ABSTRACT

Nearly all studies discussing alcohol’s relationship to religion in the South end either in the early twentieth century or shortly after the repeal of federal Prohibition in 1933. Using archival resources and oral interviews, this thesis pushes past the Prohibition era to discuss how the economic and social transformations of the post-WWII period created new divisions over alcohol. Focusing on upstate South Carolina, it first describes “alcohol culture,” a multi-classed, bi-gendered, bi-racial recreational culture that oriented itself in the 1950s and 1960s around drinking, dating, and dancing. It then shows how and why this culture created new sins in the eyes of evangelicals, causing reformers to counter with an alternative, alcohol-free culture and renewed attempts at bringing back prohibition via local option campaigns. Most importantly, it explains how the appeal of economic modernization trumped these attempts at reform but spurred evangelicals to continue fighting for “nothing but good clean fun.”

INDEX WORDS: Evangelicalism, Recreation, Alcohol, South Carolina, World War II, Modernization, Democracy, South, Southern Culture, Dating, Christian Action Council, Prohibition, Teenagers, Popular Culture, Fraternities, Local Option, Bootlegging, Rock ‘n’ Roll
NOTHING BUT GOOD CLEAN FUN:
ALCOHOL CULTURE AND REFORM IN UPSTATE SOUTH CAROLINA, 1945-1972

by

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B.A., Furman University, 2001

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For G. Perry Caldwell and Frances Caldwell,  
and their stories
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Graduate students depend on the guidance of their advisors and, for this project, I have been privileged to work with three of the best. Bryant Simon patiently directed my ideas, always pushing me to ask harder questions, consider sources with more than predictable conclusions, and simply write better. I hope the tensions he wanted me to show – not tell – are here. John Inscoe was interested in the project from the start and encouraged it with good suggestions and good humor. Ed Larson impressed me from my first days at UGA as his teaching assistant, and he continues to impress me with his encyclopedic knowledge of history and helpful comments.

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INTRODUCTION

As scholars of the modern South have observed, southerners after World War II only became increasingly “unhappy, restless, confused, embittered, [and] torn by pressure steadily mounting.” Despite the promises of urban growth, an expanding industrial base, rising living standards, and new consumer opportunities, the South remained a region divided against itself, with battle lines often drawn in terms of race, class, gender, religious attitudes, and urban versus rural interests. Staggering from the turmoil of the Great Depression, jumpstarted economically but troubled by the ramifications of world war, and uncertain about its future, the South needed a drink.¹

This affinity for alcohol was certainly nothing new, for the region’s history frequently included strolls to the barroom. In *The Mind of the South*, W.J. Cash argued for the southerner’s irrepressible desire “to stand on his head in a bar, to toss down a pint of raw whisky in a gulp, to fiddle and dance all night.”² Other observers of the South have addressed the accuracy of this comment, writing volumes about the place of alcohol in the southern past. Most of these studies focus on southern evangelical reformers and their opposition to alcohol before the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, detailing how middle class respectability fought against the wilder traditions of working class drinkers. The characters in this historiography have been diverse,

ranging from federal agents barging in on the South’s tradition of local government to black
reformers wanting racial uplift in North Carolina to evangelicals assaulting the rural male culture
of alcohol consumption. Regardless of the actors, one theme has remained strong in this body of
literature: middle class religious reformers facing down southern men unwilling to conform to
the dictates of home, church, and wife.¹

But what about alcohol’s place in the twentieth century South? Scholars have only
touched lightly on this issue, most of their works ending either in the early twentieth century or
shortly after the repeal of federal Prohibition in 1933. Hence, scholars have provided much
insight into alcohol’s relationship to the economic and social interests of the Progressive era, but
written little about the relationship of drinking practices and reform politics to the rapidly
changing world of the post-World War II South.²

This thesis pushes past the Prohibition era to examine efforts by mid-century reformers to
restrict alcohol consumption and the experiences of persons engaging in what I term as “alcohol
culture.”³ Alcohol culture resulted any time men and women, regardless of race or class,
gathered to drink at a night club, dance hall, fraternity party, private club, river bank or house

¹ William A. Link, The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina
Press, 1992); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in
North Carolina, 1896-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Ted Ownby, Subduing Satan:
Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,
1990); For interpretations on alcohol’s place in southern politics and culture before and during Prohibition, see Paul
E. Isaac, Prohibition and Politics: Turbulent Decades in Tennessee, 1885-1920 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee
University Press, 1967); James B. Sellers, The Prohibition Movement in Alabama, 1702-1943 (Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 1943); Daniel J. Whitener, Prohibition in North Carolina, 1713-1945 (Chapel
² Thomas R. Pegram, Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America, 1800-1933 (Chicago: Ivan R Dee,
1998); Norman H. Clark, Deliver Us from Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition (New York: Norton
Press, 1976); James Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard
³ Upstate South Carolina can be defined as those counties roughly north and west of Columbia, extending to the
North Carolina state line. Since several areas along South Carolina’s coast began assuming a resort status during the
mid-twentieth century, alcohol culture in those counties assumed a much different flair there than in regions
progressing toward economic modernity in a fashion similar to areas such as Charlotte and Atlanta.
party. Each night they spent in alcohol culture, these individuals chose to leave behind the strong evangelical tradition of southern society. They were granted this decision by the fruits of economic modernization and, by consuming alcohol, contributed to the perpetuation of a model of the New South that religious adherents found troubling: a consumer culture completely devoid of moral bearing. Attempts by reformers to stop this model resulted in a fierce conflict between economic boosters and evangelicals, between those shrugging off alcohol consumption as fiscally beneficial, modern, and “nothing but good clean fun” and those demanding moral piety, prohibition, and nothing but good clean fun.4

For the sake of observing this conflict between economic modernization and evangelical religion, upstate South Carolina takes center stage in this study. In many ways, the upstate fulfilled the post-war booster creed of “a new economic and social order based on industry and scientific, diversified agriculture.”5 Driven by a strong desire for modernization, the South Carolina piedmont underwent remarkable change during the 1950s and 1960s.6 Though the textile industry continued to expand after World War II and large textile corporations still garnered profits, younger workers moved out of mill villages and off farms to towns like Columbia, Greenville, Spartanburg, and Rock Hill. Diversification became a mantra for industrial boosters who supported the development of industries devoted to both cotton textiles and the manufacturing of electrical equipment, household cleaners, and aerospace machinery.7 Such moves toward modernization created new opportunities for upstate South Carolinians to

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4 In this study, two aspects of evangelicalism are featured, namely the “importance of a spiritually transformed life” and, especially after 1930, “fundamentalist reactions against . . . certain cultural changes.” These characteristics are taken from George M. Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 5, 62-82.
participate in the nation’s burgeoning post-war consumer market. Ben Robertson, writing about the upstate in 1941, observed the first hints of these changes, noting “Times have changed since our grandmother’s death. Distance has lost its former meaning, speed has increased, we have furnaces in the houses in Carolina and electric lights and refrigerators. We have many inventions intended to make our living an easier existence. She would be curiously concerned.”8 Indeed, many traditionalists were.

Wary of how such freedoms might impact the hold of evangelical religion on the region, critics of the booster spirit arose from the upstate’s collection of Baptist and Methodist congregations. Demanding the preservation of conservative social values in the face of economic modernization, these church leaders held considerable influence over the daily lives and political views of their middle to upper class congregants as well as a collection of urban working class and rural supporters.9 Vehement about instilling moral piety in all who would listen, evangelical reformers worked against all things considered sinful, and, in particular, they continued the reform tradition of vigorously opposing alcohol and the culture it engendered.

Why was alcohol culture a touchstone for reformist critique? World War II holds part of the answer, as evangelicals interpreted that war as a catalyst for a sort of evangelical “double V” campaign against atheistic totalitarianism abroad and sinful living at home, with alcohol consumption topping their list of sins. More specifically, however, they became alarmed at how alcohol consumption changed as modernization progressed after World War II, with new groups drinking in new places. Indeed, rising wages, increased leisure time, increased college

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enrollment, the popularity of automobiles, and the migration from farm to town combined to create a population of drinkers with money and time to spend on a Saturday actively forgetting about the strictures of Sunday morning.\textsuperscript{10} If fortunate enough to join the rising number of enrollments at state universities, they pledged fraternities and held wild, obnoxious parties until dawn. At nightclubs and dance halls around the upstate, middle class youths also drank with dates, danced to black music, sometimes bought illegal liquor from bootleggers, and contributed to the development of a youthful, lively and irreverent corner of southern life.

Studies of the cultural history of the South have often mentioned this culture of consumption, especially when describing the blues, rock ’n’ roll and soul music artists that played a vital role in perpetuating it.\textsuperscript{11} Still, nearly all of these studies view this nighttime culture through the eyes of the famous performer on stage, not those entering the door. Thus, this thesis changes the perspective of analysis and presents a portrait of a night out in the New South, a tour from the dorm room to the dance floor, from the bouncer to the bartender, from the bootlegger’s house to the block party, from the river bank to the road house. By surveying the first hand experiences of those who engaged in this culture, several fresh observations can be made about how recreational practices changed according to the economic and social transformations marking the post-war South.


First, unlike drinking activities at the turn-of-the-century, alcohol culture in the modern South emerged not as an expression of working class “low culture,” but as an urban and rural, multi-classed, bi-gendered, and bi-racial experience. Indeed, alcohol culture worked to assimilate people, but more toward an encroaching consumer economy of outside goods, styles, and trends. Second, though people from all classes and backgrounds drank, alcohol culture also mirrored the internal divisions present throughout the post-war South. Fractures abounded as class and race interests produced upper class alcohol havens at private clubs and beach resorts, middle class college clubs and fraternity parties, and working class drinking haunts. This trifurcation did not result entirely from elite intent since blacks and working class whites often did not desire interaction with white middle and upper class drinkers and maintained separate alcohol cultures, either choosing to drink at different times or in different places than the middle class crowd.

Historians have hinted at these elements of exclusion, but preferred to highlight moments of inclusion and interaction between the “low culture” of working class, mostly black, clubs and southern middle class youths.¹² This final, and perhaps most latent, aspect of alcohol culture can only be seen by separating the historiography from the music hot spots of Memphis and New Orleans and focusing on upstate residents who could only learn about new styles and beats second hand from records, movies, radio, and other media. Certainly, middle class youths welcomed black artists into the clubs popping up around urban areas. But no matter the applause they earned or the tips they received, black artists were viewed as not much more than exotic, popular icons made acceptable to white audiences via an expanding consumer economy.

Despite its internal divisions, alcohol culture proved remarkably apt at perpetuating itself and, when necessary, gathering ranks from all corners of upstate society to defend its interests.

This became increasingly necessary after World War II as some upstate residents became
terrified of alcohol culture’s capability for tainting the region’s future. In particular, university
officials, dismayed by the reckless drinking habits of students at private parties and public
football contests, worried about the possibility of student alcohol consumption to damage public
opinion of their institutions. When alcohol spawned violence and other disagreeable behavior,
officials felt additional heat from alumni, students, football supporters, other universities, and
both racial moderates and segregationists.

In addition to university officials, evangelical reformers and their supporters agonized
over the distinct threats alcohol culture supposedly posed to the ability of youngsters to retain
their “old time religion” and reap fully the promises of the New South economy. Led by the
Christian Action Council (CAC), a reform group first organized in 1933 to fervently fight the
repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, evangelical reformers drew support from the old standbys
of women and middle class preachers plus the new sources of working class, rural and black
reformers. Hence, the spirit of reform likewise shifted to unexpected sources as much as the
dynamics of drinking invited more than just the male, poor, and rural to imbibe.

At first glance, it seems the CAC’s concerns about alcohol were well grounded. By
1947, 6,548 licensed beer dealers and 2,648 licensed wine dealers serviced the state’s drinking
public, with a significant portion of these dealers concentrated in the piedmont. In these
establishments, South Carolinians per year spent $108 million on liquor, beer, and wine and
consumed 28 million pints of whiskey, 133 million bottles of beer, three million pints of wine,
and an unknown amount of illegally manufactured liquor.¹³ More troubling, however, were the
number of crimes related to alcohol consumption. A survey conducted in 1951 of state and

¹³ *The State*, Dec. 21, 1947; Given that the state had a total population of 2.1 million in 1950, the “average” South
Carolinian consumed sixty bottles of beer per year. See United States Census, South Carolina (1950).
county law enforcement found that 46.6% of total arrests were for public drunkenness and disorderly conduct, while drunk drivers accounted for 5% of all arrests. To prevent these statistics from rising, the CAC published numerous pamphlets against alcohol use, organized youth temperance conferences, and led anti-drunk driving campaigns throughout the state.

Other reform groups, most notably the YWCA, attempted to create a nightlife alternative to the alcohol culture of upstate dance halls, sponsoring dances and social gatherings for youths interested in an alcohol free evening. Reform forces coupled these efforts with political action, attempting to have prohibition re-established through a General Assembly vote. Hence, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, evangelicals imagined local option as the most promising course back to the fondly remembered days of statewide prohibition. In addition, they utilized rhetoric attentive to the pressures of the Cold War era, presenting the local prohibition of alcohol culture as a way for everyday people to protect democracy.

Still, prohibitionist efforts floundered in the face of harsh, but poignant, criticism. Noting the importance of alcohol culture to state tax revenues and, by extension, to the health of the upstate’s consumer and market economy, upstate “wets” portrayed reformist arguments as debilitating to the region’s ability to become a productive part of the New South. By the 1970s, reformers were forced to accept concessions to total prohibition in the form of Sunday blue laws, while economic boosters moved forward, relatively free from the demands of evangelical tradition. Hence, as the upstate moved toward modernization, the stricter dictates of evangelical religion fell aside and the fears of reformers seemed to have come true – Saturday night had overrun Sunday morning.
CHAPTER ONE
A Night Out in the New South:
Alcohol Culture in Post-World War II South Carolina

At six o’clock in the evening, Eleanor Dill left her room and walked to the lobby of her dormitory at Winthrop College. Her date, she had heard, came from a good family and enjoyed dancing. For Dill, she expected a typical Saturday night, an evening spent at a local club with a charming and attractive date who would foot the bill for dinner and drinks, keep her and her friends entertained, and return her to campus in time to meet curfew.

Unfortunately, Dill’s date not meet her expectations. “I hate to say this, but he looked like Barney Fife,” she recalled, “And what’s worse, he couldn’t dance at all.” As they arrived at The Fiesta, a dance club located two miles from campus, Eleanor found herself in an unusual place, cosigned to stand with her date by the bar instead of joining the crowd on the dance floor. By midnight, she needed to be heading back to campus and her date, who had spent most of his time drinking corn liquor brought into the club by a friend, drove her home: “I think he was just as ready to have the whole thing over with as I was. . . . That was about the only bad time I ever had at the Fiesta.”¹

Such an evening only became possible in the South after World War II. Though alcohol consumption, both private and public, had been a strong component of southern culture throughout the region’s history, an “alcohol culture” unique from past patterns of recreational

¹ Eleanor Dill, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.
drinking developed after the war. Sustained by both legal and illegal alcohol and perpetuated every day but Sunday, alcohol culture promised a wild time to those choosing to imbibe in it. More importantly, the culture created by alcohol consumption reflected the economic and social transformations occurring in the South generally and upstate South Carolina in particular. As the upstate modernized and moved to town in the 1950s, the dynamics of recreation transformed, with women, teenagers, college age youths, and middle to upper class individuals more frequently populating drinking spots previously reserved for rural, working class men.

Though all classes and both races drank, where they drank depended on a variety of factors. Upper class drinkers, of both races, preferred private clubs and resort areas, though their children might frequent nearby nightspots while in college or party hard at fraternity socials and football games. Working class white drinkers also separated themselves in clubs from their higher classed counterparts, though some working class individuals, armed with updated tactics and technology, played a vital role in keeping alcohol culture supplied with copious amounts of illegal liquor. In like fashion, blacks, both working and middle class, maintained a separate alcohol culture, packing their own clubs in urban areas or regularly attending, like their white counterparts, house parties in residential and rural areas. Given these internal divisions, alcohol culture was not a unified culture, but one distinctly marked by the class and racial tensions erupting from post-WWII southern society.

