



IMBIBE!

FROM ABSINTHE COCKTAIL TO WHISKEY SMASH, A SALUTE IN STORIES AND DRINKS TO "PROFESSOR" JERRY THOMAS, PIONEER OF THE AMERICAN BAR

FEATURING THE ORIGINAL FORMULAE FOR 120 CLASSIC AMERICAN DRINKS

UPDATED AND REVISED EDITION

DAVID WONDRICH

FOREWORD BY DALE DEGROFF
FOUNDER OF THE MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN COCKTAIL

“Imbibe! rescues barman Jerry Thomas, an American hero, from the dustbin of history. We drinkers and readers are in the debt of his scribe, Dave Wondrich, who proves an engaging and intellectually curious guide to the barroom netherworlds where ‘bottle conjurers’ and other ne’er-do-wells ‘carved their deeds in ice.’”

—John T. Edge,
author of *Southern Belly: The Ultimate Food Lover’s Companion to the South* “David Wondrich has drunk his way through two centuries of American cocktails and other mixed drinks. He emerges to tell us, with clarity and wit, what he encountered, how it was made, and how to make it now. In his re-creations of the drinks of yesteryear, he stops at nothing, even growing his own snakeroot to make Jerry Thomas’s Bitters. Thomas was called ‘the Professor’ in his day. If this title belongs to any living expert on the cocktail, it belongs to Wondrich.”

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author of *Martini, Straight Up*

“David Wondrich is such an envy-producing polymath that it drives me to drink. Brilliant historian, beautiful writer, former punk rocker, absinthe maker, mixological marvel, and perhaps, yes, even wizard. Plus he can grow an amazing beard. There are few people in the world I rely on to be so authoritative and so entertaining all at once, and to mix an amazing cocktail at the same time. And those few people are David Wondrich.”

—John Hodgman,
author of *The Areas of My Expertise*

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Esquire Drinks
Stomp and Swerve
Killer Cocktails
Imbibe!
Punch

IMBIBE!

From Absinthe Cocktail to Whiskey Smash,
a Salute in Stories and Drinks to “Professor”
Jerry Thomas, Pioneer of the American Bar

Updated and Revised

DAVID WONDRICH



A P E R I G E E B O O K

A PERIGEE BOOK
Published by the Penguin Group
Penguin Group (USA) LLC
375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014



USA • Canada • UK • Ireland • Australia • New Zealand • India • South Africa • China penguin.com

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Revised Perigee hardcover edition ISBN: 978-0-399-17261-8\

eBook ISBN: 978-0-69818185-4

The Library of Congress has cataloged the first Perigee hardcover edition as follows: Imbibe! : from absinthe cocktail to whiskey smash, a salute in stories and drinks to "Professor" Jerry Thomas, pioneer of the American bar / David Wondrich.—1st ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-399-53287-0

1. Cocktails. 2. Drinking customs. 3. Thomas, Jerry, 1830–1885. I. Title.

TX951.W5663 2007

641.8'74—dc22 2007027096

PUBLISHING HISTORY

First Perigee hardcover edition / November 2007

Revised Perigee hardcover edition / April 2015

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PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

Since November 2007, when the first edition of this book came out, I've had the pleasure of visiting a great many new "craft cocktail" bars, as they're generally known—places that specialize in drinks assembled carefully from top-quality ingredients according to classic formulas (along, of course, with a lot of creations of their own, some of them decidedly odd). Quite often, I've spotted a copy of the book nestled on a high shelf behind the bar, among the clutch of reference works such places tend to keep. Indeed, I've had a surprising number of young bartenders tell me that reading the book was a precondition for their employment in such a place. To an author, these things are of course immensely gratifying and flattering. Yet they also confer a certain obligation: If your book is being used as a textbook, then you've got to make sure the information in it is up to date. Otherwise, you look bad and, even worse, the people relying on you look bad.

By 2012 or so, there was a fair amount that needed updating. The entire section on ingredients was obsolete: All of the obscure old spirits whose loss I lamented, and for which I spent so much space describing (often dubious) work-arounds, were now available. Also obsolete were all the words I used to try to talk up old-school drinks as something one might want to try, as well as the sixteen Jerry Thomas-themed drinks kindly contributed by my friends and fellow enthusiasts in the hope of convincing people that the Professor's style of mixology had its uses in the modern age. Nobody needs convincing anymore. (Indeed, most of those contributors have since gone on to write their own books, if they didn't already have them.) And as long as I was cutting dead wood, I could also lose the vestigial section on punch-bowl drinks, since superseded by the book I wrote on the subject in 2010, and the closely argued, small-print appendices that addressed arguments nobody's having anymore.

Naturally, there were also errors to correct. Some of them were

embarrassing—William Henry Harrison was the president whose favorite Egg Nog I had included, not Benjamin Harrison, and it would be better for everyone if the Collins actually appeared in the chapter where it's listed in the title, rather than the next. Others were committed through ignorance; through misinformation or a lack of information, and further research made them apparent.

In fact, in the years since the book came out I've amassed a great deal of new information: on Jerry Thomas and his life (including colorful new anecdotes and details on his now-lost second book), on the history of the American bar, on the bartender's tools and techniques, and on the drinks and their provenance. As long as I had the hood up, that gave me the opportunity to incorporate all these tidbits. And why not add some more drinks, and not just American ones? Jerry Thomas intended his book to be a register of the world's drinks, and if I could help him posthumously achieve that goal, it would be churlish to say no. Accordingly, among the twenty-odd drinks I've added to the second edition, you'll find the Singapore Gin Sling, the Caribbean Green Swizzle, the Peruvian Pisco Sour, and the Argentine-Uruguayan San Martín Cocktail, all of them dating firmly to the pre-Prohibition age. I've also taken the chance to rearrange the sections devoted to the cocktail proper, so that the evolution of the drink is presented a little more clearly, and to spend some more time with the Mint Julep, unfairly neglected in the first edition.

Despite all the tinkering, I hope those who have read the first edition will find that this is still the same book, only perhaps a bit better focused and more than a bit more detailed—indeed, this edition is 43 pages longer than the last, and that's not counting the 40 pages' worth of redundant stuff that was cleared out. In any case, thanks for coming back. To those who are reading the book for the first time, welcome, and I suggest you make yourself an [Old-Fashioned](#) or a [Presidente](#) before you start reading. It's thirsty work and you'll need it.

FOREWORD

Back in 1985, when the legendary New York restaurateur Joe Baum asked me to create a classic bar for him at the fine dining restaurant Aurora, he sent me on a search for a book that would explain what he meant by a classic bar: *How to Mix Drinks, or The Bon Vivant's Companion* by Jerry Thomas. After my initial unsuccessful attempts searching bookstores and without the Internet for quick reference, I finally discovered that Joe had neglected to mention that the book was written in 1862 and had been out of print since the Herbert Asbury edition was published in 1928. Eventually I got my hands on a copy of the later edition and started down a road that changed my thinking about bars and cocktails, and brought me to the Rainbow Room—a road that led to a revival of interest in real drinks made in a culinary style with real ingredients following original recipes, which continues to this day.

The bigger-than-life characters found in Jerry Thomas's world actually seemed familiar to me, given my deep working knowledge of numerous New York City watering holes in the late 1960s—joints where the collection of con men, politicians, sporting types, and jazz-loving foreigners was as colorful as the crowd in any Bowery music hall of the mid-nineteenth century. The bartenders at Jimmy Ryan's club, where I practically lived back in those days, would have been right at home in one of Thomas's saloons; they could determine as you approached the bar whether you had two nickels to rub together and give you the bum's rush before you could open your mouth to order.

Colorful characters aside, what the barrel-chested and bejeweled Jerry Thomas embodied that has been lacking in the post-Prohibition bars in this country is an insatiable curiosity for the strange-sounding concoctions collected during extensive travels and adapted to his personal style—concoctions, I soon discovered, that were crafted from ingredients half of which no longer existed. But that left me undeterred in my quest to make Joe Baum's vision of a classic bar a reality.

Jerry Thomas's book taught me how to craft drinks without the aid of

commercial mixers; remember, all we knew as journeymen bartenders in those years was what we had learned from other untrained bartenders who came before us. That usually comprised a shot of spirits and a good portion of sour mix or daiquiri mix and a shake. The artificial foaming agent in the mix made the drink look great; as for flavor, those who wanted it drank straight spirits. Bloody Marys were one of the few drinks we made from scratch, and not many knew how to prepare a decent Bloody Mary mix with the right balance between the hot pepper and the sweet tomato juice.

Thomas talked about sugar syrups and how to make and then use them with fresh citrus juices. He was not generous with descriptions on technique and how to assemble these drinks, but there were enough hints here and there to fill in the blanks. Those hints, and lots of trial and error, led to my first all-fresh-ingredient cocktail menu at a time when cocktail menus were as rare as hens' teeth. When I moved to the Rainbow Room with my newfound skills and the benefit of Joe's celebrity and public relations machine behind me, the idea of old-as-new-again became the cutting edge; classics revived made quite the splash in the trade and eventually in the general market.

Back then I could have used a book like David Wondrich's as a teaching tool, to take the bartenders through the logical steps of punch to sling to cocktail, allowing them to experience firsthand how the whole culture of the cocktail evolved; even tasting them through the steps.

Wondrich has provided us with the most important and authoritative book on the American cocktail to date. He pitches and swaggers his way through the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, from poems to periodicals, from songs to books, becoming more intoxicated with each new find. As the pieces accumulate like an enormous jigsaw puzzle, the picture begins to make more and more sense.

Against the backdrop of Western civilization, the cocktail, like the whole American experiment, is in its infancy. But the nature of this bibulous tradition—born, as Wondrich so deftly demonstrates, in the sporting life—is such that even though all the drinks, stories, and recipes are less than 250 years old, there is very little left in the way of documentation.

Undeterred, Wondrich has uncovered a remarkable trail left like broken twigs on a forest path that lead the reader through the gaming rooms, saloons, gentlemen's clubs, and coffeehouses—to reveal the real story of the evolution of the American cocktail.

—Dale DeGroff, founder,
The Museum of the American Cocktail

INTRODUCTION

My introduction to Jerry Thomas wasn't nearly as dramatic as Dale's—characteristically, I read about him in a book, one or another of the various histories of American lowlife Herbert Asbury published in the 1920s and 1930s. It was the early 1990s, and I was in graduate school, keeping my head down and anticipating a somewhat dull but (I hoped) pleasant life in academia. Asbury's raffish accounts of old New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and New Orleans—I read them all—and their various thugs, crooks, players, and sports were a lot more colorful than the Latin scientific poems I was studying. But work is work, so I reluctantly shelved Gallus Mag and Bill the Butcher, Bathhouse John, Belle Cora, and the bartender known as “the Professor” (who seemed to be in every book) and got back to my Manilius and Martianus Capella.

But funny things happen sometimes. Toward the end of 1999, I found myself working as an assistant professor of English at a Catholic college on Staten Island, and my place in academia fully as dull, but not nearly so pleasant, as I had pictured it. So when I got a phone call from my friend Josh Mack, then a honcho in Hearst's New Media division, asking if I might be interested in a little side project, I was pretty receptive. And when I found out that the project involved adapting the cocktail section from one of *Esquire's* old entertaining guides for the Web, I was flat-out excited. As Josh knew, I had been writing a few little pieces on music for the *Village Voice* as a way of blowing off steam, and I liked to mix the occasional cocktail. Since this combined writing and mixing . . . Sure.

As luck would have it, *Esquire* liked the historical essays I had fitted a few of the drinks out with enough to hire me to do them for all the drinks. A new one went up on the site each week. Suddenly, I was a mixographer. Being a good academic, my first response was that I was going to need a lot more books. Well, maybe that was my second response, after kissing my wife, Karen, and mixing us up a couple of celebratory Martinis (Beefeater and Noilly Prat, seven to one,

olives, as I recall). In any case, the handful of vintage drink books Karen and I had accumulated over the years—Charles H. Baker Jr., Patrick Gavin Duffy, Harry Craddock, a couple more—were going to need some serious reinforcements. The first book I bought? “Professor” Jerry Thomas’s, in the same 1928 Herbert Asbury edition Dale found (imagine my disappointment when I learned that Thomas’s title was awarded not by any academic institution but by the wags of the day, who gave it to anyone who could do anything requiring superior technical knowledge, be it tickling out syncopated melodies on the piano, dealing undetectably from the bottom of the deck, or constructing a perfect Sherry Cobbler).

Having read *Straight Up or On the Rocks*, William Grimes’s groundbreaking cocktail history, I knew that Thomas’s book was the first of its kind, and I was a firm believer in starting at the beginning. Over the next three years, in the service of *Esquire* and soon various other publications, I mixed literally thousands of drinks of all classes and styles. But while I often used Jerry Thomas’s book as a sort of historical backstop, a place to trace a particular recipe back to, I rarely mixed any actual drinks from it. At first glance, the book’s telegraphically phrased recipes seemed either uninspiringly simple or dauntingly complex; deeply weird or old hat.

But again, things happen. At the end of 2002, now an ex-professor and happy to be so, I was introduced to a couple of people from the Slow Food movement at a friend’s birthday party. Since said party happened to be in a bar, I did what I do best in bars and began holding forth. Slow Food is all about preserving traditional foodways. Well, what’s more traditional and American than the fine art of mixing drinks? Hell, we invented it, back in Jerry Thomas’s days. In fact, somebody ought to hold a tribute to Ol’ Jerry, right here in New York where he worked; the grand memorial service he never had. And so on.

The last thing I expected was that they’d take me seriously—that’s not what bar talk is for. But since Shawn Kelley, Ana Jovancicevic, and Allen Katz, the people I was shooting my mouth off to, all happen to be organized, energetic, and competent, the next thing I knew the Professor was getting his tribute. And it wasn’t just a couple of folks meeting up at a bar somewhere. It was at the Oak Room of the Plaza Hotel, no less, with seven of America’s top mixologists and me, all making the Professor’s drinks—Blue Blazers, Brandy Crustas, Tom & Jerries, a bunch more—and the great Terry Waldo playing ragtime on the piano. There was even the traditional free lunch, a spread of oysters and country ham and whatnot that wouldn’t have been at all out of place when the Oak Room was

the hotel's men's bar, back in the sepia-tone days before Prohibition. There was even a little souvenir booklet with all the recipes we made, lovingly designed by Ted "Dr. Cocktail" Haigh, who does that sort of thing for a living. For it, I decided to write a little bio of the Professor, which meant doing a little research. You hold in your hands what happens when I start to do a little research.

Originally, this book was going to be an update of Asbury's edition—a new, more accurate biographical chapter and then all the recipes, with various historical and mixological notes attached. But the more I worked on it, and the more I learned about Thomas and the origins of his book, the more five letters kept popping up in my head. WWJTD: What Would Jerry Thomas Do? Would he be content to trudge along like some electronic-age Bartleby, narrowly copying another's work and keeping his thoughts on the matter mostly to himself? Or would he have gone for it, using the occasion as an excuse to tell everything he knew? The answer was obvious. I could be true to Jerry Thomas's book, or true to Jerry Thomas. I chose the latter.

On the one hand, this means that you won't find every recipe from Jerry Thomas's book here. In fact, of the largest class of drinks in his book, the almost threescore recipes for bowls of Punch, you won't find a single one. A bowl of Punch is a wonderful, even sublime thing, but it was already obsolete as a bar drink by the time Thomas's book was published, and the vast majority of the recipes were old English ones foisted on him by his publisher. Rather than swell the book by the hundred-odd pages it would take to explain these drinks, I've reserved them for another book.* I've also cut back drastically on egg drinks and the things that are made by carefully layering liqueurs in tiny glasses. On the other hand, I've used the space thus cleared to supplement the Professor's recipes with a goodly number of others from his contemporaries and immediate successors—popular, even important drinks that, I like to think, he would have included had he lived to do another edition of his book. (In all this, anyway, I'm doing no more than what he and his original publisher did: In 1876, they reprinted his book with a supplement containing new drinks, and in 1887, two years after his death, they put out a thorough update and revision, done by some unsung but expert bartender whose name has been lost to history.)