In the decades following World War II, the South finally shook off its position as a “colonial economy” and asserted itself via the recruitment of diversified industries, federal

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spending, and mechanized agriculture.⁴ As Gavin Wright observed, only after the war did a truly “new South” economy emerge, one “located in the same geographic space as the old one, but encompassing a very different package of labor, capital, natural resources, and entrepreneurship.” Proud of how effectively these changes reached the upstate, Governor Ernest Hollings praised the region in 1962 as “No longer quiet and self-satisfied . . . . They are determined to make South Carolina a productive community consonant with the technological needs of a new age.”⁵ In some ways, upstate residents were becoming better equipped to meet Hollings’ vision, especially concerning usable income. Though still lower than northern standards, wages in the South moved closer toward national averages. Across the region, southerners experienced wage increases of fifty percent or more between 1940 and 1965. Indeed, southerners had more money in their pockets than a generation before.⁶

If possible, upstate parents spent salary hikes on their children’s education. As one upstate editor advocated, proper leaders of the new southern economy “must be properly trained, and a college degree is a basic requirement for the best training. To fail to see their opportunity and seize it would be a serious mistake.” Following such advice, millions of parents between

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⁶ I stand by Gavin Wright and Numan Bartley’s categorization of the South as only “new” after World War II. Though certain characteristics from previous versions of the New South remained prevalent after 1945 (lower wages, unionization, education standards, racial hegemony, for instance), the region had chosen to move beyond its dependence on restrictive agricultural methods and declining industries. The result was more opportunities for some southerners, though certainly not all. See Numan V. Bartley, *The New South*, 145; Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 239-241; Pete Daniel, *Standing at the Crossroads*, 172-173.
1945 and 1970 sent their children to southern colleges.\textsuperscript{7} The increased availability of a college education, however, produced an unexpected result: the development of a university alcohol culture. Fraternities at the state-sponsored University of South Carolina (USC) and Clemson University, growing in enrollment as more students attended public schools, facilitated this growth, much to the chagrin of alumni and concerned adults. After USC allowed fraternities to move off campus in 1954 because they had outgrown on-campus facilities, complaints of wild parties flooded the president’s office. “There has been very little sleep in our neighborhood during the week,” wrote one resident living near the Pi Kappa Sigma house in Columbia. During the day, the fraternity housed “a very fine group of young men” who “improved the looks of the property.” At night, however, parties supplied with a steady supply of alcohol created nuisances ranging from yelling “between brothers in the house and friends in a car parked across the street” to “drunks in the cars parked outside.” In addition, occupants of parked cars threw whiskey bottles and beer cans over the resident’s fence while illicit “behavior” occurred in the dimly lit back yard with girl friends.\textsuperscript{8}

A week later, two other residents wrote university officials about a raucous party held in another fraternity “play-house,” complaining that “some nights, as last night . . . it sounded like Indian warfare until midnight.”\textsuperscript{9} Another resident described in detail how the Sigma Nu house celebrated an upcoming football game with “a so called orchestra consisting, for the most part, of a bass drum, a kettle drum and one or more instruments.” Fueled by “the consumption of an unlimited quantity of alcohol,” the party allowed no one in his house “to get any sleep or rest at

\textsuperscript{7} By 1970, more than two million students attended southern colleges, the result of twenty five years of increased interest in creating attractive and credible institutions in the region. Bartley, The New South, 446; Greenville News, January 22, 1956. Quote taken from Baptist Courier, February 2, 1956.

\textsuperscript{8} Letter, from Courtnay Bateman to Donald S. Russell, October 4, 1954, Office of the President papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C. (known hereafter as OPUSC), Box 7.

\textsuperscript{9} Letter, from Mr. and Mrs. H.P. Blackman to Donald S. Russell, October 12, 1954 in OPUSC, Box 7.
all until after 4:00 AM.” The next morning, the resident and his family had to “thoroughly police my yard and remove all types of refuse, including liquor bottles, chaser bottles, beer cans, paper cups, tissues, and all kinds of paper.” Angry about the university’s lack of attention toward the inability of fraternity house mothers “to cope with this situation at all,” the resident feared that unless “the boys be put into the dormitories . . . the taxpaying public can be expected . . . to see a group of boys take over the neighborhood and render our property useless for residential purposes.”

Though an irritant, fraternity drinking could be contained with fines and other disciplinary action. After receiving repeated complaints from Columbia residents, several fraternities had their charters suspended between 1954 and 1963 for injuring public impressions of the university. When a party held by the Kappa Sigma fraternity resulted in complaints of “two kegs of Michelob Beer” consumed “by some 200 persons” and disorderly conduct, Donald S. Russell, President of USC, cancelled the fraternity’s fall rush and prohibited alcohol at future events. Though the fraternity protested, the decision stood and the fraternity desisted from providing beer at a later social function. When student alcohol culture extended beyond the fraternity house into more public arenas, however, it created additional challenges to those interested in maintaining the respectable reputation of their schools and the South in general.

After World War II, collegiate football emerged as a recreation of utmost importance to southerners. University officials welcomed the thousands of fans attending fall contests at Clemson and USC, but worried about the potential for student drinking to damage the public’s perception of upstate schools. As John Lesslie, a student at Clemson in the early 1960s

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11 Letter, from Robert B. Cross and Clarence T. Easterling to Donald S. Russell, April 5, 1957 in OPUSC, Box 7.
remembered, school officials had good reason to worry. After the university dropped its status as a military school in 1957, liquor became an integral part of student culture. Sneaking booze into games was easy because “No one was watching. Guys would put mini-bottles into their girl’s pocketbooks or just slip them in through their own pockets.” Seeing gallon jugs sitting outside football games, filled with both legal and illegal liquor also became common. Bootleggers, “black men selling liquor bought at a cheap rate from Greenville stores,” often provided liquor and beer to fraternity students for post-game parties that sometimes ran until dawn.13 In an anonymous letter to the president, one USC student warned of the likelihood of weekend alcohol culture to injure the public’s perception of the state’s foremost university. Given the student’s request for anonymity, alcohol culture appeared so central to university life by the late 1950s that it threatened the personal safety of those bold enough to challenge it:

Last Saturday evening it was terrible – alcoholic beverages (whiskey and beer) were actually flowing from one level to the next lower one. Whiskey bottles were dropped and broken – largely at the expense of innocent people sitting near from the standpoint of dry cleaning bills. Young girls were actually sitting in the boys’ laps! The whole thing was most annoying and alarming. I honestly believe if parents knew the real situation, it would do much harm to the enrollment at USC. . . . They actually come with “zipper bags” with it in them. I do not believe in anonymous letters, but for obvious reasons I feel that it would be better for me to withhold my name.14

Alumni also found student alcohol culture disconcerting. Cheers started by drunk students at a Clemson-USC game urged the home team to “Beat the Damn Farmers” and “Send Clemson Back to the Hills,” causing one fan to complain that “many a parent of Carolina students who are Farmers must have cringed as I did when such yells were made.” He warned of serious ramifications for the school since “many a Farmers dollar support your institution and any slur on the fine name of any group cannot be passed over.” “To curb their enthusiasm,” the

14 Letter, from “A USC Student” to Donald S. Russell, September 27, 1957 in OPUSC, Box 7.
fan demanded the school to police the student section for alcohol and teach students not to “cast reflections on any one or any group but . . . [yell] at the ball game and at the school involved remembering at all times good taste and good manners.”\textsuperscript{15} This proved easier said than done most weekends, and on at least one occasion, student drinking damaged inter-university relations. During a game between the University of Maryland and USC, an “inebriated man [who] evidently had a grudge against the Maryland team” threw a drink into the face of one of the visiting Maryland players. Maryland fans and alumni were appalled and demanded an explanation for why such behavior was permitted at USC. To allay any conflict with the University of Maryland, USC President Thomas F. Jones fired off a formal letter of apology, assuring Maryland alumni that “this matter was investigated thoroughly” and the culprit “arrested and prosecuted.”\textsuperscript{16}

Given the racial upheaval at southern universities in the 1950s and 1960s, unrestrained drinking at upstate institutions also presented an image of the South that white supporters of peaceful desegregation found troubling. The beverage throwing incident with the Maryland player brought questions about any possible racial ramifications, forcing administrators to issue a public announcement that “there were no racial overtones or undertones involved in this affair.”

After an expose piece appeared in a northern publication about the problem of drinking at USC games, Donald S. Russell, university President, replied to the parent of a prospective student that “the suggestion of [excessive] liquor drinking is without the slightest foundation of truth. I can only assume that the reference to ‘cheap corn liquor’ represented a journalistic attempt to drop into the vernacular of an Erskine Caldwell character with the intent of painting a distorted and biased picture of the South generally.” Russell invited the parent to visit USC and “evaluate

\textsuperscript{15} Letter, from Harry S. Bell to Thomas F. Jones, December 2, 1963; Letter, from Ashley Halsey, Jr. to Harry S. Bell, December 4, 1963. Both in OPUSC, Box 6.

\textsuperscript{16} Letter, from Thomas F. Jones to Wilson H. Elkins and Maryland alumni, October 5, 1963 in OPUSC, Box 6.
USC by inquiry upon the ground and not by distorted and biased articles written by a reporter who has never been on our campus.”

Despite their best efforts, university officials and racial moderates could not deflect criticism when alcohol contributed to violence. Drinking at an initiation party for the Block C athletic club led to the hazing of a new initiate, resulting in a public relations nightmare for a university interested in presenting a moderate, non-violent image. After newspapers published news of the “boy being beaten by a ‘belt line’ and whipped in his genitals,” one USC alumnus wrote “I shall look around to find another school in the South which [my son] may attend” while the husband of another alumnus proclaimed “it’s a damn good thing you are not seeking money on good will at this time.” Writing in a postcard to the president, a non-alumnus but supporter of USC asked for disciplinary action for both involved students and university officials, since “Brutality, irresponsibility in initiations not only are a reflection on the quality and character of students involved but on officials of school – Hoodlum KKK qualities!”

Worried less about the university’s ability to save face and more about whether alcohol contributed to the inability of students to deal with the racial challenges presented to them, defenders of segregation also joined in the uproar against alcohol, urging administrators to put a stop to student drinking. In a lengthy letter to the university, Mrs. G.E. Finch of Decatur, Georgia complained the very foundations of white supremacy had been threatened by an “Old South” party held by the Kappa Alpha fraternity in Columbia’s downtown Hotel Jefferson. Describing herself as “a Southerner since 1628” and an “unreconstructed rebel,” Finch recalled

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17 Much like in other southern states, South Carolina whites divided on the desegregation issue, though most opposed moderates like James McBride Dabbs and supported the efforts of Strom Thurmond and other segregationists. See Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions*, 228-250; Edgar, *South Carolina*, 518-529, Letter, from Donald S. Russell to F.R. Bradham, Jr., May 17, 1957 in OPUSC, Box 7.

that when “My husband and I checked into the hotel about 5:00pm Friday . . . I was delighted: such goodlooking young men; such lovely girls. I was enchanted with glimpses of ruffled skirts . . . I even enjoyed the hirsute adornments worn by some of the young men.”

Over the weekend, however, the drunken and destructive behavior of the party-goers appalled Finch, who observed intoxicated attendees destroying ceiling tiles, passing out in the hallways, and intentionally turning off fuse boxes to create darkened rooms for couples. Excessive drinking left “broken glasses, empty whisky bottles in the corridors” along with “girls whose bouffant loveliness was negated by thick voices and half-empty cocktail glasses in their hands; half-clad, dull-eyed young men somewhat sacred and battered, reportedly from drunken fist fights.”19 While checking out of the hotel on Sunday morning after two sleepless nights, Finch and her husband “watched defeated young ‘secessionists,’ glassy-eyed, some of them still lurching slightly, check out with their consorts.” More alarming, however, seemed the “little secretive smiles” that flitted “across the lips of the colored help: elevator girls and maids, waiters and porters.” One of the porters, with a “bit of impertinence to be sure” according to Finch, remarked, “‘I thought just niggers behaved like this.’” Finch used this comment as further proof of the capabilities of alcohol culture to ruin the racial order, concluding, “we feel that if the now contested white supremacy ever becomes a ‘lost cause’ such week-ends as we have just witnessed will be a heavily contributing factor.”20

Indeed, to a limited extent, alcohol culture undercut the strict demands of segregationists like Finch, opening new possibilities for interaction between the races. This did not occur primarily in the fraternity scene, however, because the dictates of Jim Crow barred blacks from

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20 Ibid.
entering South Carolina colleges until the mid-1960s.21 Rather, it occurred in public spaces, as college students and other young white adults picked up their dates and went to any number of upstate nightclubs and dance halls. Still, just because blacks and whites could mix did not mean racial integration flourished as the music blared and the drinks were passed around. Blacks chose not to drink with whites as much as whites refused admittance of blacks, maintaining their own vibrant club culture, full of unique cultural differences, far from the white domain. Indeed, blacks and whites might have been moving toward drinking from the same water fountain, but certainly not from the same bottle.

Divisions in alcohol culture also did not solely emerge from racial considerations. Class also divided alcohol culture, with working class patrons either drinking at separate establishments or at different times than their higher classed counterparts. Given the economic changes occurring throughout the upstate, the motif forwarded by scholars of working class male drinkers and upper class, predominantly female critics cannot be maintained after World War II. Though some activities such as bootlegging remained the sole propriety of working class individuals, alcohol culture in the post-war period was a bi-gendered, multi-classed, and, while the band played, bi-racial culture.

Though the extent of modernization varied from state to state, “rising incomes permitted the consumer economy to reach significant numbers of southerners it had previously bypassed.”22 Teenage and college age youths fit this category. Much like other youngsters in the nation, they bought music and tickets to movies, spent money on dates, and, according to an upstate editor, wasted “more time and energy and money . . . in unwholesome leisure time

21 Edgar, South Carolina, 538-39.
22 Bartley, The New South, 145.
activities.”\textsuperscript{23} Those with enough money to afford weekend trips to the beach or lowcountry usually left town for these destinations, thus contributing to the vacation economy developing along South Carolina’s Grand Strand.\textsuperscript{24} Growing up in Greenville as a police detective’s daughter, Eleanor Dill remembered wanting to join her peers when they went to the beach in the summer, but could not because of her father’s rules. She explained such measures as protective, since “He saw a lot of what went on at dances around town and I guess he didn’t want me getting mixed up in it out of his sight.” He also kept her from joining any of the numerous social clubs formed by upper class whites as an outlet for their teenage sons and daughters. For high school youths in Greenville and Spartanburg, the Klaver Club and Entrenue Club provided seasonal dances for those able to afford membership. According to Dill, these clubs were “much like sororities and fraternities” and trained elite youngsters in the social graces they would need later in life at the exclusive refuge of upper class alcohol culture: the private club.\textsuperscript{25}

Both whites and blacks maintained private clubs. Columbia elite met frequently at the Hotel Jefferson downtown, drinking in the members-only bar. In Greenville, the local country club held seasonal formal dances for its members, paying black musicians for background music but barring them from unloading their equipment on the property. While whites gathered at country clubs and hotel lounges to socialize, the black elite maintained their own exclusive establishments. The Hi-Fi club, for instance, issued memberships to select patrons and invited top-name acts to entertain each weekend. The Excelsior club also issued memberships and did not accept solicitations from musicians wanting to play there. Fortunate enough to play these clubs in the 1950s and 1960s, one black musician remembered them as “more exclusive . . . and the restrictions were greater.” Though and his band could only play selections approved by the

\textsuperscript{23} Baptist Courier, August 28, 1958.
\textsuperscript{24} Edgar, South Carolina, 579-80.
\textsuperscript{25} Eleanor Dill, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.
management, “it was easy money” and if one was lucky, “you might be called in to back a Jerry Butler or Maurice Williams or some other big shot.”

For everyone else, weekends were spent close to home and dorm dancing and drinking in the numerous clubs and dance halls populating the upstate. For the young and single, recreational dating gave anyone with money to spend a reason to go out on Friday and Saturday nights, and according to one participant, “it was what you really looked forward to each week.” Because of the region’s growing incorporation into a national market, dates in the upstate looked much like dates in other areas of the country. Middle class women and men wore clothes matching styles popular throughout the nation and entertained each other with dances learned from the growing pop music market. As Dill remembered her youth in the late 1950s, “we learned dances from a lot of different places. Friends who had T.V. or a radio or a bunch of records . . . or had gone to the beach or Atlanta and danced in places there.” Dates also mimicked national patterns of courtship. Much like in other college towns, evenings planned by white youths at local bars and night clubs began in the middle of the week, on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings, popularly known as “trolling night.” In Rock Hill and Greenville, women from Winthrop College and the Greenville Women’s College received invitations through in-town sponsors from men interested in taking them out. Since the girls could not go farther than twenty-five miles from campus without parental permission, spots a few miles from campus became popular. Likewise, since most dates were blind dates, and most women went in a group. If particularly well-known acts were playing on a given night, or if an outstanding dancer

promised to show, as many as four or five hundred people could be expected to show up, all with dates and nearly all in groups.\textsuperscript{27}

At the door, waiting for patrons to arrive, was the club bouncer. Working as a bouncer provided good pay for those able to swing the schedule, and John Porter, known as “Big John” to his friends, made part of his house payments bouncing. Nights bouncing often ran late, sometimes until two or three in the morning, but the job offered him the ability to meet a lot of people, pick up women, and drink free beer. Since “everybody went out on Saturday night,” often underage drinkers would try to slip past Big John: “They really didn’t have to try too hard because we didn’t really check I.D’s back then. . . . If the cops let my boss know they would be around on a given night, he’d tell me to be a little more discriminating. But if you looked old enough, you could get in.” After giving Big John a cover charge, usually no more than a few dollars, “you were set.”\textsuperscript{28}

Inside, spinning lights and streamers fancied up “a place that otherwise made you ask yourself by day, do I really come in here?” The Fountain Blue club held concerts in the basement of a Columbia drug store. In Greenville, the Karma Club entertained patrons underneath a downtown hotel. At The Fiesta in Rock Hill, exposed steel beams ran across the roof; at The Cellar a ventilation system often leaked and could be heard over the stage music; The Box was a converted warehouse; The Barn was a used barn. Dirt was everywhere and lighting poor, but the booze was as cheap as the surroundings. By state law in the 1950s and 1960s, patrons could be served beer either on tap or by the bottle, usually for no more than a

\textsuperscript{27} For more on courtship patterns outside the South, see Beth L. Bailey, \textit{From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth Century America} (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 58-76; Eleanor Dill, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004, John Porter, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.

\textsuperscript{28} John Porter, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.
quarter a glass. If one wanted, a “setup” could be arranged. A setup included a bucket of ice with either a few beers or soft drinks, the former for straight drinking and the latter for mixing with legal liquor brought in via brown bags or illegal liquor brought in a coat pocket or pocketbook. After purchasing the first round of drinks, it was time to dance.

Music played an essential role in white and black night clubs, and in particular, dance music played by black musicians. Flyers and word of mouth advertised when popular acts were coming to town, and regulars lined up early to ensure a good spot on the dance floor. Regional favorites, touring up from Myrtle Beach and Georgia to play rock, soul or beach music for upstate clubs, gigged more often than signed artists, though Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Temptations, The Tams, Clifford Garey, and Hazel Martin and the Tempests appeared at least once in various Greenville and Spartanburg nightspots. As a youngster, Willie Boulware, a lifelong resident of the upstate and skilled saxophonist, made a living in the 1950s and 1960s playing “every club from Birmingham to D.C.” Trained by his stepfather, Boulware first learned jazz at the Savoy Club during extended trips to New York City before learning rhythm and blues and popular rock n’ roll numbers. He played with three bands from his teens until his thirties and used money from gigs to put himself through college. The pay was excellent: “I made roughly $50 a gig and had three gigs a weekend. . . . The highest pay I ever got was $115 for a short gig at N.C. State, so it was good cash.” Pay usually came in the form of service charge arranged by the band with a club owner. Early in his career, before his band became an established act in the upstate, a few owners attempted to stiff Boulware’s group. Such dishonesty stemmed more, he claims, from bad business than explicit racism: “A few times a

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30 Eleanor Dill, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004; John Porter, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.
31 Ibid.
check written to us from a white owner would bounce, but black owners would do it too if they thought they could . . . they [black owners] would just refuse to pay.”

According to Boulware, differences between white and black clubs abounded and resulted primarily from class issues. Once on stage in either a black club or a white club, black performers played a variety of songs from originals to covers of popular radio tunes. Because the economic rewards of the post-war period did not reach blacks as they did whites, “blacks just didn’t have the money to spend on music.” Hence, in a white club patrons frequently tipped extra for the band to play special requests; in a black club, requests were rare. As Boulware remembered, “People at black clubs just expected you to play and sing every note right. No instrumentals, no improvisations, but just like they heard the song on the radio. . . . They wanted just black music. Whites wanted black music plus and paid to get it.”

For whites, “black music plus” meant lively entertainment, and as such, they expected more than the juke box or radio could provide. For whites, juke boxes proved a poor substitute for a live black band and hence, listeners demanded all the additional trappings of a live show: “dancing, fancy clothes, solos . . . more than their money’s worth.” For blacks, however, the lyrics rather than the music took center stage. Though blacks danced to black music as much as whites, Boulware recalled “we had to play harder for less money . . . blacks were very critical and would get mad at you if you didn’t sing the right lyrics. They would not tip you at all if you didn’t play every note perfect.” To Boulware, the scripted feel of the music in a black club served a purpose uniquely important to the black community: “People could relate to the music of hard times. People wanted to be relieved from hard times, and tried to escape through the music . . . the lyrics. It was special to them.”

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The ability of music to soften the harsh, shared experience of racial inequity created an exciting union in black clubs between blacks of many backgrounds. “In a black club,” noted Boulware, “you would see older men dancing with younger women. You’d also see folks with no money in there at the same time with other folks.” In contrast, rising affluence for whites created segregation inside white clubs between upper class patrons and working class patrons. As college age students and other middle class patrons entered, working class whites remained outside the club door much like their black counterparts, choosing instead to congregate in clubs of their own until after youngsters returned back home or to campus. Uneasy about mixing on the dance floor with younger, more affluent women, working class men and their dates, known as “locals” to the college crowd, “stayed away until us college girls left. They would usually come in later, after we had to get back to the dorms.”

Though it is difficult to determine why working class men and women did not attempt to mix with the college crowd, age, economics, and courtship standards seem the most plausible reasons. Many “locals” came with wives or were older single men looking for a good time with people their own age. Likewise, as John Porter observed, the “music drew a certain crowd.” Older and less able or willing to participate in the consumer economy as the younger crowd, many working class patrons warmed more to “old standards instead of the new stuff.” The stylish, casual dress of the middle class patrons also clearly cast lines that working class patrons did not, or could not, cross. According to Dill, she and her friends regularly donned name-brand loafers, alpaca sweaters, and freshly ironed white and blue skirts. Meanwhile, their dates gussied up in loose fitting, but trim, cotton shirts and pressed or pleated khaki pants. No doubt they dressed to impress but also, perhaps, distressed those unable to afford such luxuries.

34 Eleanor Dill, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.
A more likely detraction, however, was the exclusive hold dates had on one another. If a man, regardless of class, entered a club without a date, getting one meant stepping in on another man’s date.\(^{35}\) Frequently, violence resulted from such an action. John Porter remembered having to break up numerous fights because of “too much alcohol and a girl,” but claimed, “I never had to hit anyone.” If settled quickly, usually the aggressor was forced outside, but “if the cops had to come along, then they’d arrest them. Otherwise, we’d just talk to them outside and then invite them back inside for another beer.” On several occasions, however, arguments over dates turned especially dangerous. Willie Boulware witnessed knives drawn during several club fights, and on one occasion, became entangled in a scuffle involving firearms: “We were playing this white club one night in South Carolina and two boys started arguing over a girl . . . . One drew a pistol on the other, and here I was in between them. The bouncer saw what was happening and jumped on top of me while some other guys tackled the fellow with the gun. It was a close one, but not too unusual to see arguments get that heated if enough alcohol was around.”\(^{36}\)

Though working class whites might not have wanted to split drinks or share the floor with the bobby-soxers, they still contributed an important component to middle class alcohol culture: moonshine and bootleg liquor.\(^{37}\) Since licensed stores closed in the afternoon, a great amount of illegal liquor sustained the weekend culture of alcohol. Indeed, when one wanted a stronger drink after hours, only the moonshiner and bootlegger could sell it. Making and running

\(^{35}\) This element of “going steady” and exclusive dating emerged in the post-war period in other parts of the country as well. Beth Bailey ascribes this phenomenon to a post-war “desire for security.” Many aspects of this courtship form match the behavior of youngsters entering upstate clubs, with dates acting “as if they were married . . . a mimicry of the actual marriage of their slightly older peers.” Bailey does not account much for those who, with the help of alcohol, often became brazen enough to violate such standards. See Bailey, From Front Porch to Back Seat, 49.


\(^{37}\) Moonshine refers to homemade liquor. Bootleg liquor can refer to both illegally transported alcohol and licensed liquor resold by a non-licensed dealer.
home-brew had been a common practice since the antebellum period and, after World War II, illicit liquor enjoyed the benefits of the disposable incomes of nighttime party goers. If one made good liquor and sold it at a fair price, finding customers was easy. As a friend of an upstate bootlegger noted, “It was simple mathematics. A man could buy almost four and a half gallons from Weaver for the price he would pay for one gallon of the tax-stamped bourbon from Louisville or Frankfurt, Kentucky.”\textsuperscript{38} Weaver, a Columbia bootlegger, sold a two-ounce drink for twenty cents, a half-pint for fifty, a pint for one dollar and a half gallon for three. Price increases for all consumer goods throughout the post-war period apparently affected moonshine as well, though not beyond an acceptable market value. In contrast to Weaver’s relatively cheap prices, corn liquor bought from bootleggers in York and Chester counties increased to three dollars per half-pint in the late 1960s, still enough, according to one imbiber, “to really light you up.”\textsuperscript{39}

Given the affordability and demand for illegal liquor, bootlegging in the post-war period continued as a popular primary or secondary source of income for those capable of producing good product.\textsuperscript{40} As they had for generations, some ran stills in the foothills northwest of Greenville, known as the “Dark Corner” since before Prohibition.\textsuperscript{41} Indeed, the frequent discovery of stills in rural parts of the upstate underscored bootlegging as a significant problem for lawmen even after World War II. In 1960, a pre-dawn raid in King’s Creek netted twenty-four gallons of home brew ready to be shipped into nearby Rock Hill and across state lines to Charlotte. In addition, a five hundred gallon still, complete with mash, was destroyed. During a single week in the same year, over 3,750 gallons of mash and ten stills were confiscated by York

\textsuperscript{38} William Price Fox, “Carolina Corn” in \textit{Audience}, vol. 1, no. 6 (1971).
\textsuperscript{39} John Porter, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.
County officials, all run by men under the age of twenty-five.42 Growing up in the early 1950s, John Lesslie, the son of an upstate farmer, remembers his father finding stores of sugar and Mason jars on a secluded edge of their family property in the late 1940s: “Some of our tenants [all black] had been making moonshine back there, right behind the school where their kids went.”43 Melvin Caldwell, an avid hunter, stumbled onto a live still as a college-age youth in the mid-1950s. “I just followed my father’s advice,” he noted, “to just back away if I ever found a still. Since those guys were usually protective of their liquor and were packing [firearms], I just walked away and called the sheriff’s office.”44

This advice appears to have been sound, since rural moonshiners and bootleggers aggressively defended their livelihood. Yet, many rural moonshiners also encouraged discovery by pursuing profits made available by the development of an urban alcohol culture. If one brewed or stored goods outside town, the chances of discovery increased as those goods traveled toward town. Policemen and state agents, increasingly watchful for bootleggers running liquor into town for the weekend, hopped on the newly exposed rum-runner, while newspapers, looking for exciting copy, happily printed the results.

For instance, on their regular morning patrol of downtown Greenville, South Carolina, Officers J.L. Gillespie and W.M. Post noticed a 1946 Buick driving suspiciously down Hampton Avenue. After the officers signaled for the driver to stop, the Buick sped off, zipping through the bustling Washington Street business district and out of town. Soon after Post radioed for backup from the Pickens county police, the car suddenly careened into a blackberry thicket and came to a jarring stop. Springing out of their patrol car, the officers followed the driver, but lost him in nearby pines and underbrush. Returning to the car, they discovered thirty gallons of bootleg

42 Rock Hill Evening Herald, April 11, 1960.
whiskey.\textsuperscript{45} In western Spartanburg County, a ten-mile chase ended with the arrest of two bootleggers, James Freeman and Leon Upchurch. During the chase, Freeman and Upchurch threw out six gallons of illegal whiskey, most apparently aimed at the pursuing patrol car. Caught and handcuffed after wrecking on a small rural road, both men were charged with transporting illegal whiskey.\textsuperscript{46} Another incident involved a Greenville county magistrate stopping a “suspicious vehicle” on his way to evening church services. After chasing a 1937 Plymouth at speeds of nearly seventy miles per hour, the magistrate managed to stop the car with the help of several county deputies. Though unable to catch and arrest the two men driving the Plymouth, the magistrate and deputies confiscated seventy-one half-gallon jars of illegal whiskey from the car’s back seat.\textsuperscript{47}

With federal or state agents often on the lookout, rural bootleggers wanting urban customers resorted to creative tactics for eluding the law. Many, no doubt, paid sheriff’s deputies to stay quiet about their supplies, but others resorted to late night runs or stuffing canisters in hidden compartments in their cars. James Dantzler, relating a story told him by an upstate bootlegger, noted decoys as a popular tactic used by men running liquor from across the Savannah River to Clemson and Greenville. On weekends, the bootlegger and his friends loaded up one car with moonshine and another car with empty canisters. As the car without moonshine sped over the bridge connecting Georgia and South Carolina, it attracted the police. According to Dantzler, “The police would stop the speeding car, and give the driver a speeding ticket, which basically cost the boys nothing. The second car, the one with all the moonshine in it,

\textsuperscript{45} Greenville News, February 12, 1954.
\textsuperscript{46} Spartanburg Herald-Journal, March 15, 1953.
\textsuperscript{47} Greenville News, March 15, 1954; For a review of the types of automobiles used widely by bootleggers in the South and the techniques of a high speed chase, see Derek Nelson, Moonshiners, Bootleggers, and Rumrunners, 78-94. Also see Daniel, Lost Revolutions, 91-120.
would drive nice and easy over the bridge . . . to the place they were assigned to deliver the moonshine to."48

After World War II, urban growth made any location, whether a thickly wooded hollow or private residential property, a possible base of operations. Hence, a new type of moonshiner, setting up shop in the city, appeared, augmenting traditional techniques with diversified and updated methods and leaving many upstate authorities “not in the least in doubt that the moonshiner was going modern.”49 William Price Fox, who worked for an in-town bootlegger in Columbia during the late 1940s and early 1950s, wrote about the ingenuity, nerves, and modern technology needed to be a successful urban brewer and seller:

When I was a boy . . . Weaver Jeffcoat, who operated a bootleg shot house, hired me for a quarter an hour to sit on his porch swing as a lookout. . . . When I spotted the Law, I’d press a button, and Weaver would pull the plug on the whiskey he was storing in his fifty-gallon industrial sink. A straight four-inch pipe that looked more like an artillery piece than anything in the plumbing manual dropped the fifty gallons to the sewer in seconds, and by the time the Law had crossed the yard, rushed up the steps, flashed the search warrant and made it to the deep sink, Weaver would be sloshing in coffee grounds or Clorox to kill the smell. The Law couldn’t arrest for smell, but Weaver, who was nicknamed “Showboat,” enjoyed doing it right.50

In town, raids also tended to deal with bootleggers selling store bought liquor after stores closed. If unable or unwilling to moonshine their own brew, bootleggers acted as scalpers, buying liquor from a licensed dealer during the day and then re-selling it, with considerable mark-up, at night. As one observer of such activity noted in a letter of complaint to his congressman, “Stores should be allowed to open until at least 10:00 PM, since bootleggers

50 Fox, “Carolina Corn,” 104.
operate under cover of darkness and their business thrives after legal stores close down.”\(^{51}\) In Chester county, this suggestion might have prevented sheriff’s deputies from needing to confiscate “a considerable amount of [non-tax stamped] whiskey at a small service station-grocery store along SC 9,” an edge of town spot frequented by after-hours clients seeking booze.\(^{52}\) A few miles north in Rock Hill, however, local police were on the take and area bootleggers operated freely out of small houses in the declining mill village. As John Porter recalled, illegal liquor infiltrated night spots in the upstate with regularity. Indeed, illegal liquor dealers stayed open to anyone wanting “an emergency run at night” because:

> They were both black and white, but just folks trying to make ends meet. It wasn’t the better houses that you visited and they had to know you or you had to have someone vouch for you. . . . There was a really fat woman that ran a bootleg house on Twin Lakes road. She sold store-bought liquor with a mark up. . . . But you could go on Black Street and buy half-pints of corn liquor too if you wanted. It was a real racket every weekend.\(^{53}\)

To offset this racket, law enforcement authorities began in 1962 a sweeping dragnet of the upstate. Named “Operation Dry-Up,” it succeeded in increasing legal whiskey sales but also revealed the inability of lawmen to counter the lengths taken by urban and rural moonshiners to sell their wares freely. As Jess Carr noted about South Carolina still runners, “electric pumps . . . [and] push button control panels did the job of the olden day still hand.” In addition, mobile moonshining units and complex networks of distilling equipment set up in houses, warehouses, barns, legitimate businesses, and even under covered swimming pools convinced authorities in

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\(^{52}\) Rock Hill Evening Herald, October 17, 1967.