One last thing. This book took a long time to write, but what kept me going throughout was the sheer delight I got from testing the recipes. Time after time, what seemed plain on the page turned out to be subtle; what seemed baroque or fussy, rich and rewarding. But this is only proper. The average nineteenth-century drinker was accustomed to having his drinks—based not on a thin and

anodyne tipple like vodka, but rather on something robust and flavorful, like cognac, rye whiskey, Holland gin, or brown sherry—made with fresh-squeezed juices, one of several different kinds of available bitters, hand-chipped ice, and a host of other touches that are today the mark of only the very best bars. In presenting the recipes I've done my best to lay bare these touches; to transmit the techniques and competencies the bartender relied on in practicing his craft; in making a few cents' worth of whiskey, sugar, and frozen water into a glimpse of a better world.

CHAPTER 1

**“PROFESSOR” JERRY THOMAS:
JUPITER OLYMPUS OF THE BAR**

WHO READS AN AMERICAN BOOK?

In the January 1820 issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, the noted English wit Sydney Smith closed his review of Adam Seybert's 804-page *Statistical Annals of the United States of America* with a flurry of questions calculated to let the air out of anyone whom Seybert's monument to American enterprise might inspire with admiration for the new republic's achievements. "Confining ourselves to our own country," he asks, "and to the period that has elapsed since they had an independent existence . . . Where are their Foxes, their Burkes, their Sheridans . . . their Wilberforces?"—and a good twenty-one other celebrated names to boot, covering the full spectrum of human endeavor. It's not just that the country lacks famous names, though; it's everything:

In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue? What does the world yet owe to American physicians or surgeons? What new substances have their chemists discovered? Or what old ones have they analyzed? What new constellations have been discovered by the telescopes of Americans? What have they done in mathematics? Who drinks out of American glasses? or eats from American plates? Or wears American coats or gowns? or sleeps in American blankets?

Here's the thing: Smith wasn't entirely wrong. From our perspective, two very busy—and largely American—centuries down the road, it's not easy to appreciate just how rudimentary American civilization was in its early years. Once you got more than a day's ride in from the coast, where things were maintained to a thickly provincial, mail-order version of European standard, everything was salt pork and hominy, dirt and ignorance and inebriation, all punctuated by the splat of expectorated tobacco juice. Or so it seemed, anyway, to the European travelers who flooded the country.

Even an impartial observer (which Smith and most of the travelers were assuredly not) would have to concede literature—although Washington Irving's 1809 *Knickerbocker's History of New York* had earned at least some amount of international notice—and drama, painting, and the plastic arts. And medicine, astronomy, and math. And manufacturing, heavy industry, light industry. Pretty

much everything, in short, but raw materials, empty space and the sheer drive and feistiness needed to fill it.

But little did Sydney Smith realize that, even as he wrote, an American name was thrusting itself forward, and in an art in which Great Britain had long been preeminent. As often, this genius at first was not recognized: The earliest squint we have at him creating comes from Lieutenant the Honourable Frederick Fitzgerald de Roos, of the Royal Navy, who encountered him in 1826 and was not impressed. This was at the City Hotel, the best in New York at the time. “The entrance to the house,” the fussy lieutenant writes, “is constantly obstructed by crowds of people passing to and from the bar-room, where a person presides at a buffet formed upon the plan of a cage. This individual is engaged, ‘from morn to dewy eve,’ in preparing and issuing forth punch and spirits to strange-looking men, who come to the house to read the newspapers and talk politics.”

About that man in the cage (American hotels kept their bars right in the lobby, so they needed to be lockable when the desk clerk/barkeeper—the jobs were one and the same—was off duty, lest the guests help themselves): His name was Willard. Mr. Willard, if you were being formal. He had a first name, Orsamus, but nobody ever used it (perhaps because it was Orsamus^{*}). If the lieutenant had been a little less stuck up, he might have noticed that the “issuing forth” Willard was doing was something more than ladling Punch from a bowl and pouring drams. In fact, he was America’s first celebrity bartender; our “Napoleon of BarKeepers,” as he was called. As one patron recalled, “Willard was one of the first in the city to concoct fancy drinks, and he introduced the mint-julep as a bar drink,” frequently mixing them up three or four at a time while simultaneously using his photographic memory to greet long-absent guests by name, supply the whereabouts of others, and answer all and sundry questions clerks and bartenders are subject to.

Indeed, as the English traveler Charles Augustus Murray observed in 1839, “by common consent” Willard, whose name was “familiar to every American, and to every foreigner who has visited the States during the last thirty years,” was “allowed to be the first master of [his] art in the known world.” There was probably no other American in any field about whom an Englishman would admit this, but then again, Murray had tried Willard’s Mint Juleps. As an Englishman, Murray knew whereof he spoke: For 200 years, the English upper classes had maintained a reputation as the world’s most discriminating consumers of alcoholic beverages. Without their educated—and insatiable—

demand, Bordeaux wines, Champagne, cognac, vintage port, old sherry, Scotch whisky, and liqueur rum would never have developed beyond an embryonic stage; it was the English market that nourished and shaped them. Nor was the milords' expertise confined to straight goods alone: Punch, the nectareous and lethal concoction that for ten generations had represented the acme of the mixologist's art, was an English creation, and those men who excelled in making it were rewarded with money and celebrity. But as Murray and indeed every other traveler who visited America and was cooled by a Mint Julep on a hot day or warmed by an Apple Toddy on a cold one was forced to admit, in this one art anyway, the old order was passing and a *novus ordo potationum* was coming into being.

Now, admittedly, mixed drinks are not paintings, sculptures, novels, or poems. They are disposable and, frankly, not a little bit disreputable, standing roughly in the same relation to the culinary arts that American motor sports do to automotive engineering or hot jazz to musical composition: they smack of improvisation and cheap effects and even the most august of them lack the cachet accorded to fine wines, old whiskies, and cognac brandies. They are easily abused; they can degrade lives and even destroy them. Even if appreciated in moderation, they are appreciated in surroundings that rarely lead to detached meditation on truth and beauty (if those are not the same thing) or constructive engagement with the great moral and social questions of the age. And yet neither are they contemptible. A proper drink at the right time—one mixed with care and skill and served in a true spirit of hospitality—is better than any other made thing at giving us the illusion, at least, that we're getting what we want from life. A cat can gaze upon a king, as the proverb goes, and after a Dry Martini or a Sazerac Cocktail or two, we're all cats.

But let's leave such philosophical matters for when we meet over a drink and note that even the notorious Mrs. Trollope, who spent three and a half years in Tennessee, Virginia, and, mostly, the American "Porkopolis," Cincinnati, and recorded her frank and decidedly unvarnished impressions of the country in her 1832 *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, finally came around to admitting that here was something that Americans excelled in and that it had merit. Indeed, she conceded in 1849, when it came to those Mint Juleps she had disingenuously held up in her book as an example of American boorishness, "it would, I truly believe, be utterly impossible for the art of man to administer anything so likely to restore them from the overwhelming effects of heat and fatigue." And these were Whiskey Juleps, mind you—if someone had managed to slip one of the

more epicurean brandy ones under her nose, who can say? She might even have given Porkopolis another chance.

Many excellent books have been written on the social history of drinking in early America. I will therefore dispense with the traditional lengthy description of the general bibulousness that prevailed; on the Slings and Juleps that, raised in honor of rosy-fingered dawn, eased men onto the proscenium of day; on the eleven-o'clock spark-quenchers of gin and the noontime whiskey drams; on the Celt and his ball of malt and the Good Old 'Nongohela of the Pennsylvanian; on Kentucky corn and Medford rum and the true purpose of the Georgia peach (like Johnny Appleseed's stock-in-trade, it was destined for the stillhouse, not the table).

Whether or not Americans ingested more absolute alcohol than their European forebears is open to debate. There's no question, though, that a much greater percentage of that alcohol was in the form of distilled spirits, and that these spirits were consumed in an unprecedented variety of mixtures. Nor can it be disputed that this facility with mixing drinks was the first legitimate American culinary art, and—along with the minstrel show, but that's another book—the first uniquely American cultural product to catch the world's imagination. In the century and a half between the American Revolution and Prohibition, this art was born, reached maturity, and spread to every corner of the globe, in the process establishing the principles, techniques, and even a surprising number of the tools and formulas that still characterize the art today.

Arts don't invent themselves. Someone had to mix the first Rum Punch, stir the first Cocktail, shake the first Sherry Cobbler, and invent the shaker to do it with. But when it comes to these early Titans of the bar, we run into the condition lamented by the Roman poet Horace, 2,000 years ago:

*There lived heroes before Agamemnon,
Yet all unwept in shadow lie, for want
Of poets to enshrine their deeds in song.*

Unfortunately, there was no Homer to record the names and deeds of bartenders. Other disciplines of similarly louche character found their poets—such as the Anglo-Irish journalist Pierce Egan and his remarkable 1819 *Boxiana*, a four-volume anecdotal history of British pugilism and the culture that supported it, or Patrick Timony and his companion piece *American Fisticiana* from 1849—and there was no shortage of what was known as “convivial” or

“jovial” literature, books about social drinkers and their conversation. But the nineteenth century brought forth no *American Bariana*, no chronicle of the men behind the bar, their sayings and their doings, or rather, no surviving chronicle. The sole attempt we know of to transmit this information failed in its mission, as we shall see. And so, for the most part, as far as history is concerned the great bartenders of the Heroic Age carved their deeds in ice. We might catch occasional glimpses of them in the murk, tossing drinks from cup to cup before a bewhiskered and thoroughly appreciative crowd, but beyond that they are enigmas. Even the mighty Willard left behind no book of recipes or biographical sketch. It took a great deal of digging to find out even the most basic details of his life: that he was born in the rural township of Harvard, Massachusetts, some sixty miles west-northwest of Boston, in 1792; that in 1811 he began working at the City Hotel; that he soon after went behind the bar, where he stayed, with a brief interlude when he tried first to retire, until 1848; that in 1817 he was taught to make iced Mint Juleps by “a Virginian” (as a reporter for the *Buffalo Courier* recalled the story in 1851), proceeded to make it his specialty, and through it popularized the use of ice in drinks; that he finally retired back home in 1849, to a house with room numbers on every door, where he died, old and prosperous, in 1876. But such knowledge, meager as it is (where are the descriptions of him at work, the records of his recipes, the informed appreciation of his craft?), is hard won, and shouldn’t be. There are dozens of books devoted to the life and works of Eli Whitney, inventor of the cotton gin, but nary a one to Orsamus Willard, whose Gin Cocktail was perhaps as famous in its day, and certainly as foundational to American culture, as Whitney’s automatic cotton carder.

About Willard’s contemporaries and immediate successors, the men who helped him build the American Bar, as the institution where you could stand (or in later times sit) at the counter and watch a bartender artistically compound an iced drink just for you would come to be called the world over, we know even less. If anyone asked Cato Alexander or Shed Sterling of New York, Peter Bent Brigham of Boston, Beverly Snow of Washington, John George Vennigerholz of Natchez-on-the-Hill or Joe Redding of Louisville about his craft, we have yet to find a record of it. And they were the famous ones.*

If the pioneers of the first two generations of the American Bar have been condemned to obscurity, the third generation was able to put forward one, at least, who has not; one about whom a good deal has long been known and a great deal more will be revealed herein. In large part, this is because, not content to wait for a poet, he was his own Homer, telling his story to anyone who would

listen and getting his deeds, his recipes between the covers of a book before anyone else. In this book, he will stand in for the countless ranks of his colleagues whom history overlooked; his character and actions for those of all bartenders. Fortunately, if there was one old-time bartender whose shoulders could support such a burden, it was Jerry Thomas.

AN AMERICAN AND A SAILOR, TOO

Oh, to have seen him as Edward Hingston saw him in 1863, presiding over the luxurious marble-and-gilt barroom of the Occidental, the newest and best hotel in San Francisco:

He is a gentleman who is all ablaze with diamonds. There is a very large pin, formed of a cluster of diamonds, in the front of his magnificent shirt, he has diamond studs at his wrists, and gorgeous diamond rings on his fingers—diamonds being “properties” essential to the calling of a bartender in the United States. . . . It must be remembered, however, that he is in California, and that he is engaged as a “star.”

When Hingston encountered him, Thomas was, as he noted, “one of the most distinguished, if not the chief, of American ‘bartenders,’” his name “as familiar in the Eastern States as it now is out here in California. . . . In the manufacture of a ‘cocktail,’ a ‘julep,’ a ‘smash’ or an ‘eye-opener,’ none can beat him, though he may have successful rivals.” This “Jupiter Olympus of the bar,” as the preface to his book had dubbed him the year before, was thirty-three years old and he was pulling down a cool hundred dollars a week, more than the vice president of the United States.

Jerry P. Thomas—alas, we may never know what the *P* stands for—was “an American . . . and a sailor too,” as he told a reporter from the *New York Sun* in 1882. He was a gold miner, a Broadway dandy, a (minor) theatrical impresario, an art collector, an artist himself (of sorts, anyway), an inventor, an author, and a gambler. A footloose type, at one time or another he tended bar in just about every place where conviviality was at high ebb, from London, England, to Virginia City, Nevada. And wherever he was, he was a man as good as any who stood before his bar, and a damned sight better than most.

Jerry Thomas entered this world, by his own account, as a “member of the great American nation” and “made himself heard” on the thirtieth day of October 1830. The place was Sackets Harbor, New York, a garrison town on the chilly waters of Lake Ontario not far from the Canadian border. About his parents, Jeremiah and Mary Morris Thomas, we know nothing, nor do we know much about his siblings. Birth certificates were not used in America for another

generation, so this is not unusual. We do know he had a younger brother, George M., because they ran saloons together for fifteen years. Another younger brother, John, briefly tended bar with him in New York. There was also a third brother, David, who may have been the eldest; he was a hotel clerk, a job that, at the time, frequently encompassed tending bar. Thomas's early childhood is a blank, beyond the bare fact that at some point in the 1830s or early 1840s he and his family moved to New Haven, Connecticut. We could deduce that Thomas's social class wasn't the highest, but only from his career choices. On the other hand, Richard Henry Dana and Herman Melville came from "respectable" families, and they shipped out as sailors too, and the nineteenth century saw many a gentleman work behind the stick—indeed, in 1884 the heir to the dukedom of Saxony was found working the bar in an Albany, New York, beer garden. In short, we know nothing about the family's history or culture.

Here's the problem: Jerry Thomas was a bartender, not a poet or a politician. Bartenders were important men in their milieu, but that milieu—which we shall discuss—compiled its historical record by anecdote and barroom reminiscence, not systematic investigation backed by documents. That doesn't mean that we're without resources to reconstruct his life, but they tend to be catch as catch can, giving us intermittent, if often vivid, glimpses of the man as he moved through his world. And they don't extend to the part of his life before he learned how to mix drinks. According to the lengthy and detailed obituary published in the *New York World*, this occurred at the young, but no means unusual, age of sixteen, when "he began life as a New Haven barkeeper." New Haven, which was both a seaport and a college town, would have been an excellent place to pick up the rudiments of the craft. In 1846, though, it was a craft still transmitted by long apprenticeship, and his duties in the bar would have involved more sweeping, polishing, and carrying than mixing fancy drinks for customers.

In any case he didn't stick with it long: At seventeen or eighteen, as that same obituary states, "he went to Cuba as a sailor." We don't know what ship that was on, but soon enough he joined the *Ann Smith* of New Haven (William Henry Bowns, captain) and, as he told the *Sun* in 1882, "sailed all around the world before the mast" or, if not all around the world, at least to California (as he told the *New York Dramatic Mirror* writer Alan Dale around the same time). Whatever his previous sailing experience, his berth there wouldn't have been a soft one. Life before the mast was a deadly serious business, even for a lakeman like Thomas—"though an inlander . . . wild-ocean born," as Melville put it in *Moby Dick*. Not that Thomas could complain, since "whatever your feelings may

be, you must make a joke of everything at sea” (so Dana). And there would have been plenty for him to joke about. Even for a boy from Sackets Harbor, who presumably knew something of knife-sharp winds, ice-glassed decks, and waves that topped the masts, rounding the Horn in Antarctic winter, as he did in 1849, must’ve been an ordeal: When he wasn’t climbing aloft to the skyscraping topgallants, a hundred feet and more above a pitching deck, or edging out to the ends of the yards to furl canvas stiff with ice while standing over nothing but the roiling South Atlantic, there was the constant scrubbing, scraping, and swabbing; the picking and the pounding; the stitching and the mending. And all for \$12 a month and rations that made prison food look wholesome.