\(^{53}\) John Porter, interview conducted by the author, April 28, 2004.
the state and region that “the little pint-and-jar man of an earlier era was less and less the problem.”

Despite the contributions of illegal liquor manufacturers to the region’s thriving alcohol culture, only a few individuals from the lower ranks of upstate society could devote the time and effort needed to profit from bootleg booze. More frequently, working class and rural whites and blacks maintained their own alcohol culture within their country confines and waterways. In the upstate, several rivers provided excellent spots for youths to drink and have fun away from parental and civil authority. John Lesslie recalled going with friends from his poor, rural community to get-togethers on the Catawba River and near Lake Wylie. John Porter, though struggling to make ends meet as a bouncer, still enjoyed picking up girls in his friend Skeeter’s car – a hearse bought cheap from a funeral home – and driving out to secluded spots on the Catawba river for late night fun. Stopping by a moonshiner’s house on the way to the river, Porter and his friends dumped corn liquor, orange juice, grapefruit juice, sugar and vodka into a commode Skeeter had bought and bolted into the back cab of the hearse: “We called the drink ‘Yellow God A’mighty’ cause when you drank it, well it’d make you holler.”

One place Porter and his friend never took girls, however, was just a few miles from their river spot. Though wild living and violence infiltrated the in-town clubs of black and white patrons with regularity, at establishments on the outskirts of town such behavior seemed the rule rather than the exception. Few had dance floors and none attempted to dress up the darkened barroom or regular customers. A single jukebox provided music and usually only one bartender provided drinks. “More than likely,” as one writer observed about these establishments, “the more popular ones [were] plopped in a corner of a godforsaken junction of two dusty roads, each of which feeds into the paved county road 26 flat miles away.” Commenting on redneck bars

54 Carr, The Second Oldest Profession, 140.
similar to the ones found in the upstate, he added that in a county bar “the items on the list worth doing” included “drinking, fighting, dancing, hawking wimmin, and spending all your money, and then some on booze.” One joint in the upstate, located near Fort Mill, fit this bill and had an especially notorious reputation. Known as The Bloody Bucket and frequented by “local rednecks,” this establishment unapologetically served those “looking for a beer and a fight, not necessarily in that order.” Recalling a night he spent at the Bucket with Chief Wahoo, a professional wrestler of regional acclaim in the 1960s, Porter noted “a fight broke out in there as they often did. People would drink there until four or five in the morning, so they got very drunk. Wahoo looked at me and asked, ‘Want to join in?’ I said no, and we left. But if you wanted to join in, they wouldn’t have had a problem with it . . . . They probably would have liked it.”

Aside from locations by a local river or in a seedy redneck bar, upstate residents, typically those old enough to own or rent property, held house parties nearly every weekend. Race and class again determined who might attend a house party and where. As a black teenager, Phyllis Douglas attended parties energized with music that “made you want to dance the grass off the ground.” Held just around the corner from The Go-Go, a black dance club, house parties offered youngsters forbidden to frequent dance clubs a place to go on Saturday night. “I couldn’t go to the black club, so I went to a house party instead. There was alcohol there, but since my parents knew whose house it was, it was okay.” Bands rarely played at house parties; hence, music was supplied either by a radio or record player. Hosts provided a table “set-up” of food and, as Willie Boulware recalled, homemade stews were standard.56

Given that most everyone who attended house parties knew one another, violence was rare. Still, the wild atmosphere offered by in-town clubs often became even wilder in private residences. Remembering parties thrown by his parents in the late 1940s and early 1950s, John Porter noted “they would have square dances at our house, lasting way past midnight. Big trucks would come in with all the local boys, and even a few outsiders might make it. All brought beer in big cases. It was a pretty wild time.” Willie Boulware played few private parties during his time in a band, but remembered a house party he attended “with over two hundred people. . . near this café in Great Falls. People were dancing inside and drinking, so many that it extended out into the folks’ yard.” Eleanor Dill also observed people leaving the Fiesta each weekend, “heading to another party somewhere. I had to get back to campus, but they would go out to somebody’s house and keep at it until dawn.”

Dawn brought not only hangovers but also the biting criticism of those viewing the frivolity of Saturday night from the lofty moral perch of Sunday morning. Adding to the derision leveled against student alcohol culture by university officials, evangelical reformers challenged alcohol culture with both old appeals and new rhetoric. For these reformers and their supporters, the culture young people crafted for themselves in upstate clubs directly threatened both their spiritual health and their potential for becoming respectable contributors to the quickly modernizing southern economy. Hence, the desire to keep people away from the apparent dangers of alcohol culture after World War II resulted in the development of a counter culture couched in the principles of evangelical Christianity and marked by well-intentioned, if ultimately misdirected, attempts at creating space for good clean fun to flourish.

57 Willie Boulware, May 24, 2004; John Porter, April 28, 2004; Eleanor Dill, April 28, 2004, interviews conducted by the author.
“Culture is good,” wrote Rev. C. Earl Cooper in his monthly submission to the Baptist Courier, “only when it succeeds in covering the bad and revealing the good in man.”1 For some South Carolinians, alcohol culture did nothing but reveal the worst in people and, if left unchallenged, not only intended to ruin the sanctity of upstate society. Perceiving alcohol consumption as a violation of evangelical demands for moral purity, post-war reformers pushed for the creation of a youth culture that countered the sinful experiences offered to teenagers and young adults each night in the bars, dance halls and nightclubs of the upstate. Hoping to preempt the temptations of drink and licentious living before youngsters reached their teenage years and certainly before they became old enough to enter college, this evangelical counter-culture presented youngsters and their worried parents an alternative, more respectable form of recreation.

The evangelical counter-culture remained open to anyone willing to join a youth club or attend a summer camp, whether poor or wealthy, rural or urban, black or white. The openness of this culture resulted from the efforts of the Christian Action Council (CAC), an evangelical reform group, and upstate YMCAs and YWCAs. Both of these groups welcomed the backing of a variety of evangelical supporters, making this reform impulse distinct from the pre-war efforts of female-led temperance unions, urban and middle-class evangelical reformers, and race-baiting

1 Submission, C. Earl Cooper to Baptist Courier (BC), January 12, 1956.
political leaders. Rural upstate residents, if inclined toward the evangelical vision of these reformers, joined in the assault on alcohol culture, as did others from black and working class backgrounds. In this sense, the particular threats posed by the emergence of a post-war alcohol culture helped draw previously disparate communities under the banner of evangelical reform.

Despite their efforts at inclusion, reformers still reinforced traditional interpretations of gender, teaching young women to be wary of the wilder, hetero-social culture of alcohol that welcomed them after the war. Likewise, reformers erased few racial lines with their efforts at keeping both blacks and whites away from the dangers of alcohol culture. Still, the creation of an evangelical counter-culture represented a fervent attempt by upstate reformers to combine their religious obsession with moral purity with a set scheme for training youths through recreation. Though limited in its appeal among youngsters, it still served as an important tactic for reformers and worked alongside legislative attempts at re-establishing a “dry” South Carolina.

Youth alcohol reform was not a new impulse in South Carolina. Throughout the nineteenth century, the state had an active temperance movement and, in 1885, became the first of the southern states to organize a state Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Teamed with upstate evangelicals and New South pundits, the WCTU stressed coalitions with other southern prohibitionists, fought for temperance education and, in 1889, nearly won a state prohibition act. By 1891, local option laws, lobbied for by the WCTU, ended the legal sale of alcoholic beverages in seventy-two communities throughout the state and extended the power of evangelical and middle class preferences for temperance and domesticity over the untamed recreations of male drinkers.²

A year after local option’s victory, prohibitionists won another referendum, and, for the moment, successfully coupled themselves with an emerging anti-liquor current in the state’s ruling Democratic party. Governor Ben Tillman, however, directly challenged this trend, imagining numerous political benefits from the preservation of alcohol consumption in the state. Eager to extend his powers over county affairs and fearful that political clashes over liquor might weaken white supremacy by setting wet and dry whites against one another, Tillman convinced the state legislature to offer a compromise to prohibitionists: the dispensary system. Essentially a state monopoly on the sale of liquor, the dispensary allowed counties that wanted liquor to buy it in state-sponsored retail stores; any county opposed to liquor sales could simply vote against petitioning the governor’s office for a local dispensary.

Initially, many prohibitionists approved of the dispensary because it outlawed working class saloons and limited supply to habitual drinkers. Urban residents, however, infuriated by state constables raiding private homes in search of “blind tigers,” resisted the dispensary first with words and later with violence. In 1894, Tillman’s attempts to suppress liquor trafficking in the railroad junction of Darlington led to a riot and the deaths of one constable and two members of an anti-dispensary group. Widespread graft and popular disapproval of the dispensary system eventually led to its abolition as a state institution in 1907; the last dispensaries, operated only by county officials, remained open until 1915. At that time, prohibitionists finally won a

referendum making it illegal to produce liquor within state boundaries and limiting legal importation of liquor to only one gallon per month.\(^3\)

Passage of the Eighteenth Amendment placed responsibility for enforcing prohibition in the hands of the federal government, but drinking remained a prominent social problem in the eyes of many South Carolinians. In the upstate, the perception of moonshiners regularly selling illegal liquor to waiting customers and drunken textile workers often wandering around in broad daylight turned public opinion against national prohibition.\(^4\) When authority to control liquor returned to the states after 1933, South Carolina legislators, both wet and dry, pushed for a referendum on whether a return to the statewide “one gallon” law of 1915 should occur. Placed as an addendum to the 1934 gubernatorial primary, the liquor referendum received over 290,000 votes, with wet forces winning by a margin of 157,559 to 133,028. This vote proved to be the first and only time liquor received a majority of votes in support for its place in the state.

A year later, liquor again came under attack. Governor Olin D. Johnston, though a devout teetotaler, recognized the need for liquor tax regulation and granted the state tax commission permission in 1935 to issue liquor licenses. Drys, many middle class townspeople already annoyed by Johnston’s moves toward New Deal liberalism, mounted a massive campaign against his liquor policies, arguing to voters that “we have drunk a freight train load long enough to reach around the earth 25,000 miles since repeal” and pressuring legislators to reconsider the issue with another state-wide referendum.\(^5\) Wet supporters argued the tax burden created by a return to prohibition would cripple the state’s languishing budget and remained

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\(^4\) For several revealing, and humorous, examples of public drunkenness in the upstate during federal Prohibition, see *Greenville Piedmont*, February 1, 1924; February 12, 1926; February 16, 1926.

confident that “the people will not add nearly $3,000,000 to the already heavy tax burden by adopting prohibition.”

By the fall of 1940, however, dry leaders had garnered enough support not only to get a referendum but also to win statewide prohibition by a majority of nearly 60,000 votes. Elated, prohibitionists proclaimed “a great victory in the first skirmish with the enemy in this state” and encouraged reformers “to follow through, not only to the enactment of appropriate legislation but to its proper enforcement.” But dry forces did not get the chance to prove that prohibition could be enforced properly. Uncomfortable with the tax losses the referendum would demand in the state’s budget, the Senate did not bring the prohibition bill back from committee by a vote of 25 to 18, thus ending any chance for the bill’s passage and rejecting the wishes of the electorate. State prohibitionists interpreted this defeat as a “failure to consider ‘the rights of the people,’” but they had to wait until after World War II to petition again the state legislature for alcohol reform.

With the onset of World War II, domestic fights over liquor subsided as thousands of South Carolinians joined the armed forces and liquor supplies became restricted under the same ration demands as other foodstuffs. Thus, the war served, at least temporarily, to enforce the intent of the 1940 referendum until the end of hostilities. After 1945, however, the same social and economic changes that encouraged the development of a distinct alcohol culture also spurred a new generation of evangelical, prohibitionist reformers to refocus their critiques. As one

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6 *The State*, August 27, 1940.
8 Letter, from Wallace E. Epps to P. Bradley Morrah, January 28, 1962 in PBM. Epps remained disturbed about the 1940 referendum well into his fifties. It made an impression on him as a “young man, not of voting age” and served as an impetus for his life-long devotion to bring prohibition back to the state.
reformer put it, “Our Christian concern for the political order . . . must never be lost lest the ‘things that are Christ’s’ be taken over and controlled by ‘the realm of Caesar.””

At the center of the post-war reform movement in South Carolina was the Christian Action Council (CAC). Founded shortly after the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment by Baptist leaders Dr. John Roper and Charles E. Burts, the Christian Action Council originally operated under the moniker of the South Carolina Federated Forces for Temperance and Law Enforcement. In his first presidential address, Dr. Roper made his organization’s purpose clear: “We stand in the conflict without compromise: No legal sale in South Carolina!” The organization followed Roper’s charge, at least initially. During the fight for the 1940 referendum, The Federated Forces assumed an active role and, after its defeat, continued lobbying for a return to prohibition until 1946.

After the war, under the direction of Rev. Maxie C. Collins, Jr., the Federated Forces redefined their vision. Casting aside its unilateral devotion to a staunch, unbending and outdated drive against liquor, Collins prodded the organization to expand its focus and address a wide variety of social ills. In the future, the Federated Forces would campaign against a list of perceived problems created by the upstate’s move toward modernization, including but not limited to racial conflict, illicit sex, pornographic publications, teen delinquency, and domestic violence. As one observer of the Federated Forces noted, “The mission clearly was to sensitize – to lead citizens to take the best possible options.”

Though Collins defined this new role for the Federated Forces, he would not be the one to direct it. After Collins stepped down as director in 1950, Howard G. McClain, a thirty-three

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9 Letter, Howard G. McClain to Pastors and Other Christian Leaders in South Carolina, February 18, 1954 in Christian Action Council records, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., Box 3 (hereafter referred to as CACR).
year old Southern Baptist minister from Texas, took charge and continued Collins’ imperative, but instead used the organization’s wider support to push for statewide prohibition. Educated at Vanderbilt and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and trained as a graduate student in theology at the University of North Carolina, Duke, Yale, and Union Theological Seminary, McClain wanted desperately to “be identified with a group willing to work for social change, and for the well-being of all citizens – Black and White.” McClain found these elements present in the Federated Forces, and pushed the organization to welcome support from all corners in the fight against alcohol culture. For McClain, the economic and social changes occurring in the South created a “new frontier” for evangelicals, prompting them to “‘possess the land’ with the establishment of morality’ . . . cutting out the undergrowth, cutting down the trees, pulling out stumps and rocks, and finally cultivating the ground.”

Alcohol culture, in particular, stood in the way of extending this sort of moral, Christian civilization, since “Most of the ‘true’ alcoholics seem to begin as social drinkers in their late teens. For several years they drink socially, taking only an occasional cocktail or beer. Then they begin getting drunk with regularity.” For McClain, the cost of youths drinking at night clubs and dance halls to a modernizing society included not only “the youngster with a couple of beers . . . ‘on a spree’ after a party,” but also domestic quarrels, drunk driving, and lost wages for hungover employees. To counteract these problems, McClain invited all evangelical churches, regardless of class or racial background, to “stand against THE GREAT EVILS THAT CONFRONT US and stand for the great goals of Christian relationships in all our living.”

To assault alcohol culture, the Federated Forces would couple legislative efforts with grassroots assaults, using pamphlets, programs, seminars, and other media to persuade rather

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11 Baptist Courier, May 18, 1952.  
12 Ibid., January 24, 1952.  
13 Howard McClain to Baptist Courier, February 12, 1953.
than berate South Carolinians to make decisions according the organization’s particular brand of Christian living. Wanting to sell the CAC as the primary actor for evangelical reform in the state and thus draw widespread support for new efforts at prohibition, McClain renamed the organization. In 1951, the Federated Forces became the Christian Action Council, an organization devoted “to (1) aid in promotion of relevant social, educational, and action programs of cooperating denominations . . . and (2) serve as a liaison agency between churches and important movements for moral and social welfare in the state.”

Evangelical church leaders enthusiastically responded to McClain’s call. One supporter lauded McClain’s managerial decisions, stating “The present name of the organization . . . is a fortunate choice, because it stresses the thing most needed at this time – CHRISTIAN ACTION. It is time for Christian people to extend their discussion into the social evils into action!” Indeed, dozens of Baptist and Methodist preachers and congregations flocked to support the CAC and its offensive charge against the perceived threats emerging against their families, communities, and nation in the post-war period. For these reformers, World War II was certainly a “good war,” an admirable endeavor that allowed freedom and liberty to extend into Europe and Asia; yet, at home it produced the wrong sort of freedom, a release not only from the concerns of wartime but also from the demands of Christian piety. As one upstate Baptist noted:

Now that the war has been won and is over, we may expect to learn soon how serious the immoral aftermath is to be. The secondary motive of our public character has been thoroughly shaken by wartime conditions and changes. . . . Then, too, the general disorganizing effect of the terrific excitement and anxiety caused by the war has increased carelessness and aggravated drunkenness. Unless

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14 Ibid., 6-7.
15 Minutes, Annual Meeting of the South Carolina Federated Forces for Temperance and Law Enforcement, January 23, 1951.
17 Lists of supporting churches can be found in the administrative files of the CAC. Personal correspondence between Howard G. McClain and ministers from supporting churches throughout the upstate also give evidence of supporting churches in CACR, Boxes 1-6.
a miracle occurs, we may expect to see a new low in the character of the American people.\textsuperscript{18}

For the CAC and its supporters, many of these “new lows” originated from alcohol and the culture it engendered. Admittedly, some of these supposedly new threats had long been a concern for liquor reformers and prohibitionists, such as alcohol’s supposedly debilitating effect on young drinkers, womanhood and families.\textsuperscript{19} Other threats, however, were distinct to the post-war period, and reformers utilized new tactics to counter the fresh dangers alcohol presented to public safety and the impressionable sensibilities of South Carolina’s teenage population.

The apparent effects of alcohol on upstate youth alarmed reformers. As Marshall H. Roberson of rural Saluda County complained, “For many teen-age boys and girls, the most accessible place of entertainment are roadhouses and similar establishments, breeding places of vice and crime.” Though perhaps an overstatement, Roberson and other observers showed knowledge of the upstate’s thriving alcohol culture and were correctly concerned that underage drinkers could find alcohol if they wanted it. Charles Addison of York county observed the availability of beer to upstate teenagers, noting “in a lunch room five youths all high school age, came in and the waitress took their orders: two were for milk, two were for coffee, one was for a bottle of beer. The beer was sold just as quick as the coffee was.” Clubs and restaurants were not the only establishments youths frequented. As one Baptist minister observed during an extended stay in Greenville: “In a capital city of our beloved Southland, there is constant traffic from a certain dance hall to a nearby liquor store by boys and girls forming an almost continuous

line. In four months officers observed more than 1300 teen-age girls in bars and night clubs, most of them drinking, and between the ages of 16 and 18."20

Reformers also remained deeply concerned, much like their Progressive predecessors, about the culture of alcohol’s effect on women. “Instead of teaching our girls modesty,” complained Ed B. Smith of Greenville, “we put midrift dresses and practically nothing for bathing suits on them and let them go ‘here and there and everywhere’ day and night unchaperoned from our modern sheiks and drugstore cowboys, many of whom have no more regard for a girl’s virtue than a sheep killing dog has for a lamb.”21 Likewise, alcohol culture threatened the very foundations of the home by its influence on parents and the example it set for their children: “Parents are largely responsible for the state of morals as they exist. . . . Many young women and men are on the downward road today because of mother’s and father’s approval of the modern dance, road houses, and honky-tonks.”22 Added another worried parent: “Never are we to forget the sorrow and broken homes . . . caused by using alcohol as a beverage. . . . A broken home not only breaks God’s heart but it makes two adults very unhappy. And if there are any children involved, they continue life with a most serious handicap.”23

Apart from these traditional concerns, the CAC worried about a new and deadly aspect of post-war alcohol culture. As more South Carolinians purchased cars and used them both for business and pleasure, drunk driving became a noticeable threat to public safety after World War II. Although statistical records are incomplete, the upstate undoubtedly encountered a rise in drunk driving cases. In 1946, Greenville, York, Spartanburg, and Pickens convicted 227 total

22 Letter, Calvin C. Turner of the Piedmont Baptist Association to BC, March 1, 1956.
violators for breaking state liquor laws, with drunk driving as a crime not considered of statistical significance to report. By the beginning of the 1960s, this number rose to 541 total convictions. In 1951, Richland County only reported 2 convictions for drunk driving; ten years later, 112 were convicted. In one month of 1953, 83 licenses in Greenville County, 54 in Richland, and 31 in York County were revoked for drunk driving offenses.\textsuperscript{24} By 1961, over one-third of convictions for liquor law violations in Greenville county related to drunk driving; in York, Spartanburg, and Pickens counties, violations for drunk driving accounted for over one-half.\textsuperscript{25}

Alcohol reformers used drunk driving statistics as a rhetorical tool, arguing that mixing alcohol with automobiles resulted not only in potentially fatal accidents but encouraged one to forget the principles of “Christian driving”:

> Last year, 548 people lost their lives on the highways and streets of our State . . . . Is this a lamentable record indicative of the Christian application of “The Golden Rule?” Cain’s age-old indignant query “Am I my brother’s keeper,” answered by the Lord in soft, but firm, tones must also be answered by us. We are our brother’s keeper, and as such we must drive with Christian care, Christian caution, and Christian common sense.\textsuperscript{26}

Preachers in the upstate gave sermons concerning “The Parable of the Motorists,” relating the biblical parable of the four kinds of seed to the sins of “Mr. Line-straddler, Mr. Horn-blower, Mr. Fast-starter” and the righteous “Mr. Safe-and-steady.”\textsuperscript{27} Others pushed for a return to prohibition to end “the slaughter on our highways” since “every sober motorist has a right to be protected from . . . the drinker.”\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{25} Reports of the Attorney General in \textit{Reports and Resolutions of South Carolina} (1951-1961). Greenville County in 1961 had a total of 180 convictions for violation of liquor laws, with 52 convictions for driving under the influence. In York county, 87 out of 165 for drunk driving; in Spartanburg, 78 out of 142; in Pickens, 21 out of 54.
\textsuperscript{26} Letter, from B.E. Fallaw, State Highway Patrol to Dr. S.H. Jones, \textit{BC}, August 3, 1950.
\textsuperscript{27} Sermon, Rev. E.B. Lowry, Greenville, S.C. reprinted in \textit{BC}, September 13, 1951.
\textsuperscript{28} Letter from S.J. Gardner to the Editor, \textit{Greenville News}, January 23, 1956.
Howard McClain and the CAC tied the statistics directly to pleas for Christian piety and peppered the upstate with pamphlets and flyers urging for people to avoid “the triloquy – liquor, tragedy, death.” Much of this literature focused on the human cost of drunk driving, typically using poems supposedly written by the victims of drunk drivers – orphaned children and wives. Though overly sentimental, such poems successfully married pleas for evangelical morality with pressing social concerns: “Was the driver who killed her so full of hate/That he wouldn’t brake until way too late?/Had she harmed his family – or maybe him?/Was he drinking and driving on some sort of whim? . . . “The Lord says ‘forgive’ my daddy said/It’s kinda hard when they say ‘she is dead.’” The CAC further tied Christian piety to driving behavior with the publication and proliferation of “safety prayers,” short tracts that upstate drivers could recite before heading down the driveway. After requesting the Lord to “See over hills for me/On curves, stand by/No act of mine must cause/Someone to DIE,” drivers could also use the CAC’s exegetical “Ten Commandments of Good Driving” to reflect on Scripture’s demands for Christians to drive free of “recklessness and carelessness, selfishness, stubbornness, bullheadedness, pride and ‘showing off.’”

Such literature not only directly criticized the close relationship between automobile use and alcohol culture but also brought attention to a new form of Christian living the CAC and other evangelicals advocated as necessary in the post-war period. Urging the Christian not to shy away from the changes occurring in American culture, evangelical groups in the upstate asked Christians to engage in the development of a recreation culture that countered the temptations of alcohol culture. Since alcohol culture was, at its essence, a form of recreation, “respectable” alternatives to this form of irresponsible recreation needed to be offered, in particular, to upstate

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youth before they moved way to college. Hence, after World War II reformers aggressively organized alcohol-free youth groups, camps, and dances, trying to teach youth people the benefits of Christian piety and “good clean fun.”

As scholars have pointed out, the South was hardly a closed society in the first half of the twentieth century; indeed, mass produced goods had enjoyed a growing number of customers since the 1920s. But particularly after World War II, insulation from a national culture became impossible as a “mass marketed” culture, especially entertainment culture, infiltrated the South. Southerners read advertisements for goods produced outside the South and became increasingly connected to American culture via television, movies, and magazines.32 Upstate South Carolina was no different, as residents with money to spend watched movies at the Augusta Road and Belmont drive-ins in Greenville and the Pix Theatre in Rock Hill and purchased copies of *Time*, *Life* or, if they fancied, what one state congressman referred to as “those obscene literature and degrading sex publications.”33 Advertisements in local papers prodded teenagers to see how romance vixen Beverly Micheals “used sex the way a hoodlum used a gun” in films such as *Wicked Woman* and how James Dean became “the bad boy from a good family” in *Rebel Without a Cause.*34 Pop music icons also received print space in most upstate newspapers, with coverage – albeit limited – granted to upstart artists. The *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* ran large advertisements for a week before Elvis Presley visited the city to play a series of four live concerts in 1956. Before he sang at Columbia’s Township Auditorium, Elvis earned a place

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among the Art and Drama pages of *The State* and a review of his first record, along with a miscasting as a folk singer by the paper’s music editor.\textsuperscript{35}

Predictably, evangelicals expressed dismay at the messages conveyed by these media and, especially, their supportive relationship to alcohol culture. “Any one who listens to the radio and witnesses the exhibitions on television cannot but be impressed with the fact that the untrained, unsuspecting youth of the land is being corrupted . . . by exhibitions of delicate fingers, beautiful ladies elegantly dressed, telling how interesting it is to drink intoxicating liquors,” remarked one troubled observer.\textsuperscript{36} Another concerned parent commented, “Demon alcohol walks our streets in respectable garb. Foaming beer is pictured on television screens . . . . Newspapers and magazines picture liquor as the inseparable companion of attractive men . . . We shudder when we face the question: Can these young people withstand the temptations?”\textsuperscript{37}

Upstate reformers correctly doubted that youngsters could resist and decided the best method for reaching this “generation of nuclear giants but moral infants” included the creation of “something to appeal to young people and meet their special needs.” As the president of the Southern Baptist Convention argued, by countering American culture, including alcohol culture, with Christian principles, pastors would notice “something new about your church – New Young People for a Better Tomorrow.” Calling for changes in the evangelical mission of the church, he added:

> Commercial amusements and worldly entertainers are our chief competitors for the loyalties of our young people. . . . Thousands of our churches should wake up and make attractive room for our young people. They deserve the best; give it to them and we will win and keep them. . . . I believe that modern youth is serious minded and can be won with greater success through programs which hold high

\textsuperscript{35} Spartanburg Herald-Journal, February 9, 1956; *The State*, March 18, 1956.

\textsuperscript{36} Speech, Joseph R. Bryson, Congressional Record, May 12, 1952 in JRB.

the ideals of the Christian faith. Recreation and entertainment, yes, but Christian recreation at its best – if you please.38

Empowered by such charges to use the trappings of secular culture against secular culture, evangelical reformers after World War II worked to create alternatives to secular media and recreation. As television and radio increased in popularity and availability, evangelical publications urged parents to direct their children’s attention toward “televangelism” programs, though these programs usually aired only on Sunday mornings and afternoons.39 More often, reformers showed “Christian films” and encouraged youth to attend meetings intended to refocus their devotion to clean living and train their sensibilities against disreputable forms of recreation. A rural church in Union devoted an entire summer to “wholesome recreation in fresh air and sunshine,” including boys’ baseball and girls’ softball teams which competed against other teams from surrounding churches. Tigerville Baptist Church, located in the red hills north of Greenville, held seminars focusing on “Moral Decisions Under Social Pressure” and “Personal Religious Living.” Another church recruited Furman University students to become a “Youth Revival Team” for a retreat specially prepared for teenagers. During this latter retreat, attendants enthusiastically participated in a youth choir and later watched a film sponsored by the Billy Graham crusade.40

In addition, numerous churches, rural and urban, in the upstate created seasonal “Youth Nights” and annual “Youth Weeks,” pressuring youths to attend and bring their friends to listen to speakers, sing gospel hymns, and watch “inspiring new filmstrips” produced by Christian entertainment companies. Most of these filmstrips reviewed biblical stories and hoped to create

dramatic interest in the “basic truths relating to effective Christian service.” Popular topics included the life and miracles of Jesus, the Acts of the Apostles and more dramatic tales such as the martyrdom of Stephen and the divine healing of Naaman from leprosy. None of these filmstrips could match the technical sophistication of the latest Hollywood release, but for reformers grasping at a youth audience supposedly slipping away from their faith, they served as a helpful tool for training youngsters lacking “only the opportunity and encouragement to help meet the great responsibility that lies upon us to win the lost to Christ.”

While local churches, supplied with materials from the CAC and other Christian media outlets, contributed to the Christian counter culture, local YMCAs and YWCAs proved essential to its development. Though long interested in the training of Christian youth, after World War II upstate YWCAs began offering programs specifically tailored for teenage patrons. Known as “Y-Teens,” this program was open to boys and girls, ages twelve to eighteen, and became increasingly popular during the 1950s. In 1952, the Columbia YWCA only claimed 386 Y-Teen members; by 1956 membership doubled to 660 and by 1958 reached its peak at 1754. For reformers and parents, the appeal of the program lay in the variety of recreations offered to teens and the evangelical promise to teach youngsters, as one Y-Teen song stated, to “grow as simply as common blades of grass/Both tall and straight as trees grow to the sky.” For teenagers, the appeal of Y-Teens came from the invitation to develop friendships and have fun in a respectable environment. As one Y-Teen pamphlet advertised, “JOIN a Y-Teen club and discover with

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42 The strong relationship between the CAC and YWCA was based on more than common principles and goals. Howard McClain’s wife served as a presiding officer (secretary and treasurer) for Columbia’s YWCA in the late 1950s through the 1960s.
43 Minutes (1950-1960), YWCA-Columbia records, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., Box 3 (hereafter referred to as YWCAC).
others new friends, good times, poise, interesting skills, live ideas, ways to get things done . . .
your special self, a purpose.” Programs offered in-house ranged from sports such as swimming, hiking, and baseball to after-school activities such as ballroom dancing, bridge, cooking, auto mechanics, and illustration.45

Despite Y-Teen principles to emphasize a “democratic process to further personal goals,” gender inequalities persisted. In keeping with post-war era’s obsession with containing female sexuality, classes for girls overwhelmingly stressed domesticity, motherhood, and good housekeeping.46 At least while at the Y, young women did not have access to classes other than those offered on “baby sitter training, flower arranging, cake decorating, interior decorating, charm and modeling, preparation for marriage, beginner’s bridge, ballroom dance, sewing and sketching.”47 Outside the Y building, however, recreational opportunities expanded and young women could assume roles beyond domestic training. At camps such as Camp Burgiss Glen and Camp Sequoyah, upstate girls could exchange summer dresses for shorts and boots and hike trails, go camping, ride horses, practice carpentry, fish, play baseball, and conduct science experiments, activities nearly identical to those conducted at boys’ camps. The purpose for these activities, according to one YWCA director, was “to help each girl discover and develop her latent abilities and talents leading to a wider range of interests and capacities and, therefore, to a deeper, finer impulse of soul which enriches life.”48 Another purpose for such recreations, however, was to teach a form of independence different from the relatively free gender roles present in area nightspots. Instead of becoming independent of the demands of domesticity

45 Pamphlet, “Y-Teens Open Wide a Doorway to the World,” 1961 in YWCA-Greenville, records, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., Box 1 (hereafter referred to as YWCAG).
through dancing and drinking, these activities aimed to instill confidence in young girls to maintain their Christian virtue once released from the supervision of their parents.