The drinks must’ve helped. Now, while the Royal Navy might have had its daily rum ration, this was by no means a universal practice in the American merchant marine. Whether out of moral concern or just plain Yankee thriftiness, most ships were dry (or, more properly, like Dana’s *Alert*, where “the temperance was all in the forecastle”—in other words, the officers could drink their Brandy-and-Water or Punch, while “Jack . . . can have nothing to wet his lips”). The *Ann Smith*, however, was no temperance ship. We know this because James Minor, one of the passengers on that trip around the Horn, kept a journal. A strict temperance man himself, Minor was dismayed to see his fellow passengers divide themselves into a “Temperance Party” and a “Rum Party.” The latter boozed and caroused the days and nights away, with Bowns not only doing nothing to rein them in but actually joining them. If only it stopped with the captain—“many of the Rum party,” Minor wrote, “have made themselves to [sic] free with the sailors by treating them, a poor policy to gain friends.” Things soon reached the point that the (dry) First Mate was duking it out with drunken sailors, and the cabin boy and the captain’s son were getting tanked with one of the passengers and pitching the poor ship’s dog overboard. Finally, Minor concluded that “Our Captain is devoid of Order+Sobriety.” (To be fair to Captain Bowns, there are others who recall him as a man of honor and talent.)

Minor doesn’t implicate Thomas by name in any of this shipboard saturnalia. But whatever the extent of his bartending experience, one can certainly see it coming in handy on the *Ann Smith*. Herbert Asbury, in the biographical sketch he attached to his edition of Thomas’s book, has him hoping that he could use the captain’s “excellent grog” as a basis to “invent something which would relieve the sailor’s life of much of its hardship,” and the captain looking “with vigorous disapproval upon all attempts to improve the grog and drinking habits of the crew.” Stripped of its circumlocution, this sounds very

much like Thomas was mixing up drinks for his fellow Jack Tars above and beyond some sort of regular rum ration and the captain put a stop to it. Unfortunately, Minor's journal, which would have certainly made much of such an occasion, peters out somewhere between Rio (where there had been a lengthy layover and much booze purchased) and the Horn, and the account Thomas himself published in 1863, which according to the *World's* obituarist contained highly "peculiar" escapades in "Rio Janeiro, Valparaiso and other places in South America," has been lost (but more on that later). In any case, this voyage, which left New Haven on March 24 bound for San Francisco, would be the last one Thomas made before the mast. When he returned east, he went by land.

IN REALMS OF GOLD

On November 4, only a few days after Thomas's nineteenth birthday, the *Ann Smith* reached San Francisco, whereupon he jumped ship and, as he put it, "ran off into the mountains after gold." Nor was he alone: The harbor in San Francisco was full of abandoned ships, their crews all having had the same approximate idea. The Gold Rush was on, and it was as great a spectacle as any human history has afforded. The San Francisco Thomas would've found when his boots hit the wharf is scarcely imaginable: a seething anthill of human greed, its streets yards-deep in mud, its sand hills poking their bald knobs over a sea of shacks, tents, tented shacks, flimsy one-or two-story frame houses, even prefab wooden huts from China—housing so temporary, so precarious, that one good blow and just about the whole city would be shaved clean off the face of California. Here and there, perhaps, a piece of the more substantial new construction that was just beginning to sprout up might be left standing, but everything else was as permanent as grass.

And the people—plow-callused Yankee farmers, pigtailed Chinese, "Kanakas" from Hawaii, Southern backwoodsmen, bankers' sons from Fifth Avenue, broad-hatted Sonorans, hard-bitten "Sydney Ducks" from Australia, Illinois dirt farmers, Chileans, Peruvians, French whores (who charged a pound or more of gold dust a trick, thank you very much), Indians, and lots and lots of just plain Americans, all burning with gold fever. They created a society like no other on Earth. University professors would be frying eggs for a living—and making more doing it than they ever did lecturing on Aristophanes. Ditchdiggers were paying an unheard-of fifty cents a drink for straight whiskey, and none of the best at that, and shipping their shirts to Hawaii to be laundered. Everything was topsy-turvy and everyone was "smashing through life," as the *New Orleans Times-Picayune's* San Francisco correspondent put it, "at railroad, or rather lightning speed."

Then there were the saloons. According to Hubert Howe Bancroft, the Gold Rush's great early historian, the Argonauts, as those who sailed after gold were jocularly called, were a bibulous bunch: "If hot, they drank to get cool, if cold, to get warm, if wet, to get dry, if dry—and some were always dry—to keep out the wet." The places they drank ranged from a tent outfitted only with a barrel of Cincinnati rectified or a few jugs of pisco to joints where \$3,000 billiard tables

stood on broken-up packing cases under crystal chandeliers. The city's best and most popular gambling saloon, the El Dorado on Portsmouth Square, was simply four walls and a tent roof, but "it had an orchestra of fifteen persons," as one old Forty-Niner later recalled. "It was run all night and day, with two sets of hands. It was gorgeously fitted up. What they used to stir up the sugar in the drinks cost \$300. It was solid gold." If Asbury is to be believed, one of the hands wielding that golden toddy stick was Jerry Thomas's. "The Professor," he writes, "... became First Assistant to the Principal Bartender of the El Dorado."

If only there were some scrap of evidence for this; the El Dorado is almost as central to the myth of the Gold Rush as Sutter's Mill or "Oh! Susannah," and to have Jerry Thomas firmly placed behind the bar would be quite something. But not even Thomas himself claimed that he worked there, at least not in the autobiographical sketch he dictated to the *Sun* or anywhere else we know of. And even if he did find a berth on Portsmouth Square, it couldn't have been for long, what with the El Dorado's distressing habit of burning down—along with much of the rest of the city. In the introduction to his (lost) second book, he evidently claimed to have spent six months at the Illinois Hotel on Kearny Street (probably Samuel Anderson's Illinois House, which the 1850 city directory locates at the corner of Battery and Broadway, two blocks from Kearny—but San Francisco businesses, and even streets, moved rather a bit in the early days). In any case, wherever he tended bar, before long Thomas was in the mountains, trying to get rich.

Piecing together sketchy and often contradictory anecdotes, which are all we have to go on for this part of his life (a thorough combing of census records, city directories, miners' memoirs, membership rolls of Forty-Niners' societies and suchlike has turned up no trace of him whatsoever), it seems that he betook himself to the goldfields along the Yuba River, in the northern range of the diggings, and set to shoveling. He didn't last long at that, either. Of all the ways to get rich in California, digging for gold was the most spectacular—one lucky swing of the pick, and you could be set for life. But it was backbreaking, dirty work, and few of the men who did it made enough to more than cover expenses, particularly with those expenses being so very high. Pretty quickly, it seems, young Jerry gave mining up for a mug's game and went where the sure money was: collecting those expenses. He installed himself at the big saloon in nearby Downieville run by John Craycroft, ex-mate of a Mississippi riverboat, and his silent partner, a Mexican whore by the name of Chavez. One must assume that Thomas took up his proper station behind the bar and set to doling out horns of

panther sweat to the begrimed and hairy multitude.

Whether it was in San Francisco, Sacramento, or Downieville (or all three), wherever Thomas tended bar in California he would have been making serious drinks. Even Hinton Helper, who was there from 1851 to 1854 and went back East full of grump and gripe at what he had seen, was compelled to admit that the raw new civilization then a-building on the Pacific coast did not stint when it came to the quality of its liquid refreshments. At one San Francisco saloon, he wrote, “We find the governor of the State seated by a table, surrounded by judges of the supreme and superior courts, sipping sherry cobblers, smoking segars, and reveling in all the delights of anticipated debauch.” The two bartenders, urbane fellows, when they are not “deal[ing] out low anecdote to vulgar idlers,” are mixing drinks using “the choicest liquors and artificial beverages that the world produces.” Ultimately, he concludes,

I have seen purer liquors, better segars, finer tobacco, truer guns and pistols, larger dirks and bowie knives, and prettier courtezans here, than in any other place I have ever visited; and it is my unbiased opinion that California can and does furnish the best bad things that are obtainable in America.

Just the place for a brash twenty-year-old with an outsize helping of go-ahead and a way with the artificial beverages. But in Jerry Thomas that go-ahead often expressed itself as restlessness, and at some point in 1850 or 1851, “getting tired of whiskey and sixshooters” (to pinch a phrase from his obituarist in the *World*) he downed his bartending tools and organized what he recalled in 1882 as “the first band of minstrels in California, the bills being written out by hand and posted up with pitch pine gum for want of tacks.” The blacked-up, fiddle-banjo-and-percussion minstrel outfits were the rock and roll bands of their day, only with the racial politics right out in the open for anyone to see. They were enormously popular in California, as one might imagine, and Thomas and his crew (although not actually the first, or anything like it) evidently made a killing touring the towns up and down the Sacramento River. But he didn’t last long in that business, either. This time, though, the reason for bagging it might have been more than simple boredom or twitchy legs. If the *World* is to be believed, while on the Sacramento he ran afoul of one of the great scourges of the age:

While sailing down that river on a sloop, forty of the crew died of cholera, leaving Thomas to bury their bodies on shore and pursue his melancholy

voyage to the coast. When all responsibility was over he took the cholera in a malignant form, but recovered.

Whether it was the cholera or some other reason, in early 1852, as nearly as we can determine, Thomas decided he'd had enough of El Dorado and headed back East.

Somehow or other, he had managed to amass the sum of \$16,000; at least, that's what he told both the man from the *Sun* and whomever it was Asbury got his information from. Whether it was by minstrelsy; mining, which Asbury says he continued doing while bartending; or—as Brian Rea has suggested to me—by using some of his bartending money to stake other miners and taking a share of their “earnings” in return, we'll probably never know for sure. But however he got it, it was a staggering sum (equivalents are always approximate, but it's well over \$300,000 in today's money). With that kind of money, Thomas could have afforded to take a steamboat to Panama, cross the isthmus, and take another steamboat to New Orleans or New York, returning east in a little more than a month, during which time he could be sitting with his feet up and a steady supply of Mint Juleps from the bar. Instead, though, he apparently chose to go overland through Mexico, traveling with a large group of fellow Argonauts.

The trip was not without hazards, although some were perhaps more easily avoidable than others. One of the anecdotes in the *World's* obituary, presumably drawn from Thomas's lost autobiography, recounts the time that:

he came near being shot by a mob. In a fit of California humor his party rode into a cathedral and were lighting their cigars at the candles of the altar when the natives charged on them with knives and revolvers. Thomas was protected by the British consul of the City of Mexico.

A twenty-one-year-old on his way home with a medium-size fortune in his pocket and a surfeit of Mint Julep (or mezcal) under his belt is apt to get into such scrapes, I suppose. At any rate, he seems to have made it back home without further trouble.

When Thomas got back East, he was quickly drawn into the mad vortex of light and shadow that was New York, where he took his \$16,000, as he later recalled, and “walked about with kid gloves for some time, to the great delight of myself and a select company.” I won't even speculate as to what that involved or who the company was. But when the money was gone, or most of it, he quit

perambulating and, as he recalled in 1882, “started a bar with George Earle under Barnum’s Museum, where the Herald building is now.” While he and Earle (known chiefly as an illustrator) managed to miss the New York city directory, there’s nonetheless a painting of Barnum’s Museum from 1852 with a sign reading “Exchange” on the ground floor; this being one of the many synonyms for bar, we’re on reasonably firm ground here. This bar appears to have been a busy one (see the note on [Brandy Punch](#)). It certainly had location going for it—Barnum’s Museum was one of the most popular attractions in the city, and at the time that part of the unregulated maelstrom of horses, wagons, carriages, and darting, weaving pedestrians that was Broadway was as lively as any stretch of road on Earth. It’s hard to imagine he wasn’t making money there. No matter. Within months, Thomas was pulling up stakes again.

Let’s not worry too much about the next four or five years. The only firm data we have find him running the City Hotel, New Haven, with one Andrew J. Thomas, either another brother or a cousin (David H. Thomas, perhaps Jerry’s older brother, had been running it a couple of years earlier). Beyond that, there’s the brief sentence the Professor dictated to the man from the *Sun*: “In ’53 [I] went as bartender to the Mills House in Charleston; followed that up by similar professional efforts in Chicago, St. Louis, and along the Mississippi.” One of his obituaries has him briefly running a saloon in the busted-flush boomtown of Keokuk, Iowa. Another tacks Nashville and Mobile onto the list. The preface to his book adds that he was “proprietor of one of the most recherche saloons in New Orleans” and that the stint in St. Louis was as “presiding deity” over the bar at the Planter’s House hotel, generally regarded at the time as the best in all the West. Unfortunately, beyond a lone entry in the St. Louis city directory from 1854 to 1855 that has one “J. P. Thomas” running a livery stable in town (it was entirely possible to run a stable and bartend at the same time, and the Professor always did have an interest in horses), we have nothing to corroborate any of it. Not a single document, directory entry, reminiscence, nothing. But itinerant young bartenders are hard to track even in the Internet age, at least until they become stars and get located—which is precisely what happened to Jerry Thomas in 1858, when a job brought him back to New York. It was a good one: principal bartender at the large and very fashionable Metropolitan Hotel, perched at the corner of Prince Street and Broadway, in the heart of the city’s shopping district.

THE SPORTING FRATERNITY

Before telling the rest of Jerry Thomas's story, it's worth pausing for a moment to discuss the so-called Sporting Fraternity, as the loose association of individuals whose avocation was the life of sports and games was known. It didn't look at sports the way you or I might. While it might maintain a general, conversational sort of interest in all species of contests of man against man, man against beast, beast against beast or anything against the clock, when it came right down to it there were only two sports that really counted, and you didn't actually play either one of them. You watched them from a safe distance, limiting your participation to the realm of speculative finance. The Turf and the Ring. Now, while Thomas certainly had an interest in the Sport of Kings (he had racing books, or pools, operating out of all his later saloons and in 1882, at least, he owned a race horse, albeit a leaden-hoofed one), by his own testimony his real passion was for the squared circle: As he told the *Sun* in 1882, he had been present at twenty-nine bare-knuckle prizefights, including the epic 1860 battle between the American John Carmel Heenan, a fellow son of upstate New York whom he had known in California, and the Englishman Tom Sayers, for the first heavyweight championship of the world.

But to be a member of the Sporting Fraternity involved far more than merely taking an interest in sports. In the nineteenth century, there were really two Americas; two kinds of Americans. There were the ones to whom the idea of freedom upon which the country was founded meant something like, "If I work hard, avoid temptation and play by the rules, I will be unmolested in my enjoyment of the fruits of my labors," and the ones to whom it meant, "Nobody can tell me what to do." The Victorians and the Sporting Fraternity. While the first group tried to lead a measured life, centered on work and the home with a weekly detour through church, the Sports (who came from all degrees of society) hung around in saloons and gambling halls, avoiding their civic duty to act all responsible and work long, sober hours for peanuts to increase the profits of other men. If they had hearths to go home to, you wouldn't know it. If they belonged to a church, you wouldn't know that either. And as for money, when they had it they had it and when they didn't you wouldn't know it by looking at them—the sporting life was all about maintaining a front, and a true sport would spend his last fifty cents on a cognac Cocktail and having his coat brushed, with

a ten-cent tip for the boy who brushed it. You were rich, you were broke, you were rich again—sometimes all on the same day. For the Victorians, money was an object; for the Sports, it was a process.

Some parts of America were more congenial to the fraternity than others. Small towns were bad, big cities were good, and some—New York, New Orleans, Chicago—were exceptionally good. New England was lukewarm at best; California, Nevada, and anywhere along the Mississippi were very good. Some professions were sportier than others, too. Some of them were even legal: actor, musician, newspaperman, politician. And, of course, saloonkeeper. In fact, as Mark Twain wrote in *Roughing It*, “I am not sure but that the saloonkeeper held a shade higher rank than any other member of society. . . . Youthful ambition hardly inspired so much to the honors of the law, or the army and navy as to the dignity of proprietorship in a saloon. To be a saloonkeeper . . . was to be illustrious.” He was talking specifically about Nevada, but his words could have applied equally well to anywhere the fraternity congregated.



The Yankee bartender of myth (as visualized by *Punch*, 1883; author's collection).

If his chosen profession or the prizefights, or the towns he tended to gravitate to, or the fact that he always seemed to have a book running out of his bar (if it wasn't horse, it was riflery contests, elections, or any other damn thing you could put money on), or the Parisian gold watch he always wore with the

golden seal, sovereign, and “dog’s head” on the other end of its heavy gold chain, or his close involvement with the theater and its folk weren’t enough to mark Jerry Thomas as a member of the Sporting Fraternity, that bit with the \$16,000, the kid gloves, and the select company should be a dead giveaway. Considering that room and board at the Astor House, New York’s best hotel, went for \$2 a night and dinner with rare wines at Delmonico’s might conceivably cost as much as \$5, for Thomas to blow such a sum in the few months between his return from California and his employment at the Mills House speaks to a serious dedication to amusement. Either that or sports betting.

If you’re still not convinced, there’s the story of Jerry Thomas and the *City of New York*—not the metropolis, but the balloon. In the fall of 1859, when Thomas was shaking Cobblers at the Metropolitan, one of the hotel’s guests was Professor Thaddeus S. C. Lowe, a rangy gentleman from New Hampshire of about Thomas’s age and restless disposition. Lowe had a plan: He was going to sail across the Atlantic in a balloon. The *City of New York* was no ordinary Montgolfier device. It was a massive contraption, 132 feet in diameter and 250 feet tall, including the metal lifeboat that was to dangle beneath it and pull it through the air with a steam-driven propeller. It was to be inflated with coal gas from New York’s gas mains and launched from the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street, where the New York Public Library stands today.

When Thomas caught wind of Lowe’s scheme—it was impossible not to; it was the talk of the town—he was more than interested. Indeed, as his fellow bartender at the Metropolitan, Ed Gilmore, later told the man from the *World*:

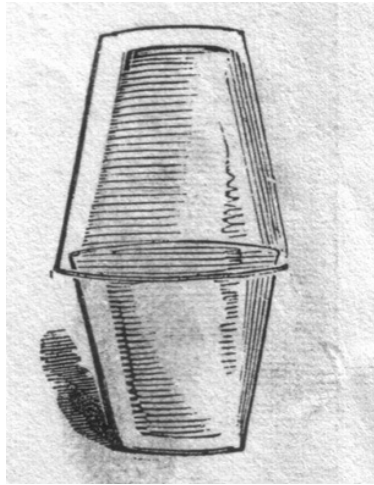
Jerry Thomas was half crazy over the project. . . . Jerry became so enthusiastic about the balloon that he agreed to sail in it across the ocean. In fact he made extensive preparations for the trip. I remember, among other things, that he bought a sealskin coat, together with sealskin boots and trousers, to withstand the intense cold that was supposed to prevail above the Atlantic. He also provided himself with a big knife for killing sharks in case he should be forced to cut loose from the balloon and drop into the sea.

Fortunately or unfortunately, but more likely the former, the city’s gas company couldn’t supply enough of the stuff to fill the balloon, and the departure date came and went. This might have been a great setback for Thomas at the time—to be one of Lowe’s fellow aeronauts was a coveted thing and a guarantee of fame, whether one made it to the Old World or expired in knife

fights with schools of sharks. But Thomas's destiny lay elsewhere. As Gilmore put it, "the balloon did not sail and the inventor of mixed drinks was saved to the country."

MIXING EXCELLENT DRINKS

One thing Mark Twain was wrong about: He considered keeping a saloon to be “the cheapest and easiest way to become an influential man and be looked up to.” Tell that to the New York barkeeper George Augustus Sala described in an 1853 article in Dickens’s popular journal, *Household Words*:



The cocktail shaker, in its youth (*Illustrated London News*, 1850; author’s collection).

The bar keeper is a scholar and a gentleman, as well as an accomplished artist, captain of a fire company, and, I believe, a man of considerable property, and unapproachable skill in compounding and arranging these beverages, and making them not only exquisite to the taste, but delightful to the view. His drinks are pictures. [Here I’ve omitted a very long and thirst-provoking paean to one of this paragon’s “Fiscal Agents,” apparently a sort of fancy Julep.] The barkeeper and his assistants possess the agility of acrobats and the prestidigitative skill of magicians. They are all bottle conjurors.—They toss the drinks about; they throw brimful glasses over their heads; they shake the saccharine, glacial and alcoholic ingredients in their long tin tubes; they scourge eggs and cream into froth; they send bumpers shooting down the bar from one end to the other without spilling a drop; they give change, talk politics, tell quaint anecdotes, swear strange oaths, smoke, chew and expectorate with astonishing celerity and dexterity. I should like to be a barkeeper, if I were clever enough.

Admittedly, Sala might be laying it on a bit thick, but only a bit (and knowing Sala, who always displayed a detailed curiosity in the American mixological arts, he was only half kidding about wanting to be a barkeeper). If the efforts of Willard and Cato and Peter Brigham (the probable inventor of that Fiscal Agent, by the way) had established the basic techniques and procedures of mixing individual drinks *à la minute*, the mixologists of the 1850s lit the afterburners. Clearly, to preside over a bar like this—although the *Brooklyn Eagle* identified it as the St. Nicholas, the description could apply just as well to the Metropolitan—one needed formidable skills. But one also had to be a sporting character of wide experience and infinite jest; as the *Chicago Tribune* noted in 1870, a good barkeeper

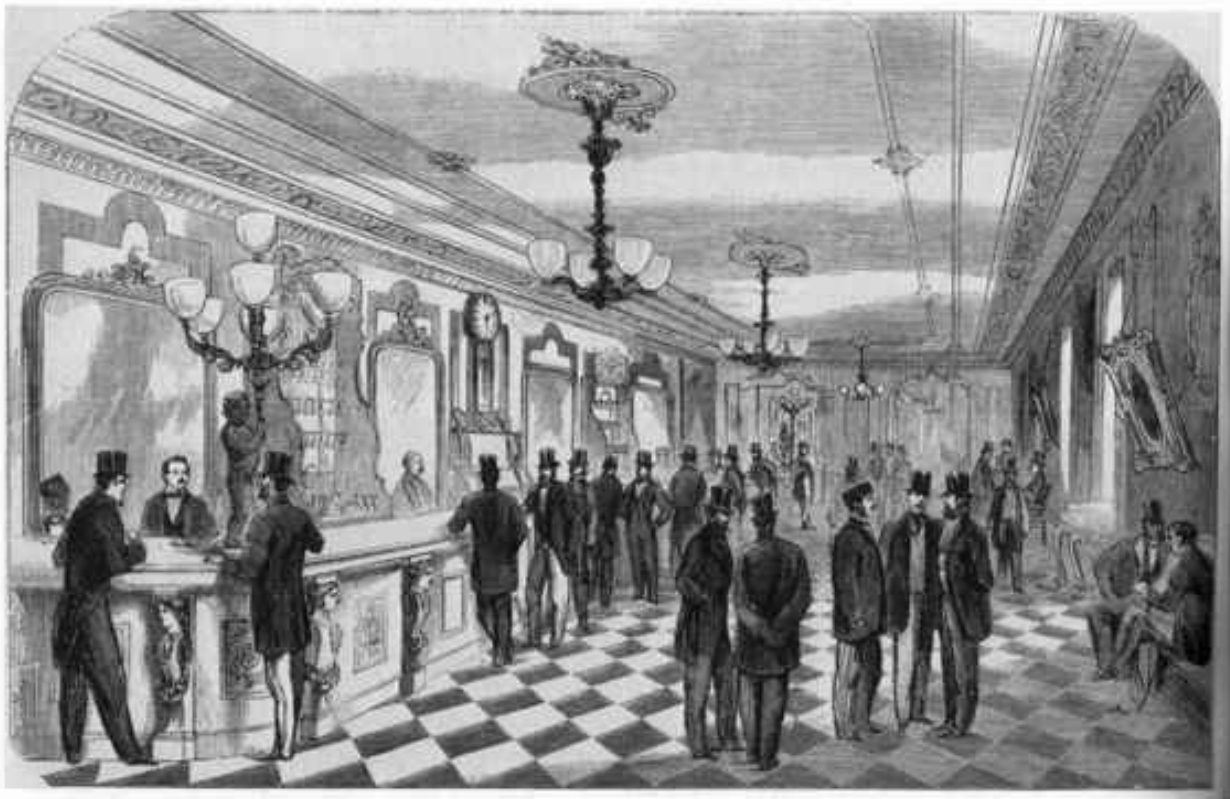
becomes part and parcel of a saloon, knows all the customers, is on familiar terms with them, learns to call them Tom, Dick and Harry, knows their weaknesses for a particular tippie, and mixes it to suit their tastes. . . . Sporting news is his delight. He is learned on the base ball nines, pretends to forecast the result of the coming prize fight, talks wisely of the last “chicken dispute,” and criticizes actors and actresses with a happy confidence in his own opinions. He is a two-legged sporting journal with a dramatic column.

Jerry Thomas was just that. Indeed, Charles Leland, the owner of the Metropolitan, would later tell the *New York World* that “Jerry Thomas was the best barkeeper I ever saw” and that “he had no rival in the city.” For the next eighteen years, all those skills and the jest that went with them would keep Thomas in the limelight as America’s most famous bartender.

His run at the top started off auspiciously enough when, after a couple years at the Metropolitan building Juleps and shaking Punches for the elite of the theatrical and political worlds of New York and a quick sporting jaunt to London for the Heenan–Sayers fight* and to the Continent for the sights (while in London he may have done some bartending; as to precisely where, the complete lack of evidence allows many theories to bloom), the thirty-year-old Thomas opened his own place, just a couple of blocks up from the Metropolitan at 622 Broadway. That was in October 1860. He and his brother George, his partner in the enterprise, didn’t hold back. Charles W. Nash, Thomas’s contemporary and fellow saloonkeeper, called it “the finest drinking resort in America” and said, “Nothing like it had been seen in New York at that time, and its opening was an event.” The saloon was in the same building as Laura Keane’s New Theatre and

probably, as was customary, attached to it. Certainly Laura Keene (the most popular actress of her day and the only one to run her own theater company) displayed no conspicuous temperance proclivities that would have prevented the usual connecting door being opened. In which case Thomas might have noticed, one night in 1861, an intense, dreamy-eyed man on the edge of middle age pop in for a quick Gin Cocktail or Santa Cruz Sour. Some old friends of Stephen Foster's were in town from Pittsburgh and had managed to extricate the songwriter, then just beginning his final slide into destitution and death, from the East Side liquor groceries where he was killing himself on adulterate rum. After dinner at the St. Nicholas, they treated him to a play at Laura Keene's. I can't imagine Foster handling the second half without a bracer.

Foster wasn't the only celebrity to come within the Professor's orbit at 622. The same month the saloon opened, Queen Victoria's son Edward, the Prince of Wales, visited New York. The reception he received was overwhelming—for a free people, Americans of the day were shocking royalists. Poor Edward's hotel, the Fifth Avenue at Twenty-Third and Fifth, was so besieged by crowds that he was essentially trapped there.



"The Newly-Opened BarRoom of Messrs. Thomas Bros., Corner of Broadway and Washington Place." *The New York Illustrated News*, 1860 (presumably that's the Professor himself, lurking behind

the point of the bar next to his black barback; author's collection).

In 1902, however, an old newshound by the name of George Forrester Williams published an interesting story to the effect that one night during the prince's visit, he and Mortimer Thomson, a fellow scribe who had achieved a fair degree of fame for the dialect humor he wrote under the pseudonym "Doesticks," managed to achieve a private audience with His Royal Highness. Upon perceiving how miserable the man was to be trapped in his hotel, they suggested sneaking him out the back way for a quick tour of the neighborhood. He immediately assented (for more on the prince, see the [Prince of Wales's Cocktail](#)). Because the crowd was watching the front—royalty doesn't use the back door—things went off without a hitch. The trio stalked briskly down Twenty-Third Street toward Sixth Avenue, a street of saloons, gambling houses, minstrel theaters, dance halls, and oyster houses. Real New York. As they turned up Sixth, Doesticks posed the question: "Have you ever drunk a mint julep, sir?"

No, the prince had not. Yes, he would. And here's the kicker: "Thomson led the prince into a famous barroom presided over by the no less famous Jerry Thomas, one of the greatest artists in his line or time." His Royal Highness watched the "elaborate and picturesque style of manufacture practiced by the mixers of elixirs in those antebellum days with profound curiosity and admiration," took a sip, said, "Why, it's only a lemonade, after all," revised his opinion as the Julep-glow suffused him, and pronounced it "very, very nice." End of anecdote. Now, if there were ever two people who should have met, they were the Prince of Wales and Jerry Thomas; they had much in common, from a deep curiosity into the composition of drinks to an interest in the operation of the rules of probability to an unshakable personal dignity leavened with humor. But the details, the details. Williams had to have gotten either his geography or his bartender wrong. Assuming the former, a thing easy to do after forty-two years, the story is plausible, particularly considering the publicity that attended the recent opening of Thomas's bar, which would have made it the natural place to take a visiting sport. But Williams might not have told the whole of it.

According to one Richard Doolittle, a New York businessman, the outing was rather wilder than Williams, who has things ending quickly and sedately, let on. As Doolittle recalled in 1892, the prince and his party ended up downtown (another point for Williams's having mistaken his geography), rather worse for the wear, and—as happens in these situations—got separated. "The heir to Britain's throne wandered, unattended, into a . . . resort and proceeded to make

things pretty lively,” whereupon “the bartender started in to squelch him, and would have done so effectually had I not taken charge of the roisterer and piloted him back to his party.” Start in with “lemonade” like Jerry Thomas’s and there’s no telling where the evening will take you.

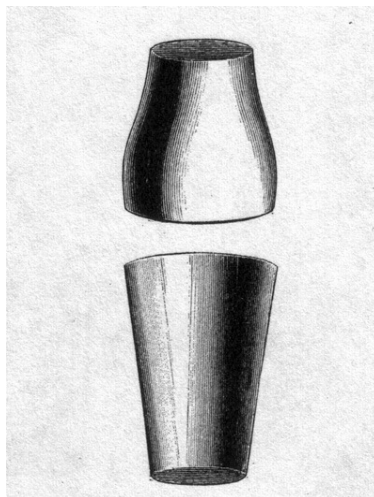
Splendid as it was, Thomas didn’t keep that bar long. “Unfortunately,” as Charles Nash explained it, “he bought everything on credit, and in a few months the Sheriff levied on the costly liquors and closed up the place.” This would not be the last time Thomas couldn’t keep a business open. It was while he was at 622 Broadway, though, or soon after, that he did something no American bartender had ever done before: He put the unruly mass of formulas that every skilled mixologist carried around in his head down on paper. Barkeepers tended to regard their recipes as trade secrets, not to be exposed to the *vulgus profanum*. For whatever reason, though, Jerry Thomas broke the mold, contracting with the New York publishing firm of Dick & Fitzgerald to thoroughly revise and expand, and attach his name to, the *BarTenders Guide* (alias *How to Mix Drinks*, alias *The Bon-Vivant’s Companion*) they had been planning to print since 1859. The book was well received when it came out in 1862—the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, for example, deemed it “unique, carefully prepared and perfect of its kind”—and sold widely, but it was work for hire and the Professor received none of the royalties. It certainly didn’t hurt his star power, anyway, and on the strength of that he was able to go in 1863 to the Occidental in San Francisco, another property run by the Leland brothers.

There might have been more to Thomas’s going west than mere opportunity for profit: In the summer of 1863, as the Civil War was raging, the draft came to New York, and Jerry Thomas was highly eligible. The sporting milieu he was a part of looked unkindly on the war to begin with, and a bolt hole in San Francisco must have seemed pretty attractive. Whatever his reasons for going out there, the city found him attractive in turn: “Certainly,” wrote a reporter for the *Evening Bulletin* after observing Thomas at work, “we have never seen a man who could mix a cocktail better or more gracefully.”

While Thomas was at the Occidental, he wrote a second book, this one without the aid of a revenue-siphoning publisher. Its title was pure Jerry Thomas: *Portrait Gallery of Distinguished BarKeepers*. This was an obvious poke at James Herring’s 1835 *National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans*, a popular work of high moral purpose that included no barkeepers. Thomas’s book, a sort of sporting-life pendant to Herring’s, set out to redress that lack. It began with a series of biographical portraits of the leading bartenders

of his day, illustrated by Thomas's own hand (as Edward Hingston noted, "Mr. Jerry Thomas . . . is clever also with his pencil as well as with his pen; and behind his bar are specimens of his skill as a draughtsman") and culminating in his autobiography. Then there were general notes on bartending and finally a generous selection of recipes for mixed drinks, both his own and ones that he had gathered on his travels.