Y-Teen programs also included numerous elements intended to instruct all teenagers, regardless of sex or race, in dating patterns alternative to what they might learn at an upstate nightspot. At Y-Teen summer conferences and camps, books entitled *Finding Yourself and Learning About Love*, *Alone in the Crowd*, *Faith/Sex/Love* and pamphlets responding to questions about “Boy/Girl Relations,” “Dating” and “Relationships with the Opposite Sex” offered teenagers preventative suggestions to avoid the pitfalls of learning about love in all the wrong places.49 Residents living at the YWCA, usually rural teenagers looking for domestic or secretarial work in cities like Greenville and Columbia, often received instruction in proper etiquette for dating and respectable forms of physical affection. Within such safe environments, parents from “small towns and rural areas” could relax, confident in the Y’s policy to offer “protection for their daughters” and “opportunity to meet men under best circumstances.”50

Though these attempts at offering youngsters alternatives to the enticements of sinful recreation proved an important part of the Christian counter to alcohol culture, none so directly challenged it as the Y-sponsored co-ed dance. Interest among youths for dancing was high, as shown by registration cards for Y-Teen programs. Among girls and boys signing up to become Y-Teen members in 1952, over two-thirds listed “dancing” as their favorite recreational activity; registration cards from 1959 show no decline in interest among teenagers in dancing.51 To meet this demand, upstate Y’s converted their gymnasiums or meeting halls into makeshift nightspots, complete with a live band or jukebox, refreshment table, and dance floor. Thus, every Friday or

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50 Report, “From Special Committee to Study Residence as related to New YWCA Building,” April 12, 1961 in YWCAG, Box 1.
51 Registration Cards, 1952-1959, in YWCAC, Box 3.
Saturday night, teenagers had a free place to dance and listen to music in an alcohol-free environment. Adult supervisors kept rowdy or illicit behavior outside the dance hall and limited the possibility of respectable, and controlled, dates to be ruined.

Always divided by age into junior high and senior high groups and supervised by married adults, dances could be formal, with students encouraged to wear ankle-length gowns and sport coats, or informal, with attendees usually wearing calf-length dresses and p-coats or simple linen shirts and slacks. Themes for dances also varied, sometimes depending on the season. Every year in February, Valentine’s Day dances granted teenagers the opportunity to bring sweethearts or dates to an evening dancing in the Y’s meeting hall, transformed by decorators into a romantic, yet respectable, space complete with red and white cardboard hearts and ceiling streamers. Halloween and Christmas dances also proved popular, with awards often granted to attendees with the best costumes.52

Divisions between the races also held but did not keep black Y leaders from sponsoring dances. This desire for respectable dances reveals a distinct black interest in creating programs for black children and teenagers. Though kept out of white facilities, black children were allowed to reap the benefits of the evangelical counter-culture and, in the end, likewise receive training about the dangerous results of illicit behavior. Mirroring white programs, black reformers sponsored domestic classes, athletic teams, and, of course, alcohol-free dances.53 The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA building proved a favorite spot for black dances, both formal and informal, though if facilities were unavailable, black teen groups moved to a private residence.

52 Records concerning Y-sponsored dances are spotty, at least regarding what people thought about them. Hundreds of photographs, however, were taken of these dances and these documents offer clues about the look and feel of such events. See Photographs, “Sweetheart Dance,” 1949 in YWCAC, Box 13; “Decorating for Valentine’s Day Dance,” 1954, “Girls Dressed up for Valentine’s Dance,” n.d. (most probably mid-1950s), “Halloween Dance,” 1956, “Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Carter Supervise Square Dance,” n.d. (probably early 1950s); in YWCAG, Box 4.

53 Registration cards in Ibid.
Photographs from the early 1950s show black teens dancing outside on a patio, presumably at an alcohol-free house party. Chaperones stand in the background with no less concerned expressions on their faces than their white counterparts, suggesting that the desire for respectable dating and demands for evangelical piety cut across racial lines.54

Like their black counterparts, white reformers held weekly co-ed dances that had no particular theme other than the pursuit of good clean fun. Sponsors often advertised these dances in the recreation sections of newspapers, intentionally placed next to other advertisements for live concerts or movie showings. Typically, these dances started around eight o’clock in the evening and ended at a respectable hour, usually in time for boys to have their dates home by midnight.55 Unlike theme-oriented or formal dances, which tended to feature music intended for ballroom dancing, weekly co-ed dances hired live bands to play. Before rock n’ roll became a popular form of dance music in the mid-1950s, country and jazz were standard. For instance, at one Saturday night dance in Columbia, high school students slow-danced to an all-white jazz band, while at another co-ed function in Greenville attendees donned cowboy hats, boots, and cuffed pants and participated in a country-themed square dance. Most often, if a live band played, they consisted of middle-aged men reading sheet music, dressed in formal wear, playing under such docile names as The Merry Makers, Wayne Rutledge and his Orchestra, and The Bow Ties. Song selections were likewise placid, including soft jazz selections from the “Ork Combos,” waltzes by Brahms and Mozart and music club melodies entitled “The Little Joy Bird” and “Flower Fairies.”56

In the mid-1950s, however, the tone of co-ed dances changed. Although jazz and country line dances remained a fixture, teenagers also were allowed to dance to rock ’n’ roll, swing, shag, and jitterbug numbers, yet still under the strict supervision of adults. No strong resistance to this transition seemed to appear. Indeed, upstate Y’s appeared quite accommodating to these changes in musical taste. Dress, for the most part, remained informal, but those providing the music became younger and noticeably more influenced by the fashion and style of rock n’ roll. Photographs taken after 1955 featured looser dancing among attendees, with arms and legs allowed to flail wildly and boys holding their dates closer. Likewise, bands specialized in blues and rock, dressed in flashier clothes and appeared free from the confines of less raucous numbers. One group, called The Epics, played 1962 Fender Jazzmasters, an electric guitar popular among rock n’ roll musicians for its driving tone and ability to sustain bent notes. Another group, known as The Crescents, also frequented co-ed dances and played rock n’ roll numbers on Gibson electric guitars plugged into several stacked amplifiers and backed by an electric bass and full drum set. Given these accommodations, rock ’n’ roll culture seemed less a concern than the environment in which it flourished, namely the appealing night spots reformers aimed to counter via co-ed dances.57

Though some reformers might not have approved of the musical selections played or certain dancing styles, at least teenagers were not engaging in such behaviors outside the watchful eye of responsible adults. Still, despite the best efforts of reformers to create an environment free from alcohol consumption, alcohol seeped into such events with regularity. As John Porter recalled from his youth spent in Rock Hill in the 1960s, “When kids went to those kind of dances, you could expect someone there to have some beer or a flask or something

around. You just had to go outside and get it.” Since many youths who attended Y-sponsored
dances and events also were under drinking age and those providing alcohol typically were not,
teenage drinking undermined the sanctity of co-ed evenings. Low attendance, however,
presented a more common problem: “Some folks went to those things, but mostly if there wasn’t
anything else to do . . . if no band you wanted to see was playing somewhere. I only went once
or twice and was just bored at them. You couldn’t really do anything that was much fun, in my
opinion, so I would go just to see who was or wasn’t there and then just leave for someplace
else.”58

John A. Lesslie, while a student at Clemson University in the 1960s, remembered
observing numerous high school students from Greenville and rural Pickens county heading to
dances sponsored by the Greenville YMCA with beer purchased using fake I.D.s earlier in the
afternoon before liquor stores closed. During the dance, the beer chilled in handmade ice boxes
in the students’ cars. “After the dance,” he recalled, “they would take drive down to Lake
Hartwell, where the YMCA had a recreational spot, with a sort of picnic area on the lake. They
would drink down there when no one was around. . . . Some buddies of mine would go down
there too. The younger kids had to have their dates back early, but the Clemson guys would stay
longer.”59

Though well intended and at times successful as a tool for temperance, co-ed dances and
other events organized by evangelical reformers did not completely draw youngsters away from
the enticements of alcohol and the culture it engendered. Cognizant of the limits of their efforts,
reformers coupled their attempts at cultural reform with legislative reform. Seeing no middle
ground, however, between teetotalism and full-blown decadence, reformers attempted to

resurrect prohibition as a viable solution to the perceived threats of alcohol culture after World War II. In the process of garnering support for prohibition, the racial lines maintained by respectable recreation became a problem for reformers seeking the end of alcohol production consumption in the state. Hence, as groups such as the CAC planned to persuade the South Carolina General Assembly to honor the results of the 1940 referendum, reaching across racial boundaries became a necessary tactic of reform. More frequently, however, the CAC and other reformers attempted to play off the popular values of the post-World War II period, utilizing rhetoric that equated prohibition with democracy and alcohol consumption with the sinister threats of communism and immorality. By doing so, reformers linked “good clean fun” with notions of Christian citizenship and, in the end, reaped a partial victory against the culture of alcohol.
CHAPTER THREE

Prohibition Remembered and Revisited:
The Legislative Assault on Alcohol Culture

Prohibition remained a divisive social and political issue in the South long after the repeal
of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1933. Drawing from a variety of impulses, from memories of
federal Prohibition to religious convictions to economic interests, upstate South Carolinians
engaged in fresh debates about alcohol’s impact on the quickly changing post-war world. The
conflict between this new generation of “drys” and “wets” circulated around the issue of local
option, a legislative proposal that allowed voters in each county to determine the legality of
alcohol sales and distribution.

Yet, unlike the prohibitionist fights of a generation before, the mid-century debate over
local option incorporated rhetoric particular to the challenges facing the South at mid-century.
Some, following the lead of the Christian Action Council (CAC) and other prohibition
supporters, fought for a return to the past, to an imperfect, but supposedly better, time of
statewide prohibition and religious living. By casting themselves as defenders of “democracy,”
opponents to alcohol culture hoped to appeal to a populace supposedly aching to re-establish
prohibition and respectable living by majority vote. Other upstate residents, witnessing the
economic changes occurring in the region and doubtful about its ability – or their desire – to
return to this system of legislative control, fought just as hard to ensure alcohol culture’s place
for the benefit of upstate society.
Unlike prohibition debates before World War II, battle lines in this fight were not drawn along class lines, with middle to upper class prohibitive sentiments clashing with working class defenses of recreational alcohol use. Indeed, much like the alcohol culture they hated, prohibitionists pulled support from both races and many classes. In contrast, those supporting upstate alcohol culture most often came from the business class, though some working class individuals rallied around the wet campaign. Concerned more about the region’s economic progress than its spiritual health, upstate wets defeated local option again and again, hijacking the dry rhetoric of “democracy” and using it against them. Dismayed by their failed attempts at re-establishing prohibition, upstate drys accepted a partial victory against alcohol culture in the form of Sunday blue laws. Still, the legislative fight over alcohol culture revealed the influence of church on the state as slipping in this corner of the New South, with economic growth, rather than evangelical piety, proving a vastly more attractive goal.

Guided by the Christian Action Council (CAC), upstate drys began lobbying against alcohol culture shortly after World War II. Howard G. McClain, president of the CAC, spearheaded the campaign, calling for upstate churches to support local option legislation as a means for re-establishing statewide prohibition. Local option was not an arbitrary solution to these problems but a carefully selected marketing tool, a calculated political tactic chosen by McClain and other drys because of the rhetorical language that could be attached to it. As a fellow prohibitionist, writing to McClain in early 1951, noted, politicians could not ignore the appeal of local option if couched with the right terms:

> It seems to me that your strongest appeal would be this: in a democracy, to which we all pay lip service, people have a perfect right to govern themselves and you are only asking the Legislature to provide the machinery for the people in any given county to say whether or not they want liquor sold in that county. Anything other than that is not democracy. I believe in “states rights” and I also believe in
county rights [local option]. One is as logical as the other. Hammer away at them along this line and blessings on you while you are hammering.¹

This version of democracy – specifically the right of communities and states to rule themselves – touched on many of the issues confronting legislators and their constituencies after World War II. For upstate residents, the word “democracy” contained a sense of tradition, a strong belief in a mythic past of self-determination at home, at work, and at church. Holding on to a sense of personal freedom became a difficult endeavor after World War II as rural communities broke down, the racial order came into question, the federal government pushed for school desegregation, and communists seemed “avowedly out to destroy our concept of freedom by violence or subversion or both.”² Democracy, as upstate residents understood it, seemed under attack from all sides. Hence, reformist rhetoric pushed people to fight against these assaults, to take control of their own families and communities by voting for the local prohibition of alcohol culture. After all, McClain argued, “like communism, alcohol promises so much but delivers so little.”³

In the state legislature, the CAC had many allies in their fight for a more “democratic” South Carolina. The most prominent was P. Bradley Morrah, Jr. of Greenville County. Appointed in 1952 to the state senate, Morrah authored numerous local option bills over the next twenty years and was in constant contact with the CAC and other prohibitionists about his progress. Morrah, a devout Baptist, was not alone in his fight against alcohol either, recruiting support from a group of dry legislators popularly known as “the Spartans.” Named for Spartanburg, the home county of several members, this group became the most vocal force for

¹ Letter, from Norman M. Lovein, Georgia Temperance League, to McClain, May 3, 1951 in CACR, Box 11.
² Speech, John Richards at Christianity Confronts Communism conference, October 8, 1962 in CACR, Box 6.
³ Pamphlet, “Teaching Aids for Christian Action,” 1956 in CACR, Box 3.
prohibition in the state house for the next decade.\textsuperscript{4} Though their membership changed many times as new representatives were voted in and out, the Spartans, along with the CAC, remained firm in their opposition to alcohol and in their conviction that prohibition was “in keeping with the spirit of a democracy.”\textsuperscript{5}

The CAC also had also had allies across the color line. Three years before the Brown decision, CAC officials contacted black leaders in the upstate to support their upcoming fight against alcohol culture. After a special meeting on May 22, 1951, the CAC’s governing council unanimously voted for the CAC to become bi-racial, noting “if we are ever to be successful in getting Local Option or in doing anything else constructive on alcohol problems, we must seek the support and cooperation of ALL RACES.” Rev. H. C. Ritter, president of the South Carolina Council on Alcohol Education (SCAE), welcomed the proposal wholeheartedly as a “way to strengthen greatly the cause of temperance in our state.” J. T. W. Mems, a black representative to the SCAE from Clinton, agreed that “If the proposed action is carried through to completion, [my work] will be enabled to strengthen in the Negro churches.”\textsuperscript{6}

In CAC records, no other motive appears for recruiting black supporters other than to add more ranks behind the prohibition banner. As Howard G. McClain wrote to a friend in North Carolina: “We are going to be making definite plans in the very near future for making our organization inter-racial in fact and program . . . [and] we hope that we can make this local


\textsuperscript{5} Letter, Tigerville Baptist Church to P. Bradley Morrah, February 5, 1962 in PBM.