That, at least, is what we can gather from the extensive review of the book the *San Francisco Daily Alta* printed in late 1863. Unfortunately, Thomas was never much of a businessman, and his experience as a publisher merely reinforces that conclusion. Beyond that review in the *Alta* and a little satirical squib about the book in a Nevada paper, the book sank without so much as a trail of bubbles. It's possible that the Professor's obituarist from the *New York World* had a copy, or knew someone who did, but—well, put it this way: In today's cocktail-conscious times, when an original copy of his 1862 book—hardly a rare volume—brings thousands of dollars and anything from the nineteenth century with a cocktail recipe or two brings hundreds, not a single copy of his *Portrait Gallery* has turned up. Not in a library, not on eBay, not in private hands or public archives. A copy apparently existed in 1961—it is listed in a sale record—but if it still does, it's buried in a collection so obscure that even all the shouting of Thomas's name from the bartops in the last few years has failed to summon it forth. We live in hope, anyway.



An American shaker now also known as the Parisian shaker (1878; author's collection).

All is not lost, however. Fortunately, one of the worst habits of nineteenth-century publishers offers us a window into Thomas's evolving mixology, at

least: In 1867, a San Francisco printer by the name of Charles B. Campbell took the *Portrait Gallery*, stripped out the biographical bits and the pictures, boiled Thomas's introduction down to a scant couple of paragraphs, trimmed a few of the more identifiable recipes and tacked on a few others he found lying around the city and put the resulting hodgepodge out as *The American Barkeeper*.^{*} We know this because the introduction to the book repeats verbatim several phrases quoted in the *Daily Alta*'s review of Thomas's book and recipes for most of the drinks cited in the review, many of them otherwise unattested, appear in the Campbell volume.

The fortunes of Thomas's book were likely affected by the Professor's next move: rather than stay at the Occidental, where he could have passed the volume along to the steady stream of clay-moistening literati who stopped in at his bar, he pulled up stakes yet again and headed east to witness the vast and vulgar spectacle that was unfolding 200 miles away in Virginia City, Nevada, where a city of 30,000 had sprung up overnight on top of the massive mountain of silver known as the Comstock Lode. By 1864, Thomas was there, either (as local legend has it) at the famous Delta Saloon or at the Spalding Saloon on C Street, where the city directory found him—or, of course, at both. Wherever he wielded his shaker, he would've known the local newspaperman Samuel Clemens, who was then just beginning his literary career and didn't think a Whiskey Cocktail would bite, much. Unfortunately, the *Territorial Enterprise*, Twain's paper, burned in one of Virginia City's frequent fires, and all its archives and most of its back issues with it.

In 1865, as soon as the shooting stopped, Jerry Thomas was back in New York (this time he went by steamship). After a spell back in his old job at the Metropolitan, in 1866 he and his brother George opened a saloon at the very fashionable address of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-Second Street, just south of Madison Square. The space, at 937 Broadway, was "a narrow strip about 15 feet wide and 150 feet deep," as the *New York Times* described it, that ran through the block and had a second entrance on Fifth and a "long room" upstairs for meetings (the local Republican Party was a regular customer). "It was a great place," the Professor recalled in 1882.

After two years our bar receipts ran \$400 a day, and the way people used to drop in to look at Mr. Thomas Nast's pictures was a pleasing thing to us, who stood ready to serve them with what they wished to drink when they were done. You remember the Hogarth prints, the full set, without mercy—

the fine illustration on steel of Mr. and Mrs. Gyges that—what’s his name?—the father of history—Herodotus—tells about, and the oysters and rarebits, cooked special, to say nothing of the chops, and the fat and lean looking glasses (for the first time), and the tables that ran along all in a row, as cosy as chickens on a roost and not near so crowded.

Between the art and the drinks and the free lunch and the steaks and chops and the funhouse mirrors, for a few years there the Thomas brothers ran what was probably the most famous free-standing bar in America. According to an 1871 article in *Appleton’s Magazine*, it was a “favorite resort of the American *jeunesse doreé*” and, after the bar at the nearby Fifth Avenue Hotel, “probably the most frequented place after dark” in the city. (There was the occasional dissenter: In 1871 one fastidious habitué labeled the bar “a dreadful hodgepodge of art, liquor and actors,” but that was certainly a minority opinion.)

Things were so good that for once the Professor stayed put. In fact, in 1867 he even got married. Henrietta Bergh Waites, a New York City native, was a widow some five years younger than her husband with a teenage daughter, also named Henrietta. Before long, she had another child to take care of: Milton was born the next year. A daughter, Louise, followed some three years after that. For a time, anyway, Jerry Thomas was a family man and a successful businessman—a proper Victorian. He even took to joining things—he turned up as a member of the stuffy Wine & Spirit Traders’ Society and the rather less tony Fat Men’s Association (at a portly but still mobile 205 pounds, he was one of the lightest members). He was a Mason of the thirty-second degree.

As the Professor’s reminiscences suggest, he had more than a passing interest in the contemporary equivalent of pop art—indeed, his place was “a museum as well as a bar,” to quote *Appleton’s*, containing “all, or nearly all, the caricatures of celebrities, painted by Nast for the *bal d’opéra* a few years ago; to these a good many additions have been made, so that Jerry Thomas’s comic gallery is as well visited and appreciated as the exhibitions of the National Academy.” And well it might be—the walls of his saloon displayed caricatures of all the political and theatrical figures of the day, drawn by the most popular artists. Nast, though, was the star; the most celebrated and controversial caricaturist of his day, through his platform in *Harper’s* magazine he was a political and cultural force to be reckoned with. When he did your caricature, you’d best make sure you saw it, and many of his subjects—such as Ulysses S. Grant—did just that.

It couldn't have hurt Thomas's collecting that he was an artist himself. Indeed, according to Thomas, his work, "Jerry Thomas's 'Original Dream,' which is a vision of all the famous men and women of America sitting together in three tiers, . . . tickled P. T. Barnum so much that he came and asked me to make him one like it, only having him, of course, asleep in the big, crimson-cushioned, central arm-chair, instead of me." It remains one of my fondest hopes that this book will spur some talented researcher in American art to track down one or both of these *Dreams*—and, while he or she is at it, the *Portrait Gallery*. Might as well also throw in the "magnificent set of solid silver bar utensils constructed at a cost of \$4,000 for his own personal use" that Asbury claims Thomas took to Europe with him. Jerry Thomas had his dream and I have mine.

In 1872, faced with the kind of massive rent increases that are an eternal characteristic of the New York real estate market, the Thomas brothers moved their operation uptown to 1239 Broadway, near West Thirtieth Street. This was a barn of a place, two stories tall with galleries around the sides, a furnished basement, and rooms in the back. What's more, it was in the heart of the rip-roaring Tenderloin, where New York came to unwind (either within the bounds of the law or without). Apparently, it was business as usual, if on a grander scale: Thomas was surrounded by his pictures, and the place was, as one history of the New York stage notes, "popular with Wall Street men and members of the theatrical profession"—key constituencies for building a clientele. Finance and celebrities. In fact, Thomas's bar was popular enough to become proverbial, the name you would reach for when you were looking for an example of a New York saloon. It appears as such, for example, in two of the popular dialect humor books by "Eli Perkins" (alias New York journalist Melville D. Landon), and in 1875, it even made it into poetry, when George Augustus Baker Jr. included a stanza in his "Les Enfants Perdus," a bittersweet ode to New York's gilded youth, wherein the "juvenile Comuses" all drink Champagne and are "known at Jerry Thomas's." In April 1873, as if to celebrate the permanent prosperity of the Thomas Gallery, as they were calling the place, the brothers held a party for the unveiling of a new sculpture, right in the middle of the bar: D. B. Sheehan's work, wrote *Turf, Field & Farm* magazine, was "a life-size representation of the immortal Jerry Thomas . . . so strikingly natural that you almost expect to hear it speak." A tad excessive, perhaps, but it went with the rest of the decor, particularly the nine gargantuan "tippling postures" of the Professor mixing drinks that Thomas Nast painted on the walls (including one, as a regular fondly recalled in 1910, with "Jerry . . . pouring a cocktail from the mixer into a glass

with wide outstretched arms”). More things for that researcher to track down.

But even with George’s help, money was a problem. Sure, the place was pulling in at the very least \$200 a day, at a time when a bar could turn a profit on \$50 a week. But it had cost, according to the *New York Evening Telegram*, \$10,000 to set up the place—nothing but the best for Jerry Thomas—and even at a 50 percent profit, as was customary in the business, that took some paying off. Plus expenses were high and Jerry, at least, was not careful with his money. In July 1873, the brothers doubled down on the art, rechristened the place “Jerry P. Thomas’ Museum and Art Gallery” and had a “grand re-opening,” complete with a “full band” and (of course) free food and drinks. That didn’t quite do it, so in 1874, they took more drastic measures to pull in the masses. Their solution: billiards tables—indeed, “the largest and finest Billiard Room in the world.” Soon there were also “four of the finest Bowling Alleys in the world.” But why stop there? The crowning touch was “the largest and most perfect Shooting Gallery” (yes, you read that correctly) containing “four separate ranges—60, 75, 100 and 110 feet—each with an electric target which shows all bull’s eye hits by an annunciator.”* If you think all this makes Thomas’s bar sound more like a spiflicated Chuck E. Cheese’s than the sort of low-key, contemplative thirst-emporium we’ve become accustomed to frequenting for our preprandial cocktail, you’re not wrong. Still, it worked, for a time.

By 1875, however, the Thomases had seen the way the wind was blowing and, as a last resort, let in the pool sellers. Here *pool* was used in the same sense as we use it in “office football pool.” The pool sellers were bookmakers, and they did a brisk business at Thomas’s bar (in 1871, he had written an indignant note to the *Tribune* when it associated his name with a gambling house, but hard times make a monkey eat red peppers, as the saying goes). Unfortunately, their profits were not Jerry and George’s profits.

In mid-1876, Jerry Thomas was done, broke, and had to sell his store to John Morrissey. (Alas, not even his artistic skills could help him: The patent he was awarded on February 1, 1876, for a kind of signboard “intended to represent a book suspended by the head-band or upper end as is very commonly done with directories or other books for public reference” failed to pull him out of the hole.) His obituaries blamed the closing on financial problems caused by buying stocks on margin. Knowing the Professor’s clientele and knowing his sporting proclivities, I have little reason to doubt them. Thus ended Jerry Thomas’s run as a star.

EPILOGUE

With the closing of this, his last high-profile bar, Jerry Thomas was relegated to keeping establishments in out-of-the-way corners of the city. The first was at 3 Barclay Street, across the street from the faded glory that was the old Astor House Hotel (no billiards tables here; plenty of pool selling). Then, after an abortive attempt to return to his old Broadway barn, running it this time as “Thomas’ Opera House,” a combination saloon and minstrel theater (“Jerry Thomas may succeed well enough in mixing [eggs and milk] with liquor, but when he attempts to mix minstrelsy with liquor he is forced to cry quits,” as the *New York Clipper* opined in February, 1879) and a last, Hail Mary fling at easy money in Denver and Leadville, where gold fever was again running high, he returned to New York for good. 1880 saw him open his “Beer Tunnel and Grand Central Café” (another pool room) on Park Avenue, across from the Grand Central depot, where it failed to make any waves at all. In November 1881, Jerry Thomas opened his last saloon on Sixth Avenue and West Tenth Street, under the elevated tracks across from the Jefferson Market police court. In these last two enterprises he was without George, who wisely retired from the saloon trade and went into banking, although he still appeared as a member of Jerry’s enigmatic Gourd Club.*



The Professor's (enigmatic) card (1882; courtesy John C. Burton).

In March 1882, the Professor had to sell out for good. This time the pictures had to go, too—auctioned off to various fellow bartenders and Sarony, the famous portrait photographer. The highest price paid at his auction was a paltry \$26, for a caricature of the editor of one of New York's second-tier newspapers. All the Hogarths together brought a mere \$49.50.

Although the reporter from the *Sun* who talked to him before his final sale had found the Professor full of big plans for reopening on Broadway, he never owned a saloon again. For a time after this, by one account he briefly tended bar in New Rochelle (his wife and children lived in nearby Mamaroneck; the 1880 Census says that he was living there with them, but it also has him boarding on Fourth Avenue in Manhattan), and then for a good stretch at the quaint old Central Park Hotel, a wooden structure at the corner of Seventh Avenue and West Fifty-Ninth Street (while there, he gave a testimonial to the makers of St. Jacobs Oil, a patent medicine, who used it in their advertising; ostensibly it had cured him of his neuralgia). This is where Alan Dale of the *Dramatic Mirror* found him, tending bar one Sunday afternoon in blatant disregard of the city's blue laws. "He was a stout, thick, good-tempered-looking, greasy little man, of about fifty-five years of age," he recalled. While that "greasy little man" hurts (I must confess), it's true that the Professor was sick and broke, and that never presents you at your best. Nonetheless, "his forehead was bulging, as became a master-mind" and "his aspect was severely respectable," and when he introduced himself, giving Dale the full "Jeremiah P. Thomas," he expected to be recognized—as well he should have.

He was still full of plans. This time, he was going to go over to London to set up a bar that would straighten out their garbled notions of American drinks:

Then I'll teach the Britishers what's what. Then there'll be no need to brew bogus Yankee drinks. No, sir, for I'll give them the full benefit of my inventions, and they shall see what kind of a boy a New York bartender is. I'll revolutionize the bar in England when I go over, you bet your boots!

Instead of London, he went to Brighton. The Hotel Brighton, that is—a rather seedy, gambler-infested joint at Broadway and Forty-Second Street, whose "café" (for which read *bar*) he began managing at the end of 1884, supposedly with the intention of turning it into a real attraction. But on

December 14, 1885, he left work right after noon, went back to his house at Ninth Avenue and West Sixty-Third Street, and dropped dead. His death certificate lists “Vascular Disease of the Heart” as the cause. He was fifty-five years old. His grave, near the northeast corner of the “Poplar” plot in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, is marked by a stone that reads simply “J P. Thomas”—punctuated exactly like that.

The *New York Times*, the *New York Post*, the *New York World*, and a bevy of other papers, from one end of the country to the other, all printed substantial obituaries of Jerry Thomas, almost all of them chockablock with inaccuracies, all of them crediting him with drinks he didn’t invent. His real epitaph, though, came a few months before he died, in an editorial from the *Brooklyn Eagle*:

A man does not need to be very old to remember a time when the average barkeeper was a very different sort of person from what he is at present. During the war and some years after it when money was flush and times booming the average barkeeper, with his pomade plastered hair, his alleged diamonds, his loud oaths and his general aspect of bravado, was a sort of a cross between a dandy and a highwayman. . . . This old type of bar keeper has disappeared from the earth as completely as the mammoth and the present age knows him no more. Anything constructed on his lines turned into a modern bar-room would convert it into a solitary desert in a couple of weeks. The modern American will not submit to the same kind of treatment which his free born fathers endured; he looks for civility and he declines to go where rowdy instincts are rampant.

When the *Sun* interviewed Jerry Thomas in 1882, the reporter couldn’t help but note that, “two white rats that were pretty enough to be guinea pigs, and that would be taken for such except for their long and unmistakable tails, cut capers upon his shoulders, caressed him at the corners of his moustache, and mounted occasionally to the top of his Derby hat, whence he removed them with a patient persistency that had no effect upon them whatsoever.” Yeah.

HOW TO MIX DRINKS, OR WHAT WOULD JERRY THOMAS DO?

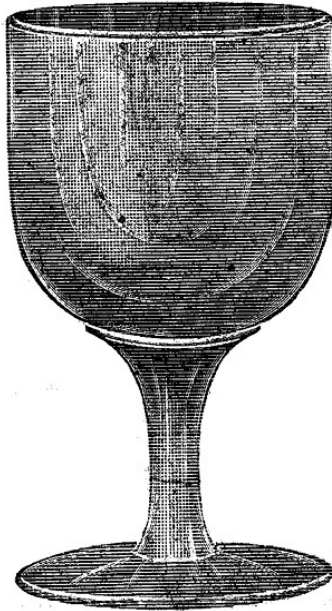
Jerry Thomas would have laughed at the very idea that you could learn how to mix drinks from a book. Sure, you could pick up a few recipes, a few proportions in which to combine the standard ingredients, but turning them into a liquid work of art and making a bar full of skeptical, sporty gents give props as you do it? That's like learning to box, or play Hamlet, from a book. The only way to master such things is to glue your eyes on the people who know how to do it and then practice, practice, practice. Accordingly, his recipes are essentially devoid of the helpful hints that one finds in modern essays in the genre. Indeed, not until the 1880s, when the profession was losing its ties to the Sporting Fraternity and started admitting miscellaneous clerks, waiters, and immigrants, did you find mixographers giving tips on technique, and even then they rarely tackled anything so basic as how to hold a shaker or what kind of strainer to use.

I can see their point. Thirty seconds spent watching Dale DeGroff effortlessly waltz the ice around in his mixing glass as he stirs a Martini will teach you more about the proper use of the barspoon than thirty pages of dense prose on the topic. In other words, this book can't teach you how to mix drinks like Jerry Thomas; no book can. The Professor's art came from constant practice and the knowledge that what he was doing was important to his customers and they'd think badly of him, who was as good a man as any of 'em, if he screwed it up. All I can do is explain how they used to do it, supply modern equivalents for things that no longer exist, and pass along a few hard-earned pointers from my experience with making these drinks. Fortunately, while that might not have you tossing drinks over your head in liquid rainbows as white rats frolic on your shoulders, it'll at least have you turning out some pretty damn tasty drinks.

I. How THEY USED TO Do IT

If literature and painting can have their ages and eras, so then can mixology. In fact, considered from the perspective of the man behind the bar, the 140-odd years between the end of the Revolution and the imposition of Prohibition can be carved up into three Ages: the Archaic, the Baroque, and the Classic (in most arts, of course, the Classic precedes the Baroque; but what do you want from history that happens in a bar?). Fittingly enough, Jerry Thomas was born on the cusp of the second and died on the cusp of the third.

Fashion Beer Goblets.



By the mid-1870s, bartenders had taken to using goblets like this as mixing glasses, a practice that did not survive Prohibition (author's collection).

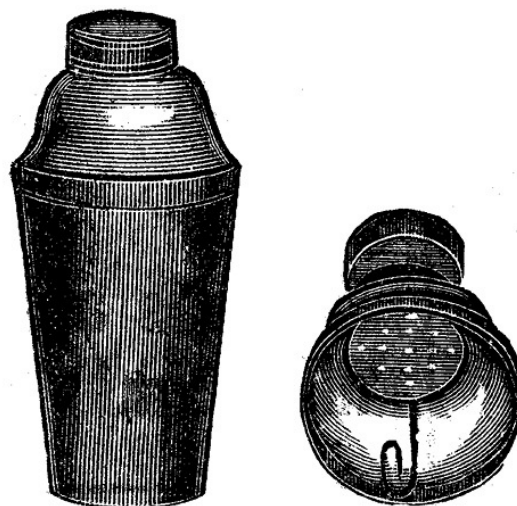
THE ARCHAIC AGE (1783–1830)

In the formative years of American mixology, the tools were few, the recipes simple, the ingredients robust, and the mixology rough and ready. Sure, the more sophisticated towns maintained a handful of establishments where a tavern keeper might have to invest in a few silver punch ladles and lemon strainers, a set of good china punch bowls, and a barrel or two of imported arrack to fill them with (the best kind came all the way from Indonesia and fetched four or five times the price good Jamaica rum did). But all the average

barkeeper needed was a knife with which to cut lemons and what-have-you, perhaps a reamer to help juice them and a strainer to catch the seeds, a nutmeg grater, and one or two pieces of equipment peculiar to the craft.

The most important of these was the toddy stick, a five-to ten-inch hardwood or silver (or whatever a sharp Yankee peddler could pass as silver) pestle with a rounded handle on one end and a flattened knob on the other. This, a somewhat more graceful version of the modern muddler (a name it began to assume in the 1830s), was the general mixing tool of the age, used to crush lumps of sugar and mix them into the drink. Since ice—in whose presence sugar dissolves poorly—was rare in drinks and boiling water common, this was entirely adequate, and its characteristic raps and taps against the side of the glass aroused much the same Pavlovian response in the toppers of the day that the rattle of ice in the shaker does now.

Beyond that he might need a loggerhead or flip dog for hot drinks (this was nothing more than an iron poker that would be heated and plunged into drinks, making them hiss and steam) and perhaps an Egg Nog stirrer, made by passing a splint of wood sideways through the end of a stick, which would then be twirled between the palms, thus whipping up the eggs. Some basic glassware—large tumblers, small tumblers, stemmed wineglasses and mugs for hot drinks—and a cruet for bitters, with a goose quill forced through the cork as a dasher spout, and the bar was equipped, at least in terms of dry goods.



No. D 82. Patent Combination Shaker.
Price.....90c

Combination shaker (author's collection).

The wet goods were equally simple and robust. While Madeiras and sherries excited the merchant class and the swells drank Champagne as always, for everyone else rum loomed large, particularly in the earlier part of the period. The good stuff came up from Jamaica and St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, the less good from Boston and Providence and the towns thereabouts. In fact, when, a bit later in the century, Maine-born dialect humorist Artemus Ward opined that New England rum “wuss nor the korn whisky of Injianny, which eats threw stone jugs & will turn the stummuck of the most shiftless Hog,” he was reflecting the consensus of public opinion. That opinion was not uninformed; but I’ll get into that later. (The great exception here was Daniel Lawrence & Sons’ Old Medford rum, a byword for quality from 1824 to 1905, when the company fell into the hands of a Lawrence who happened to be a Methodist bishop and promptly closed it.) But speaking of whiskey, barkeepers mixed drinks with that, too, although not necessarily the ones fortunate enough to work in the established cities of the East. There, the epicures preferred imported French brandy or Dutch gin—“Hollands,” as it was known—or the aged domestic brandy distilled from peaches and their pits. In the backcountry, it was whiskey (and generally unaged whiskey at that) all the way down, interrupted only by the occasional tot of cider brandy or applejack (there was a difference, as will be made clear in a few pages) or peach brandy if you were lucky. In the deep hinterlands there were also other, more eccentric distillates: things such as cornstalk rum (OK), maple rum in the north (quite good), pawpaw brandy in the West (likewise), and persimmon brandy in the south (not OK).

But that’s the way things went in the backcountry. In the city, imported spirits were common indeed. Loaf sugar—a relatively refined off-white affair that came in hard, conical loaves (barkeepers had to cut pieces off with heavy iron snips)—prevailed among the discriminate, such as the two black chimneysweeps satirized (gently, for once) in 1825 in the pages of the *New York Literary Gazette* for having palates so delicate that they would always insist on “white sugar” in their Slings. The indiscriminate or underfunded used a darker, more raw form of sugar (also produced in loaves), or molasses, or whatever the country provided in the way of maple sugar or honey or what-have-you. In the city, lemons and limes were common; in the country, they were scarce. On the other hand, country toppers could count on fresh milk and eggs and clean water whereas their city brethren found all of those problematic.

The 1810s and 1820s saw considerable development in the barkeeper’s art, as pioneers such as Willard and Cato Alexander made their influence felt and

new drinks—the individual Punch, the iced Mint Julep, the Cocktail—achieved near-universal popularity. Things were happening in the boonies as well, particularly as rum began its long decline from its perch as America’s spirit of choice and Pennsylvania’s old Monongahela rye and old bourbon from Kentucky began to come into their own.

THE BAROQUE AGE (1830–1885)

In the fifteen-odd years between Jerry Thomas’s birth and his apprenticeship behind the bar, the profession of barkeeper changed utterly. Not everywhere, of course. The land was still infested with a vast profusion of low doggeries where the man behind the stick was required to do nothing more complicated in the way of serving liquors than put them in a glass, if that—for most of the century, it was customary to put the bottle and a glass in front of the man ordering straight goods and allow him to help himself (those who took undue advantage could expect to face the barkeeper’s ridicule).

But in the best places, the barkeeper at work was, as we have seen, a marvel of the age. It was ice that did the trick; that turned him from a host and server, albeit an unusually busy one, into a juggler, a conjuror, and an artist. Iced drinks had always been available for the few, but in the 1830s, with the burgeoning trade in fresh, clean New England ice, delivered by horse-drawn carts from insulated central warehouses even in the hottest months of the year, ordinary people started getting used to the stuff, expecting it, calling for it in their drinks. Suddenly, the bartending game was entirely transformed. Ice, combined with the American drinking public’s ever-increasing preference for individual drinks made to order over things drunk communally out of bowls, meant that the barkeeper had to add a whole set of tools to his kit. Once the blocks—in New York, at least, they were cubes twenty-two inches per side—reached the bar, they had to be butchered, as it were; cut into usable pieces. This meant ice tongs and ice picks (both single-and multiple-pronged), ice shavers, icebreakers, ice axes, ice scoops, ice bags, ice mallets—a whole world of new tools to master. It also meant straws: the state of nineteenth-century dentistry dictated that if at all possible the stuff be kept away from direct contact with people’s teeth.

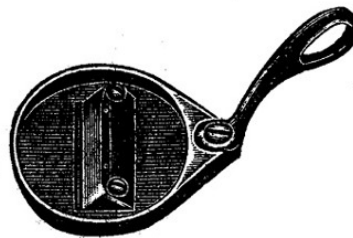


No. D 44. Ice Pick.
Hardwood Handle.....90c



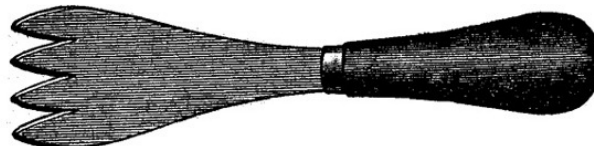
No. D 53. Best Steel Needle Ice Pick.
Price.....15c each.

No. D 300 ICE SHAVE



Will fit any glass. Can be taken in the hand and carried to the ice box, filled with shaved ice and used without wetting the hands or soiling them in any way.

Price.....35c each



No. D 55, Ice Shaver. Best Steel..... 20c each.

The nineteenth-century bartender needed a whole armory of tools to reduce the large blocks of ice he was supplied with to usable size. The No. D300 Ice Shave is designed to shave ice right into the mixing glass (author's collection).

And it also meant the eclipse of the venerable toddy stick. Once bartenders started mixing their drinks with ice, its days were numbered as the primary mixing tool due to the awkwardness of fitting both it and the ice in the same glass (its sugar-breaking function was obviated by switching to syrup). By the 1860s, after ice had found its way into just about any drink that wasn't made with actual boiling water, old-timers were reduced to fond memories of how "the ring of the tumblers, as [the toddy stick] hit the sides in mixing, had its peculiar music, with which nearly every one was familiar." Bartenders would still keep

one around, to be sure, but its uses were very limited.

For stirring, bartenders replaced the toddy stick with a long-handled spoon with a twisted stem, whose design appeared to have remained pretty much unchanged until Prohibition. Far more interesting, though, was the new method of mixing iced drinks delineated by Charles Astor Bristed in his 1852 novel, *The Upper Ten Thousand*, when one of his characters prepares a Sherry Cobbler:

He took up one of the spare glasses, covered with it the mouth of the tumbler which contained the magic compound, and shook the cobbler back and forwards from one glass to the other a dozen times without spilling a drop.



The 1840s-vintage shaker (right) was too simple and effective a device to escape the American need to improve things. The hermaphrodite shaker-strainer on the left, patented in 1882, is one of the more benign results (author's collection).

This way, the ice itself did the mixing. Neat enough, and effective (I've done it myself countless times in hotel rooms). It wasn't long, though, before the knights of the bar figured out that this is much more fun if you don't keep the glasses jammed together. Case in point, this description (from Thomas Mayne Reid's 1856 novel *Quadroon*) of a Mississippi riverboat bartender making a Julep:

He lifted the glasses one in each hand, and poured the contents from one to the other, so rapidly that ice, brandy, lemons, and all, seemed to be constantly suspended in the air, and oscillating between the glasses. The

tumblers themselves at no time approached nearer than two feet from each other! This adroitness, peculiar to his craft, and only obtained after long practice, was evidently a source of professional pride.

I shouldn't wonder. Ten or twelve tosses and the drink was mixed, and all without spilling a drop—or rather, as one barfly of the day observed, at least without seeming to.

Although spectacular, this method did have its drawbacks. For one thing, as can be readily ascertained by a few minutes spent with a couple of Old-Fashioned glasses and some ice water, it was damned difficult to do well, and damned messy to do poorly. It was also too gentle to work with every kind of drink: eggs and fruit need to be hit with some kinetic energy before they'll blend properly, and it was inadvisable to toss the drinks too hard. Writing in 1848, pioneering lowlife reporter George Foster provided the first record of the bartenders' solution and the next major addition to their kit, when he described a man behind the busy bar of a New York oyster cellar who, "with his shirt-sleeves rolled up and his face in a fiery glow, seems to be pulling long ribbons of julep out of a tin cup." This cup—it could be made of cupronickel, brass, or tin (plated or unplated) or even of solid silver (stainless steel didn't appear on the scene until the eve of Prohibition)—would be just big enough to fit over the mouth of the mixing glass, allowing it to be jammed onto it. With the ice cooling the air trapped inside, a vacuum is formed, in theory keeping the hybrid contraption from leaking without the need for any mechanical assistance and allowing the contents to be shaken with considerable violence.

This shaker, as it came to be known, went by several names. Bartending as a profession has never had a governing authority, and it's in rather trivial matters like this that the lack is most keenly felt. In 1862, Jerry Thomas noted that "every well ordered bar has a tin egg-nogg 'shaker,' which is a great aid in mixing this beverage." In 1868, though, we find George Augustus Sala writing about "a young officer in the Blues" who owned "a pair of 'cocktail-shakers,'" which he defined as "a brace of tall silver mugs in which the ingredients of the beverage known as a 'cocktail' . . . are mixed, shaken together, and then scientifically discharged." But here, it seems, the British were going their own way, both in the use of two metal cups and in what they were being called: In America, the metal shaker appears to have always been used singly, in conjunction with the mixing glass, and it wasn't until the twentieth century that it had *Cocktail* spliced onto its name, never to be torn asunder. By then, the Brits

were calling their two-cup apparatus, with rather more justification, a “Cobbler shaker” (Cobblers contain slices of citrus that need the extra mixing force; Cocktails do not) or, for reasons that have entirely eluded my or anyone else’s research, a “Boston shaker.” Bartenders being a perverse race, this last is of course the name that has stuck, although now it refers to the American-style metal-and-glass version, rather than the British all-metal one. It’s all enough to make you want to take the pledge—in which case, you’ll have to call it a “lemonade shaker,” another name that was often attached to the apparatus.

Whatever it was called, bartenders took to using this classic bit of American improvisation more and more, not just when they needed that extra oomph: It was simple, it didn’t leak (much), it was cheap, and the parts were infinitely interchangeable. It was often used in conjunction with another piece of gear that came into use roughly at the same time. In the early days of iced drinks, the practice was to leave the ice in the drink and give the drinker a straw (another marvel of the age as far as European travelers were concerned). Not every tippler liked that, particularly if he was going to throw back his portion and get on with his business. Accordingly, as we see in some of Jerry Thomas’s 1862 Cocktail recipes, barkeepers began straining the drinks off the ice. (This must have been a fairly recent innovation, as iced Cocktails had only caught on the decade before.)

As with the shaker, here the bartender improvised. One method for holding back the ice, still in use, was to break the seal between the mixing glass and the shaker, hold the apparatus sideways over the glass and let the liquid trickle out. But this worked only if you were using the shaker, and many bartenders persisted in the two-glass method for Cocktails. For this, some bright spark whose name is lost to history made the discovery that a piece of silverware known as a “caster spoon” or “sugar sifter”—a spoon with a wide, scalloped bowl with little holes punched in it, used to sift sugar over a bowl of berries—could also be used to hold the ice in the mixing glass while letting the liquid trickle out. By the 1860s, special bar versions were being made, with handles bent just so to fit them into the glass. This came to be called a “Julep strainer,” not because you strain a Julep, but because for a time in the 1860s and 1870s some bars would put them in the drink itself and the customer would drink through them (they were even manufactured in sizes small enough to fit into a whiskey glass). Eventually, the old, scalloped models were replaced by one with a larger, oval bowl, which fit the glass better but didn’t look nearly as nice.

The earliest mention of anyone chilling the glass the drink is strained into—necessary if you’re not shaking it in the glass in which it will be served—comes

in 1883 from a Kansas City bartender, who described a procedure involving “putting out a whiskey glass full of ice water, setting an empty glass on top of it, and then turning the water from one to the other.” For what it’s worth, ten years later a Brooklyn bartender could still describe chilling the glass as one of the arcana of the bartender’s art, practiced only by thirty-third-degree adepts.