\textsuperscript{6} Address, Rev. F. Clyde Helms to CAC, Annual Meeting Minutes, May 22, 1951; Baptist Courier, June 7, 1951.
option bill an issue before the present legislature is ended. For that reason we will need all the “ammunition” we can get as to the value of local option and in relation to community welfare.”

Though blacks were actively recruited by the CAC, they were constricted in their role by their history of limited access to the upstate economy. McClain and the CAC were well aware of the problem: “I believe that we can get local support from many Negro leaders in the state, and perhaps some from ministers in the various communities, but the amount of financial support is problematical.” McClain had no idea how to overcome this difficulty, but black evangelicals did not seem to mind, pushing their congregations to back CAC’s efforts. Of course, at the same time other blacks participated in alcohol culture and facilitated its growth with their music and money, but no adequate records exist to confirm their exact role in challenging the legislative assault on alcohol culture. What is certain, however, is that the CAC sought to become a bi-racial organization in 1952 and remained committed to peaceful desegregation throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, their commitment to moderation during the civil rights fight emerged because of their history of bi-racial unity, a relationship formed by the common bonds of evangelical religion and a shared disdain for the culture of alcohol.

On 25 March 1953, the Spartans drafted House bill H-1447, the first meaningful local option legislation introduced to the General Assembly since the Brice Act of 1904. Aimed at alcoholic beverages containing over one percent alcohol by weight, H-1447 sat in the House Ways and Means Committee until January of the following year, when it reappeared under a new tag as H-1856. The Spartans’ bill allowed any county to determine the legality of alcohol manufacturing and sales if fifteen percent of its registered citizens petitioned for a local option vote. Concerning enforcement, violators would be arrested and processed by local authorities.

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7 Letter, from Howard G. McClain to Rev. R.M. Hauss, Allied Church League, March 19, 1951 in CACR, Box 11.
As a compromise to moderates concerned about the permanence of H-1856, voters dissatisfied with the results of a local option vote could resubmit the issue to county vote after two years.9

Prohibitionists lauded the bill as a step in the right direction and prodded evangelicals to make its passage “the ‘heart project’ of many, many Christians throughout the state . . . Local Option Must Come!”10 In addition, supporters for local option quickly adopted the CAC’s new rhetorical strategy and set of buzzwords. The Baptist Courier led the way:

To oppose the granting of that right is tantamount to saying that the citizens of a county are not competent to decide such a question for themselves. How one could oppose local option as a principle and at the same time profess to believe in the competency and right of the people to local self-government is hard to see. . . . As a matter of principle, we favor local option. We believe, moreover, that people can be trusted to use it wisely if all do their duty in informing them. Is this not democracy?11

S. J. Gardner, a Baptist pastor in favor of local option, agreed: “The people of any county in the state ought to have the right to say at the polls whether or not they desire the sale of alcoholic beverages in their borders.”12 Absolutely certain that putting the issue to a county vote would ensure the expulsion of alcohol from their communities, the editor of the Southern Christian Advocate exemplified reformist optimism, writing, “While local option is a method of beverage alcohol control about which good people may disagree, it nevertheless appears to have the support of the majority of people in South Carolina.”13 An anonymous contributor to a Greenville Baptist publication likewise expressed his delight that “This bill is fair to all” and a welcome piece of legislation since “Many of our good citizens believe that such a County Option Law would be very helpful, and they ought to be given a chance to try it.”14

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10 Baptist Courier (BC), June 18, 1953.
11 BC, December 3, 1953.
12 Letter, from S.J. Gardner to Senator P. Bradley Morrah, December 4, 1953 in PBM.
13 Southern Christian Advocate, March 11, 1954.
14 BC, April 9, 1953.
By trying local option, argued prohibitionists, South Carolinians would both demolish alcohol culture and return society back to a time before the war, when Christian citizenship instead of “liquor interests” and “youth delinquents” reigned. In short, local option would set history right. As S. J. Gardner argued, “The vote in 1940 was so overwhelming in the state against the traffic. We were gypped as a democratic people in that clear mandate . . . I pray God that no such chicanery will be repeated.”\(^{15}\) Another supporter echoed Gardner’s position, positing that a return to prohibition would bring enormous social benefits: “As one I feel that the crime in SC would drop at least 50% if not more, if legalized alcohol was out and tighter and more stiff sentences were placed on those guilty of possessing ‘bootleg’ liquor.”\(^{16}\)

Prohibitionists, however, overestimated their appeal. Indeed, the rosy promises forwarded by those advocating prohibition received an immediate rebuttal from the defenders of alcohol culture. To contrast the rhetoric of the CAC and its supporters, upstate wets remembered the failure of enforcing federal Prohibition laws as evidence against a county vote system. As J. Austin Griffeth, a middle class electrician from Greenville observed, “If alcoholic drink could be abolished completely it would be a God-Send to our country but age old efforts to do this have been futile.”\(^{17}\) Others agreed wholeheartedly with Griffith’s sentiments, arguing problems with enforcement condemned federal Prohibition and would likewise expose local option as untenable. Voicing his strong opposition to H-1856, insurance salesman Grady H. Hipp wrote, “You cannot enforce temperance by laws. In my opinion, prohibition was the most dismal failure in the history of our country.”\(^{18}\)

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\(^{15}\) Letter, from S. J. Gardner to P. Bradley Morrah, December 4, 1953 in PBM.
\(^{16}\) Letter, from Billy Joe Watkins to Senator P. Bradley Morrah, March 16, 1953 in PBM.
\(^{18}\) Letter, Grady H. Hipp, February 16, 1954 in PBM.
At the end of his letter, Hipp mentioned another potential drawback of localized prohibition – the resurgence of the bootlegger. Drawing from personal memory, Walter W. Goldsmith, president of Goldsmith Insurance in Greenville, deemed the bootlegger a hidden ramification of putting alcohol culture’s future to a vote. In his rebuttal, Goldsmith showed knowledge of the changing tactics of urban bootleggers, noting the close relationship between legal liquor establishments and their trade: “Speaking as one who has lived through prohibition days I have seen the evils of that. . . . The way it is handled at present with the retail liquor stores there is very seldom that you ever hear of any disturbance around a package store. If the purchases are handled through a bootlegger you know what the situation would be on that.”

Writing the editor of the Greenville News, wet supporter T.E. Thackston also based his opinion on local option predominantly on the potential threat of such activity, discarding his evangelical values and instead emphasizing the threat of bootleggers: “Now I am a church member, and if I live I am going to vote wet. I won’t vote for the bootlegger. I know all the churches are fighting to have it dry, but I can’t see what they are thinking about.” Other local option opponents expressed their concerns about bootleggers via Western Union, sending nearly sixty telegraphs to P. Bradley Morrah in one week’s time. Some of these telegraphs originated from middle class grocers obviously interested in maintaining alcohol sales in their store. Yet, the language often blended economic concerns with an interpretation of the failures of federal Prohibition and the threat of bootleggers. Warned twenty-five representatives from the Greenville Restaurant Association, “Local option will lead us to the old days of prohibition – we do not want bootlegging and crime – you are urged to vote against senate local option bill.” In turn, W.D.

19 Letter, Walter W. Goldsmith, President, Goldsmith Insurance, Feb. 22 1954 in PBM.
20 Ibid., March 11, 1954.
Sullivan and Sam Foschini, grocers from rural Easley, wrote “We do not want bootleggers and racketeers in Greenville – please vote against senate local option bills.”

Working class opponents of local option also used their memories of prohibition to create pointed critiques of local option. J.D. Seaborn, a warehouse worker, advocated “Local option will increase crime and highway hazard and taxes – please oppose local option bill in senate.” Jim Griffin, a brick mason from Greenville, bluntly voiced his opinion concerning local option, “Remember prohibition? Vote no local option.” Obviously protecting his job, H.A. Batson, a salesman for Greenco Beverages pleaded, “A vote for local option is a vote for bootleggers . . . remember prohibition . . . You cannot legislate morality – vote against local option – local option will hurt all legitimate business – kill it.”

The mistakes of the past, however, were not the only rhetoric used by upstate supporters of alcohol culture. For middle class and upper class business owners, especially, local option proved a direct threat to their ability to attain all the economic promises of the post-war New South. Supportive of wet efforts because of its own dependence upon liquor advertising dollars, the Greenville News listed the ample contributions of alcohol culture to state coffers: “During the last three years $4,741,750 [in taxes] has been received by the 16 upstate counties, with approximately a million of that coming to Greenville. Local governments in Spartanburg County received about $807,000; in Anderson County $323,000; in Pickens County $222,000; in Laurens County $267,000, and in Oconee County $187,000.” Potential revenue cuts also attracted a strong response from upstate residents, most middle class business owners anxious about bearing the brunt of higher taxes passed to them in alcohol’s absence. Esther Cowart, a

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22 Telegrams to P. Bradley Morrah from J.D. Seaborn, March 10, 1954; H.A. Batson, March 14, 1954, all in PBM; Hill’s Greenville City Directory (1954).
downtown beauty shop owner, proclaimed “vote against local option – taxes are high enough now.” Drug store owner B.M. Grant also forwarded his concern, pleading “vote no on local option because tax burden too heavy at present.” Other opponents noted the usefulness of alcohol taxes to fund local schools, arguing that education cuts hurt young people more than alcohol use. One opponent, insurance salesman W.K. Evans, even broke racial ranks on this topic, imploring the state legislature to “Kick option out – we need more taxes for Negro schools and I’m white!”

Elite business interests likewise found H-1856 dangerous, presumably because, as architect Bruce McPherson noted, the “substantial citizens in Greenville actually are the people who pay the bulk of the freight and taxes” on alcohol. Likewise, Charles E. Robinson, Jr., a prominent real estate dealer worried about higher property taxes, wrote, “Owners of Greenville County real estate don’t want to be taxed for this lost revenue.” Besides the additional tax burden, some business owners fretted about the impact local option might have on the developing economy of the upstate. Grady Hipp claimed county and state taxes punished business owners to a “back-breaking point,” convincing him “that the extension of ‘blue’ laws will seriously retard the economic progress of our county and state.” J. N. Caldwell of the Municipal Association of South Carolina agreed, writing a lengthy booklet entitled “Why South Carolina Cannot Afford a Prohibition Law.” Sending it to numerous upstate mayors, Caldwell predicted dire consequences for the upstate if local option went into effect:

There are compelling reasons why . . . SOUTH CAROLINA CANNOT AFFORD, FINANCIALLY, TO ADOPT ANY FORM OF PROHIBITION. . . . The loss [in state taxes] would have to be made up by levying new taxes, or by

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24 Telegrams to P. Bradley Morrah, Ester Cowart, March 14, 1954; B.M. Grant, March 14, 1954; W.K. Evans, March 8, 1954 in PBM.
25 Letter, Bruce McPherson to P. Bradley Morrah, March 1, 1954 in PBM.
26 Telegram, Charles E. Robinson, Jr. to P. Bradley Morrah, March 9, 1954 in PBM.
27 Letter, Grady Hipp to P. Bradley Morrah, February 16, 1954 in PBM.
making DRASTIC INCREASES in existing tax rates. . . . By increasing tax levies on other businesses in the state, for example, would be the equivalent of DOUBLING the present corporation income tax . . . DOUBLING the present tax rate on personal incomes, DOUBLING the state’s share in property tax collections, DOUBLING the inheritance tax. . . . 3100 JOBS – LOST . . . $12,000,000 IN ANNUAL PAYROLLS – LOST.28

For Walter Goldsmith, prohibition likewise cut short the upstate’s potential, but instead of focusing on the tax burden local option imposed, Goldsmith regarded liquor legislation as a direct threat to the ability of citizens to make consumer choices freely in the South’s emerging mass market: “Greenville is no longer a country village. There are people here that would like to be able to buy their whiskey at a convenient location and there people that would like to go to Sunday movies and I think that we should be enough cosmopolitan to make it where the people that want those things can get them.”29

As H-1856 finally passed the House and reached the Senate floor, area newspapers devoted front page space to its passage or failure. On 18 March 1954, the local option bill received its second and third reading in the General Assembly, but feverish attempts on the part of wet factions stalled immediate passage. Needing at least a full week to push through both the House and the Senate, the possibility of passage remained uncertain until March 21, when the General Assembly decided to adjourn. Attempts by Senate wets to adopt a resolution “killing all statewide legislation not enacted by April 2nd” proved successful and left H-1856 on the cutting room floor. Despite its failure, the bill was, according to the Greenville News, “just about the hottest issue of the session,” even more unsettling than demands by the U.S. Supreme Court for South Carolina to make preparations for school desegregation.30

29 Letter, Walter W. Goldsmith, President, Goldsmith Insurance, February 22 1954 in PBM.
After the defeat of H-1856, alcohol culture hardly remained free from attack. Numerous bills similar to H-1856 received attention from state legislators and garnered public comment from upstate wets and drys. In January 1955, the Spartans introduced H-1002. Under this new bill, a petition of fifteen percent of a county’s voters could force a referendum on whether alcoholic beverages could be sold. Thereafter, fifteen percent of the registered voters could call a new election by petition. Thus, a county could change from wet to dry and back again if the sentiment of the voters changed. Unlike previous bills, H-1002 placed additional pressure on alcohol dealers, granting sellers in dry counties only sixty days to dispose of their stock.

Given the previous year’s near passage of local option legislation, dry forces remained optimistic and continued pleading for “the democratic right to vote to be upheld.” One Greenville pastor wrote to Morrah, “This is to ask you to support Bill H 1002, without crippling amendments. Surely, the people have a right to vote on Local Option if they care to. . . . Those of us at home watch and wait with eager expectations.” Local wets, such as Spartanburg Herald-Journal editor Hubert Hendrix, however, were more realistic: “Here’s what I think will happen. . . . There will be a lot of noise about county option on the liquor question, but the proposal will end up where it usually does – dead in the Senate. The House will pass its bill without much ado, with many members voting for it because they can bank on the Senate to kill it.”

Hendrix’s predictions came true for H-1002 and for every piece of local option legislation introduced into the General Assembly for the next seven years. Since the Spartans

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31 Spartan membership changed little from the previous year, though new representatives from around the upstate joined the primarily Spartanburg county delegation. Additions included Robert C. Wasson and C.L. Milam of Laurens county, James M. Morris and Joseph D. Rogers of Clarendon county, Harold D. Breaseale of Pickens county, James R. Turner of Spartanburg county, Hugh J. Love of York county, Albert W. Watson of Richland county, Marshall B. Saunders of Colleton county, and James M. Arther and John C. Hart of Union county.
33 Letter, Rev. James G. Stroud to P. Bradley Morrah, March 22, 1955 in PBM.
could not garner support for a strong local option bill in the Senate, dry forces seemed outmatched. Ironically, their idealistic appeals for unencumbered democracy seemed to run up against the structural problem of apportionment in the state legislature. Hardly a popular issue in the traditionally wet low country, local option was handicapped by sympathizers to alcohol culture below the fall line. Given the increased voting power of low country residents, upstate residents had to work harder to overcome a significant apportionment gap. Yet, local option’s failure cannot completely be blamed on apportionment. The upstate was changing and alcohol culture, regardless of its drawbacks, was a symbol of that change. With more income for alcohol and thus more income going into the state treasury, alcohol culture’s growth seemed essential, especially to many business-minded people, to paying the bills for some of that growth. Removing it would endanger some of the promises of the New South and, though their representatives might not obey them and their preachers might condemn them, upstate boosters placed economic freedom over zealous demands for moral piety.

Still, upstate drys never considered giving up. In February 1958, the Spartans proposed local option bill H-2241, a carbon copy of H-1002. Despite its dismissal as a “dead horse issue” by area newspapers, upstate drys hoped for local option’s success while continuing to sell the bill with appeals to historical memory and Christian virtue. Citing the failed 1940 state-wide prohibition referendum, Rev. C. Wilber Brockwell claimed the “sorrow, illness, and disease that come as a result of the liquor traffic is getting heavier as time marches on . . . . I believe and hope that if the people have an opportunity to speak and vote on the above mentioned bill . . . that our

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35 For more on the apportionment problem in South Carolina before 1962 and the lowcountry’s control of the General Assembly, see Bryant Simon, “The Devaluation of the Vote: Legislative Apportionment and Inequality in South Carolina,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* vol. 101, no. 3 (July 2000), 240-250.