It wasn’t just the tools and the techniques that got more elaborate; the drinks themselves did, too. Fancy garnishes of berries and artfully cut pieces of fruit; imported French syrups and Dutch and Italian liqueurs for sweetening; various kinds of bitters (in the early days, there was just one in general use); aristocratic wines and long-aged spirits—the colors on the barkeeper’s palette multiplied exponentially. So did the drinks they were used in, in both number and complexity.

In 1820, a top-flight American bartender could at most be expected to know perhaps fifteen to twenty formulas: a few variations on Punch, the Sling (Punch without the citrus), the Julep (Sling with mint), a Cocktail (Sling with bitters), a Toddy or two (hot Sling), one of them with apples, a Flip (ale, eggs, and rum), maybe a Sangaree and an Egg Nogg. Pretty basic. By the 1830s, however, that had all changed. We don’t know who first got the ball rolling, although the “Extra Extra Peach-Brandy Punch” that the *New York Dramatic Mirror* mentions in 1831 as a specialty of Willard’s is highly suggestive. But by the end of that decade, it was commonplace for a first-rank bar to offer a list of “fancy drinks,” such as the one from the Merchant’s Hotel in New York shown below:

Merit River	5¢
IOU	5
Smashers	5
Franklin Peculiars	5
Pickwicks	5
Vetos	5
Timberdoodles	5
Celeste Punch	10
Fiscal Agents	15
Radiator Punch	15

A few of these—the Smasher (a variation on the Julep), the Fiscal Agent (likewise), the Timberdoodle (a sort of Stone Fence)—were widely known at the time. The rest appear to be peculiar to the establishment. Even more elaborate was the list that Peter Bent Brigham offered at the Oyster Saloon he opened

beneath the Concert Hall, Boston, in 1842, with its Sling Cobbler, Wormwood Floater, Tippe na Pecco, and seven kinds of Punch—from arrack to whiskey. Indeed, Brigham seems to have been a true pioneer in this regard. As his lists got longer and longer, and the names on them more and more topical, they began to attract considerable attention from the newspapers. Soon they were reprinted around the country as examples of the extravagance of the rising generation. At first they were greeted by bemusement. “It beats anything that can be done in this temperate latitude,” as the *New Orleans Picayune* wrote in 1843. By the end of the 1840s, though, they were mostly answered with adoption and emulation, and indeed such things became the norm. In 1863, for example, Charles Hammack’s large saloon in Washington, DC, offered a list of eighty-three drinks, including eight Juleps (Coffee Julep, anyone?), seven Smashes, five Cocktails, four Cobblers, and so on. Unfortunately for curious tipplers today, the press of the day was content to merely marvel at the names of these concoctions without going into further detail; forty or fifty years later, they would have taken down accurate recipes for each.

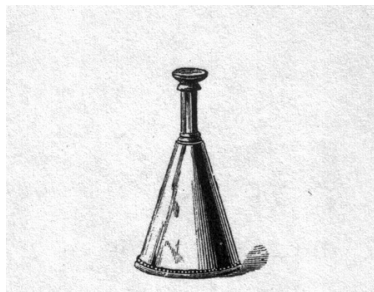
The language even created a term for those who could master all of this: mixologist. In France, it takes an academy of intellectuals to modify the language. In America, all it takes is a guy with an idea. The term first appeared in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* in 1856, in a humor piece by Charles G. Leland. In it, the narrator overhears a sport in the hotel room next door referring to the bartender as a “mixologist of tipulars” and of “tipicular fixings”; Leland’s coinage caught on, first humorously and then, *faute de mieux*, as a way of referring to a bartender who was, as the *Washington Post* later phrased it, “especially proficient at putting odds and ends of firewater together.” (Other terms that were floated and sank include the early *toddydriver*, Chicago’s *cocktail architect*, and *drinkist*.) By the 1870s, saloonkeepers were using it in their advertising, with only a hint of a smile.

THE CLASSIC AGE (1885–1920)

The artistic mixologists of the Golden Fifties and Bloody Sixties were working at a pitch that couldn’t last. As the nation grew in size, population, wealth, and industrial heft, the sporting milieu that produced men like Jerry Thomas and nurtured them in their craft began sliding into decline. Ironically, this served to liberate the Cocktail from some of its louche connotations, as the kind of upper-crust gents who would previously have confined themselves to wine learned to drink Manhattans and such—a new, lighter, and simpler breed of

Cocktail. The theatrics that characterized Baroque Age mixology came to seem embarrassingly gaudy. Rather than display maximum effort and enjoyment in their work, the new-school bartenders in such Gay Nineties hotspots as New York's sporty and high-toned Hoffman House Café cultivated economy of gesture, deploying the spoon rather than the shaker wherever possible.*

At the same time, the elegantly simple shaker-glass-strainer combination fell victim to the American thirst for progress. Sure, it worked fine, if subject to the occasional glitch (with heavy use, the mixing tins tended to erode or crack at the place where they met the glass and get gunky with verdigris, and the strainers didn't always fit the glass perfectly). But from the 1870s on, there were numerous attempts to improve things. The first one to stick was patented in 1884 by one Edward Hauck, of Brooklyn, New York. This is, more or less, the same three-piece shaker we know today, with a mixing tin, a metal cap with a strainer in the middle of it, and another cap on top of that. (A Chicago man had patented a similar three-piece shaker in 1877, but it had a complicated air vent and didn't catch on; then as now, for bar gear simpler is better.) It's uncertain how many actual bartenders used these "combination shakers." The parts were harder to keep track of in a busy bar, and ice tended to block up the strainer and slow the straining process. But some did, anyway, particularly in Britain.



The jigger, model 1.0 (1878; author's collection).

The strainer, too, got an upgrade, although not until 1889: That's when a Connecticut man by the name of Lindley came up with the bright idea of threading a spring around the edge of the thing, thus enabling it to fit into any size glass. This received its current name, the "Hawthorne strainer," three years later, when Manning & Bowman Co. of Connecticut put out a slightly improved version, which had a row of little holes around the edge forming the word *Hawthorne*. The word was there because William Wright, the inventor of the device, happened to have assigned his patent to one Denny Sullivan, who ran the popular Hawthorne Café on Avery Street in Boston, just off the Common.

Sullivan marketed the device with a certain energy and thus managed to immortalize his bar's name, if not the establishment itself. (It took another fifteen years for the device to sprout ears to hold it over the top of the mixing tin, thus assuming its present-day form.) Even the simple toddy stick got another look, evolving into the larger, stouter muddler, which, according to the fancy Madison Square bartenders the *New York Sun* queried in 1890, "must be cedar; no other wood will answer."

There were other technical innovations—fancy new lemon squeezers, metal jiggers to replace the sherry glasses that had been previously used to measure out drinks (the first was a silver-plated cone on a stem, like a sherry glass without a base; the standard nip-waisted double cone was patented in 1892 by Cornelius Dungan of Chicago), bar-top hot-water dispensers, dasher-topped bitters bottles, Champagne-taps that screwed right through the cork, thus allowing the stuff to be dispensed one squirt at a time, and so forth. All of these worked to simplify and streamline the mixologist's art (when, that is, they worked at all); to open it up to general participation.

The one area the Classic Age surpassed the Baroque in elaborateness is in the profusion of glassware. As the nineteenth century wore on and the mixologist's art gained in complexity, he required more and more types of glasses into which to deposit his creations. Willard at the City Hotel probably made do with only four or five different kinds of glasses—small tumblers, large tumblers, small and large wineglasses, perhaps a few cordial glasses, and something for hot drinks. By the end of the century, that would have been woefully inadequate. In 1884, New York's G. Winter Brewing Co. published a little bartender's guide, containing a list of the glassware required for a first-rate saloon:

Champagne, Claret, Port, Sherry and Rhine Wine Glasses, Cocktail Glasses for Champagne and also for Whiskey, etc., Julep and Cobbler Glasses, Absinthe, Whiskey, Pony Brandy, Hot Water, John Collins and Mineral-Water glasses, as well as large Bar Glasses for mixing purposes and for ornamentation, together with all sizes of Beer, Ale and Porter glasses. There should also be a great variety of Fancy Glassware, to be used in decorating the shelves behind the counter.

This list is actually fairly conservative: it omits the so-called small bar glass, glosses over the knotty issue of the absinthe glass (there were two kinds

available, each adapted to a different way of serving the verdant elixir; a first-class bar would have both), and skimps on the small goods required for the various cordials and Pousse-Cafés in style at the time. Of course, only a few bars would carry such a freight of glass. If, on the one hand (as the *New York Tribune* opined in 1908), “the array of gleaming, highly-polished glassware displayed and used in the hotels and cafés in Manhattan is unexcelled anywhere in the world,” it’s equally true that there were plenty of joints on that very same island that had no problem making do with beer mugs and whiskey glasses and would treat the order of a Pousse-Café as an invitation to physical violence.*

It wasn’t just the tools that changed; the spirits did, too. With a savage yank from a pesky insect known as phylloxera, brandy was dragged out of the spotlight, which it had so long occupied as the premier mixing and sipping spirit, to be replaced by American whiskey in the mixing glass and Scotch whisky in the clubroom. At the same time, dry gin drove out the malty, whiskeylike Dutch and lightly sweet Old Tom styles that had previously prevailed, just as the fairly light, dry Bacardi rum from Cuba chased out the heavier rums from St. Croix and Jamaica. Imported liqueurs multiplied behind the bar, and even such exotica as Russian vodka began popping up in the occasional mixture—the St. Charles Hotel, in New Orleans, even featured a vodka-based Russian Cocktail in 1911 (three-fifths vodka to two-fifths “Ruhinoy,” which appears to have been a kind of wishniak, or black cherry liqueur, served up). Mezcal and tequila, however, although drunk in some quantity in the Southwest, barely cracked the mixologist’s armamentarium until Prohibition forced attention their way in the 1920s.

Even the mixers changed: vermouth, known (if not savored) in the United States since the 1830s, suddenly appeared in a dizzying variety of Cocktails, mixed with every spirit known to commerce. The definition of a Cocktail stretched to include ingredients like lemon juice, orange juice, pineapple juice, and the faddish and pink-making grenadine. By 1920, just about every technique and major ingredient known to modern mixology was in play (OK, there wasn’t a lot of flavored vodka, but they made up for it by selling artificial sour mix and cocktail cherries made of dyed cellulose). Only now, with the introduction of so-called molecular mixology, with its foams, gels, infusions, and vapors, are we breaking new ground. But that’s (thankfully) beyond the scope of this book.

Let me close this section with an example of everything working the way it was supposed to. Unfortunately, if anyone wrote down a detailed description of Jerry Thomas or Cato Alexander or Peter Brigham making a drink when at the

height of his powers it has yet to be discovered. In the 1880s and 1890s, however, journalists started to pay minute attention to the technicalities of the bartender's art, particularly when that bartender was William "The Only William" Schmidt, the most famous mixologist of his age and a born, if unlikely, showman (he was a smallish, balding type with a large mustache and a heavy German accent). Here's him making his Spanish Cocktail (one-third each whiskey, port, and sherry with two dashes of gum syrup and a dash each of Boker's bitters and absinthe, lemon twist—if you must know) for a couple of gents from the *New York Herald* in 1891:

Two [cloth] napkins are placed on the bar. They are small, clean and fringed. Two glasses, thin and small, are filled to the brim with cracked ice and water and placed back of them.

"Drink the water first, please," said William.

"Why?"

"To prepare the throat for the liquor. . . . The water . . . leaves the palate in good condition to fully appreciate the taste of the cocktail."

The second course is the serving of billiard tips, . . . a diminutive sort of ginger-snap . . . put out simply to engage your attention while the drink is being compounded. . . .

Meanwhile, the "layout" on the bar increases. Two cocktail glasses heaped high with cracked ice appear on the scene. So thin are they that they seem almost too fragile to hold the ice.

"We do that as a pretense for cooling the glasses," explains William, "but really it is more to please the eye than anything else." . . .

Naturally the mixing is the most important part of the whole performance. William does it upon the counter in plain sight. . . . Each cocktail is mixed in a goblet by itself. I don't think there is any reason for so doing except it is more bother to do it that way, and William likes to impress you with the idea that he is taking a great deal of trouble on your account.

Grasping a nozzle-ended bitter or gum bottle in each hand William shakes in a drop or two, pours in the other ingredients and stirs it all up deftly with a long-handled spoon. Then he tosses away the ice in the cocktail glasses and, holding the goblet high above his head, pours out the fluid in a thin stream.

As a "pourer" William is world known.

He insists that a bartender should always stand erect and move only his

arms. . . .

It has been a long time coming, but it is only the regular procedure. With an “if you please,” William passes over the glasses, with a thumb and forefinger holding them by the standards [the bases]. It’s the nicer way.

The fastidious, craft-obsessed, and slow bartender is clearly nothing new. Ink up his arms and give him a pour-over and an iPod loaded with old Oasis tracks and you could drop William into any speakeasy-style bar in the country. I’d sure like one of them Spanish Cocktails, though.

II. How to Do It Now

As you've no doubt gathered by this point, reproducing pre-Prohibition drinks accurately is a tricky business. It only gets worse when you start digging into the actual recipes, which are far more inconsistent than my thumbnail history of mixology suggests. Even when everyone else is shaking their drinks, you can always find some cross-grained son of toil who will grumble that they're all doing it wrong and you really have to stir it. Bartenders are an individualistic lot, and always have been.

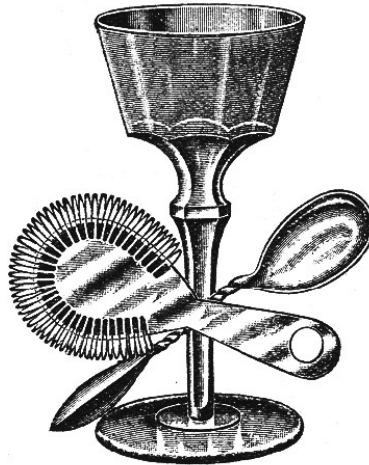
Happily, reproducing these drinks deliciously isn't nearly so hard, and while bull's-eye accuracy is elusive, you can at least get the vast majority of 'em into the black, and often enough a good deal closer than that. What follows are some general suggestions and observations for making them work as smoothly and easily as possible; I'll discuss exceptions and other specifics under the individual drinks.

BAR GEAR

Let's begin with the basic tools and how to use them. You can haunt eBay for original Julep strainers and old-style barspoons and such if you're so inclined, but prices have gone through the roof in the past few years—a Julep strainer that used to go for \$10 to \$15 nowadays fetches \$100—and they're certainly not necessary for making the drinks in this book come out well. One of the defining characteristics of American mixology is its inherent resistance to change, and the modern bartender's kit isn't all that different from what his predecessor would have been using a hundred years ago. If you've still got a mind to go retro, Cocktail Kingdom carries a line of barware inspired by and often closely modeled on that of the late nineteenth century.

If you want to go Baroque and “toss the foaming Cocktail” (as they used to say) from glass to glass, please let me know if you figure out how it's done; after considerable practice, I came to the conclusion that there's some kind of trick involved, and I didn't, and still don't, know precisely what that trick is. The Spanish-style long pour, where you start off with the glasses held together on high and precipitously drop one while pouring into it, is clearly related, but doesn't quite fit the surviving descriptions of the American toss. One thing's for sure: The guys who knew how to do it weren't about to let it get into print; while

spectators' accounts of it abound, I have yet to find one penned by a practitioner. Otherwise, it's the mixing glass and shaker, both of which are readily available and easy to use.



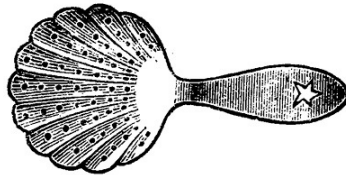
Cocktail essentials, ca. 1900: Cocktail glass, barspoon, and Lindley-type strainer (author's collection).