36 By 1958, the Spartan ranks had reduced in number. Those deeming themselves Spartans and thus dry consisted of Tracy J. Gaines, D.R. Hill, Hugh N. Layne, Matthew Poliakoff, Dewey Blanton, Paul S. McChesney, and Hugh E. Finch of Spartanburg county, plus Albert W. Watson of Richland county and J. Arch Talbert of McCormick county.

37 *South Carolina House Journal*, 343.
state will again go dry overwhelmingly as it did some years ago.”

Likewise urging the Spartans to use their “Christian influence in controlling the liquor trade which is rife in our land,” Maud N. Earle and Jeanette Miller looked to local option legislation to lead “the older citizens as well as the younger ones toward a more perfect manner of life, thereby, saving our nation.”

No amount of pleading by upstate drays, however, could change the General Assembly’s wet position. In March, 1958, H-2241 died in the Senate and, the next year, another bill proposing local option surfaced but quickly succumbed to Senate vote. For the next three years, prohibition subsided as a political issue as the Spartan faction proposed no local option bills for consideration.

In early 1962, however, local option again appeared, drawing nearly as much public attention from upstate drays as it did eight years prior. Historical memory and demands for democratic rights again structured dry petitions, regardless of class. For Wallace Epps, a middle-aged citizen living on the outskirts of Greenville, the defeat of local option in 1940 remained a memorable transgression against his individual rights: “I recall while a young man, not of voting age, our good citizens voted overwhelmingly in favor of a dry state, by a majority vote of fifty nine thousand, yet the desire and sentiments of the people were never regarded by our elective officials. This is not democracy as it should be.”

C. Leon Chandler, a laborer at Greenville’s Union Bleachery also appealed to his memories of prohibition’s “lost opportunity,” writing, “Years ago our people voted against its legal sale and consumption, yet the will of the people was never implemented by those responsible. This isn’t democracy, nor as it should be. And yet few of us have even lifted our voices about it. Surely it is past time something should be done.”

Malvin Brown, a mechanic from Greenville, likewise called for the democratic rule of the

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38 Letter, C. Wilber Brockwell to P. Bradley Morrah, January 15, 1958 in PBM.
39 Letter, Maud N. Earle and Jeanette Miller to P. Bradley Morrah, March 10, 1958 in PBM.
majority, writing, “I understand only through you fellows we vote for can we get our wishes in
governing our great land. We are counting on you to see that our fight against whiskey, etc. is
carried out according to the majority wishes.” 41 Representatives of rural Tigerville Baptist
Church focused solely on the danger of denying upstate citizens the right to vote on alcohol,
stating in a resolution sent to the General Assembly that “We believe that such a request is in
keeping with the spirit of a democracy.”42

Even as concessions were being made to youths dancing in the evangelical counter-
culture in the early 1960s, the protection of upstate youths remained a rallying cry for those
leading the legislative assault on alcohol culture. Charles Banks, a spare hand working at Poe
Mills, advocated, “We can’t prosper in SC as we should as long as we support liquor. You know
as well as I do there are too many broken homes, teenage lives being wrecked, hungry children,
big hway [highway] accidents (lot of innocent people killed) and many other bad things cause by
liquor. Let’s take a stand against it and raise taxes some other way.”43 A television store owner
and father of “a Christian family,” a Mr. Winchester of Greenville demanded localized
prohibition so “that our homes and neighbors’ homes will be spared from this evil and that our
children and neighbors children and grandchildren will be saved from this evil thing that has
broken many homes.”44

Anxiety about home and community made for strong rhetoric, but many drys apparently
began listening to the arguments of wets concerning the financial cost of prohibition. Hence,
unlike eight years prior, a willingness to compromise and accept higher taxes as a consequence
of living in a dry county pervaded some requests for a local option vote. A resolution adopted by

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41 Letter, Wallace Epps to P. Bradley Morrah, January 28, 1962; C. Leon Chandler, January 26, 1962; Postcard,
42 Resolution, Tigerville Baptist Church, February 5, 1962 in PBM.
43 Postcard, Charles Banks to P. Bradley Morrah, January 30, 1962 in PBM.
members of Buncombe Street Baptist Church reflected this desire for a middle ground, stating “We believe that a reduction in tragedies, crime, accidents, broken homes, and juvenile delinquency will be the ultimate result of a dry state. We further realize that some increase in taxes may be necessary to off-set revenue lost if alcohol is voted out, and we are willing to bear an extra tax burden to make up such loss, provided the tax increase is not more than the approximated loss of revenue.”

Wade H. Hale of Tigerville demanded “the right of the citizens of our fair state” to “decide on the legality of liquor sales,” but likewise remained sensitive to the financial challenges localized prohibition might bring and posited a solution to restore lost revenue: “We would even be in favor of an additional sales tax or some other means of revenue to replace the revenue from the sale of these intoxicants.”

This emerging sensitivity of upstate drys to the economic ramifications of prohibiting alcohol culture, however, did not ensure the passage of local option legislation. The referendum again faced strong opposition from Senate members and died on the table. Forced into a corner on local option, the CAC and Spartans decided in 1962 to abandon local option and prohibition altogether. Instead, for the next ten years, religious reformers focused not on abolishing alcohol culture but on containing it, choosing to forward liquor legislation concerned with strengthening tax laws and provisions restricting weeknight and weekend liquor sales. Though economic forces pushed upstate residents beyond considering prohibition a healthy option for the region, wets and drys still fought for determining when and where they could drink.

From 1963 to 1965, the General Assembly reviewed bills amending portions of the South Carolina Code of Laws, changing the distribution of taxes on liquor and beer to draw more

45 Resolution, Buncombe Road Baptist Church, February 7, 1962 in PBM.
46 Letter, Wade H. Hale to P. Bradley Morrah, January 30, 1962 in PBM.
revenue from liquor sales.\(^47\) Stiffer penalties and fines for persons convicted of bootlegging likewise presented the General Assembly as willing to address problems associated with liquor, if unwilling to grant the public the option to vote on the legality of alcohol as a whole.\(^48\) With local option was a nominally dead issue by the mid-1960s, wets and drys confronted one another in the spring of 1966 over house bill H-1157. The bill asked whether liquor controls should be eliminated from the State Constitution and left solely up to the General Assembly. If approved, the constitutional change allowed the General Assembly to legalize sale of liquor by the drink, set hours for liquor store operations, write laws penalizing violators, and provide better guidelines for enforcing liquor statutes. In a television interview concerning the new liquor bill, Governor Robert McNair commented, “periodically people should be allowed to express themselves on this and other matters.”\(^49\) The governor’s emphasis on the right to vote on matters of social concern again became a source of conflict between upstate wets and drys.

Yet, unlike in previous years, local wets rather than drys used the rhetoric of “democracy” most often. William A. Sullivan, employed as a waiter in an upstate restaurant and night club, demanded “the issue that has been put forth . . . should be decided by the people and not individuals.” Emil Fritz, a co-owner of a local delicatessen, asked Morrah “not to commit yourself on the issue” but added that “I and my associates do think the voter should have the opportunity to decide [the liquor issue].” Another liquor supporter, Knights of Columbus board member Bob Altier expressed his extreme disappointment to Morrah “on your stand on the liquor issue – don’t take the rights of the people away from them. Let them decide.”\(^50\)

\(^{50}\) Telegrams, William A. Sullivan to P. Bradley Morrah, May 5, 1966; Emil Fritz, May 5, 1966; Bob Altier, May 5, 1966, all in PBM.
Supporters of H-1157 criticized existing liquor laws detailing licensed store hours and proper forms of alcohol consumption as outdated in a modern South Carolina and damaging to its economic future. James H. McKinney, Jr., an editor for a local newspaper, observed, “The present basic law, forbidding liquor sales before sunrise and after sunset and sales of whisky by the drink, is completely unworkable in this day and age.” Looking for workable alternatives to total prohibition that focused on violators instead of legitimate alcohol culture, McKinney considered breakers of South Carolina’s liquor laws as equal to “a racial agitator violating local mob control laws,” but given the inability of the state to enforce prohibitions against Sunday sales and illicit alcohol manufacturing, McKinney contended that without strong commitment from state officials to punish violators, the state’s liquor laws seemed “a farce.”51 An anonymous contributor to the Greenville Piedmont echoed McKinney’s statements, arguing liquor raids by tax commission agents only “served to emphasize the archaic structure and lack of rationality in the state’s constitutional controls for alcoholic beverages as applied to modern times.” Leaving the power to regulate liquor to the General Assembly could “more realistically . . . control liquor in these times than constitutional provisions written three quarters of a century ago under vastly different circumstances.” 52

In the State House, the bill received additional comment. Arguing that leaving the issue up to General Assembly members simply left the House and Senate open to liquor lobbying, P. Bradley Morrah claimed H-1157 “would simply give a hunting license to anyone in the Legislature with reference to any liquor matter. The Legislature would be at the complete mercy of an extremely strong lobbying group.”53 Supporters of the bill that sought the potential economic rewards for businesses, such as Joseph McGee of Charleston, disagreed strongly with

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52 Ibid., May 5, 1966.
53 Letter, P. Bradley Morrah to Bob Rothman, May 7, 1966 in PBM.
Morrah and countered, “we’re out of step with the modern times and we’re breeding contempt for the law.” In the end, concerns about liquor violators and the region’s economic future secured H-1157’s passage, and liquor regulation came under the direct control of the General Assembly. Still, this effort, as one embittered dry commented, “to liberalize our already too liberal liquor laws” did not fully remove prohibition from public life.⁵⁴

Political wrangling over liquor did not end in 1966, though local option as a polemical issue faded out. At mid century, however, alcohol culture was a hotly contested issue, drawing comments spurred by the economic and social concerns of the day. Class did not predetermine the answers given concerning alcohol, but mixed interests did, ranging from religious, economic, and political sentiments to fears about bootleggers drawn from custom-made memories of federal Prohibition. In turn, local option brought together old concerns about alcohol’s threat to the home and community and new concerns about the fate of democracy – interpreted as the power of the people – in a modernizing region. As one Greenville pastor concluded, local option asked strong questions about the nature of legislative power, who should have it and why:

The question at hand is not prohibition. The question before our legislative body now is whether or not you will give the people of SC a right to express themselves. As my representative, how can you conscientiously do anything other in a democratic society than to give me the right to express myself? In my opinion, and I speak for myself and not for my church – the mere fact that many of you are voting to kill the referendum is a more serious circumstance than the return or elimination of prohibition.⁵⁵

Upstate wets and drys debated the validity of these comments, battling over who in the state should have power and who should decide which moral traditions should be retained and which jettisoned. In the end, economic modernization won the day, beating out evangelical appeals to moral piety. To reformers, the realm of Caesar had conquered the realm of Christ.

CONCLUSION

Alcohol culture continued to spark controversy in South Carolina and throughout the South after the fall of local option. In 1972, reformers, both from the state tax office and area churches, pushed and won mini-bottle laws requiring establishments in South Carolina to serve alcohol in portions measured not by the bartender but by the manufacturer. Liquor drinks, previously spiked by liquor bought from retailers and brought into clubs via brown bags, now contained equal servings of alcohol in them: one mini-bottle equaling fifty milliliters. Reformers might not have been able to sell upstate residents on local option as democracy in action, but they convinced lawmakers to make all drinks “created equal,” regardless of glass, color, or barrel of origin.¹

This was about the only victory registered by reformers after the 1960s. On upstate campuses, alcohol culture remained an important component of student life. In 1968, even the student center at USC began serving beer in the canteen and at university sponsored dances. By doing so, USC became one of the first universities in the South to sanction on-campus alcohol sales.² The public outcry from evangelical parents was immediate and intense: “Giving in to students’ demand on this issue will only bring more woes. Few of these Students have the capacity for drinking and even fewer possess the wisdom of moderation. . . . Suggest to them the law older than any State, founding in the Old Testament forbidding anything which defiles the

² Memo, from C.H. Witten to Thomas F. Jones, “Survey of Beer and Alcohol Regulations at Southeastern Universities,” October 4, 1968 in OPUSC, Box 6. The memo noted that no beer was sold on campus at the universities of Alabama, Florida, UNC-Chapel Hill, Georgia, Louisiana State, Duke, Florida State, Emory, and Clemson. Of these, only Duke and Emory allowed drinking on campus as long as students “did not exhibit anti-social behavior.”
Another concerned parent agreed, labeling beer sales as “just another wedge to open further drinking privileges on campus.” If alcohol culture was allowed on campus, he argued “the next move will be to open all dormitories to men and women visiting and living together married or not . . . we do not have to give our consent to the kind of thing that we know lowers the standards!” Past concerns about how alcohol culture affected public perception of the university continued as well. One alumni wrote, “Before I entered USC [in 1962], Carolina had the reputation of being a “Party School” . . . Allowing alcohol beverage sales on your campus . . . will not increase the quality of education at Carolina, nor will it enhance the reputation of the institution.”

Despite these calls for prohibition on campus, the vast majority of students and administrators considered an on-campus alcohol culture beneficial. One professor imagined several rewards from on-campus beer sales, listing “the profits will go to a good cause rather into the pocket of a restaurant owner. Russell Hall [the student center] will certainly be more sanitary than some of the dives in which the students now congregate. Finally, anything that keeps the students off the highways and on campus will help keep them alive.” Other administrators agreed with these sentiments. Recognizing the perversity of alcohol culture off campus, they demanded a slackening of stricter traditions on campus for the safety of students. As the Dean of the Engineering School wrote, “I think it is clear that beer is the national beverage for college students and that they will drink it in many establishments, some of them quite unsavory, near

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1 Letter, from H.C. Land to Thomas F. Jones, October 1, 1968 in OPUSC, Box 6.
3 Letter, from Calhoun Winton to Thomas F. Jones, October 3, 1968 in OPUSC, Box 6.
the campus. In the Student Union Building, it will be possible to control excesses and incontinent behavior . . . . I believe you can count on their continued responsibility."

By allowing beer on campus at USC, university officials accepted alcohol culture for the sake of protecting students from alcohol culture. This happened only because the economic and social changes in the South reached into the upstate and created favorable conditions for youngsters wanting a drink. Increased wages, opportunities for college educations, automobile use, and nation-wide standards of dating and dress all collaborated to create a place for them to drink and a way for them to get there and afford it. Their elders might not have approved of their newfound freedoms, but by the 1970s, all they wanted was for youngsters to have a safe time, if not a clean one.

This spirit of protecting those participating in alcohol culture continued among evangelicals, though in a different form. Unable to limit alcohol consumption via night time alternatives or local option, evangelical reformers settled for prohibition once a week. Sunday blue laws, which had been in place in South Carolina for years, received sustained support from evangelicals throughout the 1950s and 1960s, but after 1972 they became an evangelical’s only recourse against economic assaults of alcohol culture. Certainly, blue laws prohibited the sale of many goods on Sunday, but alcohol culture figured prominently in the debate. Some slackening of blue laws took place in the 1980s and 1990s, allowing stores in South Carolina to open their doors for the first time on Sundays. Alcohol culture, however, remained restricted, with most groceries unable to open their beer lanes for customers and many restaurants forced to spend potential profits on special Sunday licensing fees.

For some, such restrictions still appear insufficient and taking back Sunday from the sins of Saturday night remains a realistic goal. Given the history of restricting alcohol culture in the

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4 Letter, Rufus G. Fellers to Thomas F. Jones, October 2, 1968 in OPUSC, Box 6.
upstate, however, few options appear available to evangelicals still bent on conforming society to their demands. The economic and social transformations that changed the South after World War II also changed evangelicals, creating new sins for them to address and convincing many that “this time around,” their demands for moral piety could be met by people with no inclination for meeting them. Though they reached across racial and class lines and accepted support from all corners, few stepped back to question, as one evangelical leader did, “How would we feel if we lived in a place where Jews or Seventh Day Adventist groups were in the majority, and forced us to observe Saturday as the Sabbath Day? We would probably cry out ‘religious persecution.’” Such a position certainly would have seemed an unnecessary concession to them, despite the possibility it might have been noticeably more attentive to contemporary change. And perhaps more boldly Christian.

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