To shake a drink, simply combine all the ingredients in the glass (that way you can see if you're missing anything), bung in the ice—I'll discuss that in a minute—and cover it with the shaker. Then give the upturned bottom of the shaker a tap with your fist to seat it and shake it vigorously up and down like a piston with the metal part on the bottom so that if—heaven forfend!—the seal should break, the mess will end up on you rather than your guests. To break the seal, hold the shaker in your weak hand, with your fingers overlapping the join between the parts. Then take your other hand, point your fingers up to the ceiling, and with the heel of your hand sharply tap the spot on the mixing tin where the rim of the glass touches it inside. If the seal doesn't break, rotate the glass a quarter-turn and try again. Repeat as necessary. Because the drink will be left in the mixing tin, you'll have to strain it out with a Hawthorne strainer, which is designed to fit over the tin.

To stir a drink (or mix it, as some mixologists called it), proceed as before except rather than fitting a shaker over the mixing glass you'll be sliding a spoon into it and whirling it around with your wrist. The key here is to expend as little energy as possible, and at all costs avoid vigorously thrashing everything about. (Very unbartenderly.) This is much easier if you use fine ice, discussed later. In any case, you'll want to stir a good ten or fifteen seconds and then strain the drink out with the spoon-shaped Julep strainer, which is sized (or should be,

anyway) to fit right into the mixing glass. To be authentic, leave the barspoon in the glass while you strain. This is where you get to practice your high pour.

Ice Spoon. Plated, 4/6



This is better known as the Julep strainer (author's collection).

When to shake and when to stir? Modern orthodoxy dictates that one should shake any drink with fruit juices, dairy products, or eggs and stir ones that contain only spirits, wines, and the like. This is based partly on the fact that these last ingredients are harder to mix and partly on the fact that shaking clouds up liquids by beating thousands of tiny bubbles into them. If you don't mind your Martinis, Manhattans, and Improved Brandy Cocktails cloudy, go ahead and shake them; many an old-time mixologist did. Conversely, though, I don't recommend stirring a Ramos Gin Fizz; no amount of agitating with a spoon will make it come out right. You can probably stir a Whiskey Sour or a Daiquiri though, should you feel strongly about it, without causing permanent injury to its recipient.

If you're making drinks from the toddy-stick era, simply use its modern descendent, the muddler—which is nothing more than a thick hardwood dowel with a flat knob on one end and a rounded bit to serve as a handle on the other. Like Americans themselves, this might be a little stouter than its ancestors, but it still works pretty much the same.

Sugar

This brings us to the question of ingredients in general, and in specific sugar, which was, with a handful of exceptions (see the Apple Toddy, the Crushed Raspberry Fizz, and the Clover Club), the only thing the toddy stick or muddler was used to crush. While a visit to any tony grocer's shop will turn up a surprising array of sugars for sale, none of them are a precise equivalent for what was available in the nineteenth century, particularly in the earlier years. Our loaf sugar comes in crumbly little cubes, rather than the dense, resistant loaves that it once did, and our white sugar is too dazzling white, relying on production methods not known to the ancients of mixology. On the other hand, our raw

sugar, the nearest step down the scale, is too brown. Given a choice, I'll use the raw sugar—either a Demerara or a turbinado, such as the supermarket-friendly Sugar in the Raw brand, or the fine, light stuff sold as evaporated cane juice, if I don't want quite so much sugarcane flavor. To make this easily soluble, though, it must first be pulverized in a food processor. If that's too much trouble, superfine sugar will work, although it will convey a little less depth of flavor.

Whichever sugar you use, if you're making an iced drink you'll have to melt the sugar first in a little water or citrus juice (if you're making a sour) since both ice and alcohol impede its dissolution. Simply begin building the drink by putting the quantity indicated into your glass, add an equal quantity of water or the specified amount of citrus juice and give it a quick stir, then proceed with the rest of the recipe. Of course, you can also replace the sugar with gum syrup or simple syrup, as many period bartenders did (see Chapter 10). Even unto the end of the nineteenth century, though, there was usually a drawer under the bar that would be full of granulated sugar (and, no doubt, insects); the bartender would simply slide it open and spoon the stuff out.

If you're using a thick, two-to-one syrup, you can usually use a quantity equal to the amount specified of powdered sugar and the drink will come out fine. My general preference, however, is to use sugar in sours and fizzes and such (as the veteran master bartender Bill Kelly wrote in 1946, "for real life in a drink give me sugar"; he wasn't wrong) and what's known nowadays as "rich simple," a two-to-one syrup made with Demerara sugar, in everything else. Be warned, though: It's dark enough to throw the color off of some of the more delicate tipples. Myself, I'll take a little dinginess in return for the rich, sugarcane flavor it adds. And if you want to make your syrup with gum arabic, that will also add an amazingly smooth mouthfeel to liquor-heavy drinks like the Sazerac and the Improved Cocktail.

Twists

Modern practice is to twist a swatch of lemon or orange peel over the top of the drink at the very end, to get a little sheen of aromatic oil on the surface of the drink. With his usual care for consistency, Thomas suggests doing it this way for some plain Cocktails and squeezing it into the drink before stirring for others. That being the case, I prefer to follow the modern practice: cutting a 1½-by ½-inch strip of peel with a paring knife or peeler (including as little as possible of the white pith) and twisting it over the drink after mixing. Some nineteenth-century mixologists suggested that, its work being done, the spent peel should

then be discarded. Others dropped it into the drink by way of garnish. As usual, Thomas goes both ways, with a preference for throwing it in. In that he is my guide.

Cherries and Olives

The end of the nineteenth century saw a revolution in the art of the garnish. The admittedly fussy—but fresh and healthy—berries and fruits Jerry Thomas called for began falling by the wayside, to be replaced by an assortment of pickled or macerated items that could linger behind the bar for a while without going off. Some—pickled French hazelnuts, pickled walnuts—are no longer seen. Others—olives, “pimolas” (pimiento-stuffed olives)—are very much with us. Yet others fall into the realm of the undead. Here I am referring specifically to the maraschino cherry. In the 1890s, a maraschino cherry was nothing more than a sour cherry that had been macerated in maraschino liqueur. You can still buy these, made by the Luxardo company (who make the best maraschino) or now by any one of a number of hipster micromacerators. By the time Prohibition rolled around, this expensive, imported item had gone through the American production mill and emerged as either a blob of artificially colored cellulose or, hardly better, the supermarket product we know today, in all its zombielike glory.

I should also note that it wasn’t until the early twentieth century that bartenders figured out that cherries belong in sweet drinks and olives (or pickled nuts) in dry ones. Before that, you’d find either in either.

Eggs

Nineteenth-century eggs were much smaller than the extra-super-jumbo ones we get today. Use the smallest ones you can find. When making drinks with egg white, you can get away with using one (modern) white for every two drinks.

Ice

Before we get into the spirits, a word about H₂O in its solid form. Because barkeepers carved their ice from large blocks, they could make it any size they wanted. This, too, became a part of the art, knowing which type of ice went into which type of drink. The 1887 rewrite of Thomas’s book added a note on the subject that neatly sums up the prevailing wisdom:

In preparing cold drinks great discrimination should be observed in the use of ice. As a general rule, shaved ice should be used when spirits form the principal ingredient of the drink, and no water is employed. When eggs, milk, wine, vermouth, seltzer or other mineral waters are used in preparing a drink, it is better to use small lumps of ice, and these should always be removed from the glass before serving to the customer.

This is in general still sound, although vermouth drinks should be moved into the shaved or finely cracked ice category. For everything else, ice cubes will work fine. A healthy, vigorous shake will crack the cubes anyway. Whenever a recipe calls for shaved, fine, or cracked ice, in the absence of a large block of ice and a shaver, simply take dry, cold ice, put it in a canvas sack and quickly whale the tar out of it with a woodworker's maul, the bigger the better (the sack is known these days as a "Lewis bag," after the modern manufacturer who revived it; many styles are available). Whatever type of ice you use, you can be a little more generous with it than Thomas and his peers were. It's cheaper now and we're more used to extreme coldness in drinks, so go ahead and fill the glass at least two-thirds with the stuff. (A note to the daring and the dexterous: If attempting the Spanish toss or high pour, use fine ice in the high glass or tin and hold it back with a Julep or, even better, old-school prongless Hawthorne strainer.)

Glassware

Happily, for the purposes of accurately reproducing the recipes contained in these pages, your glassware needs will be closer to Willard's than the array listed in the G. Winter book. Here are the main glasses called for, with their capacities.



Fancy glassware, ca. 1905 (author's collection).

LARGE BAR OR MIXING GLASS. This held 12 to 16 ounces and for most uses can be ably represented by the modern, 16-ounce mixing glass.

SMALL BAR OR MIXING GLASS. This was also variable in size, running between 5 and 8 ounces. Usually, it took the form of a short, flared glass with a heavy bottom. A regular (not double) Old-Fashioned glass will do admirably, if you can find one. For most mixing purposes, though, it's easier to simply use the large glass.

From the 1880s until Prohibition, many mixologists preferred to use heavy-stemmed, straight-sided goblets in place of both large and small glasses. There was no practical reason for this other than looking fancy—which is often, I suppose, reason enough.

Cocktail Glass.



No. 2549. Pressed Cocktail.

The only correct shape glass for cocktails. This style which has a pressed bowl and imitation cut stem is exceedingly popular everywhere. Although of pressed glass it is of the kind made for bar use and much thinner than the glassware commonly called pressed which is quite heavy and clumsy.

The size, 4-ounce, is just right for cocktails and at the price offers very good value.

Price, per dozen 75 cents

Cocktail glass, 1902—a short step to the modern Martini glass (author's collection).

COCKTAIL GLASS. A stemmed glass, more rounded than V-shaped, holding no more than 3 ounces. This glass lacked the inward-turned rim of the coupes commonly used in modern cocktail bars and is not easy to come by these days. Fortunately, the coupe works fine. You want a small one, holding 4 to 5 ounces.

EARTHENWARE MUG. Preferably without Garfield or Dilbert on it.

Optional

COLLINS GLASS. A tall, narrow glass in the 14-to 16-ounce range.

TUMBLER. A rather robust 8-ounce glass, taller and narrower than the small bar glass. Good for Punches.

FIZZ GLASS. A slender 6-to 8-ounce glass of delicate construction, often slightly flared.

RED WINE GLASS. A glass for red wine, not a wineglass that is red (although they had those, too). Also called a claret glass. Capacity: 4 ounces.

SHERRY GLASS. A narrow, stemmed 2-ounce glass.

PONY GLASS. The pony was a small, narrow stemmed glass holding 1 ounce or a little more.

III. SPIRITS

Lemons are lemons, more or less, and sugar is sugar. There might be some incidental differences between what was available along those lines before Prohibition and what we can get now (for example, their limes were the small, round, and seeded Key or Mexican limes, not the larger, oval, and seedless Persian or Tahitian type, which was introduced in 1895 and didn't catch on until the 1920s), but they won't be truly decisive. Spirits, however, are entirely products of art, and though art is long and life is short, it's still subject to the game of telegraph that is the transmission of information over time. I have taken the liberty, therefore, of suggesting some brands that in my experience work well in historical drinks, which, to the best of my knowledge, are reasonably close to what would have been available in Jerry Thomas's day and immediately after. Fortunately, this is much easier in 2015 than it was in 2007, when this book was first published.

Whatever spirits you use, with some exceptions they should ideally be at what would have been considered "proof" at the time: a proof spirit was one that was 50 percent alcohol. Strengths were recorded as a percentage of that 50 percent. Thus an 80 (percent of) proof spirit contains 80 percent of 50 percent, or 40 percent alcohol. Easy enough, I suppose (although I still get confused from time to time, especially if that time is 10 p.m. on a Thursday), except for the fact that there were two different systems in use for measuring the percentage of alcohol: the Sykes system, which was by weight, and the Gay-Lussac system, by volume. Anything from Great Britain or its colonies used the first, while anything from France, Continental Europe, or the United States went by the second, which is now the modern standard. Because alcohol is lighter than water and it therefore takes a greater volume of alcohol than water to make the same weight, 50 percent Sykes works out to a little more than 57 percent Gay-Lussac, while (for example) 33 percent Sykes, the maximum strength British law allowed until the 1860s for "compound spirits" such as gin, works out to 47 percent Gay-Lussac—a figure you might recognize from your Tanqueray or Beefeater label.

In the nineteenth century, as now, not everything hewed to the ideal. In practice, there was a great deal of variation in the strengths of spirits sold. Bars bought many of their spirits in the cask and bottled them themselves, reducing

them to proof in the process. Some bars seemed to have wider water taps than others. Nonetheless, the best-quality spirits generally fell into a range of between 43 and 58 percent alcohol by volume (abv). Nowadays, many spirits are again being bottled at these higher proofs rather than the legal minimum of 40 percent that was increasingly becoming the industry standard. OK. On to the spirits.

APPLEJACK (ALSO KNOWN AS APPLE WHISKEY)

Before Prohibition, the Jersey Lightning used in the better bars would not have been blended. For genuine American applejack, there's only one big player left standing: Laird's, of New Jersey—in fact, it's probably the oldest brand of liquor in the country. Unfortunately, the regular Laird's applejack one sees around is a blended product and is hence mostly neutral spirits and water. If you can't find their (pure) bonded version or their (also pure and excellent) old apple brandy, better to use a VS-grade Calvados from France. If you can find those, pounce. The microdistillers have been getting into this category as well, so there might also be a local option. (It's also worth noting that in the early nineteenth century Americans drew a distinction between cider brandy—made from the free-run juice from the first pressing of the apples—and applejack, which was made from the leftover apple pomace mixed with water.)

ARRACK

Arrack is an Arabic word that basically means “liquor” and has all the specificity of that term. The most highly regarded in the West, however, was Batavia arrack, made on the Dutch-held island of Java by the Chinese who had settled there in considerable number. It was, and still is, made from molasses, a little bit of palm sap, and cakes of mold-and yeast-infected red rice. It is a pungent, intensely fragrant liquor in the Chinese style, yet also a close cousin to rum. The best arracks come via the Netherlands to this day; the ones you can buy in Indonesia proper are, in my experience, watery, low-proof, and undistinguished. Batavia Arrack van Oosten, imported from Holland, is available in the United States and is excellent of its kind.

BRANDY

Cognacs and brandies were sold at rather higher proof than they generally are today. There are, fortunately, a handful of bottlings now available that reflect this, including the 90-proof Pierre Ferrand 1840 (which I had a small part in developing), and the 106-proof Royer Force 53. If you can't find them, you

might want to add a splash more cognac to your drink or a splash less water. In general, for the best drinks you'll want to use a VSOP-grade cognac or better. This is pricey, but it's one place where you'll just have to grin and be a sport. It's worth it.

CHAMPAGNE

The Champagnes popular in Jerry Thomas's day were much sweeter than those we prefer today. The brut Champagnes we favor did not become popular in America until the 1890s. That said, I still prefer my drinks with brut.

CORDIALS AND ABSINTHE

"Keep a line of cordials in your bar," the veteran Rochester bartender Patsy McDonough advised in his excellent 1883 *Bar-Keeper's Guide*. "The most popular are Chartreuse, Curaçao, Maraschino, Benedictine, and Absinthe." His list is an accurate one for its time. Let's look at it, in order.

The Chartreuse one sees most often in nineteenth-century drinks (or at least, ones from around 1880 on; before that, it's rare) is the green variety, but both were available.

Curaçao, or as it was frequently written "curaçoa," was one of the bedrock essentials of the bar. Early versions of this orange-flavored liqueur were based on young brandies or rums, rather than the neutral spirits used today. As with the higher-proof cognacs, there is an option from Pierre Ferrand that I helped develop (and as with that one, I have no financial stake in the product's success). Their Dry Orange Curaçao uses an array of nineteenth-century production techniques and works splendidly in the drinks of the time. Otherwise, it's worth remembering that the cognac-based Grand Marnier was originally sold as "Curaçao Marnier." The Marie Brizard Orange Curaçao is also acceptable. Cointreau was originally "Curaçao Triple Sec Cointreau," and is likewise a pioneer of that drier, lighter style.

Luxardo Maraschino is the gold standard here and always has been. Another 1880s addition to the drink-mixer's palette is Bénédictine; accept no substitutes.

When it comes to absinthe, there's also no substitute for the real McCoy. Fortunately, it's one of the modern spirits revival's great success stories, and there's a vast array of brands from which to choose. Pernod 68 is generally available and quite reasonable for cocktail use. Ted Breaux's Edouard, Nouvelle Orleans, and 1901 bottlings are all excellent, if expensive. Vieux Pontarlier is another personal favorite. In general, you want a traditional-style absinthe, not

an experimental one.

GIN

Is gin gin? In the 1862 edition of Jerry Thomas's book, fourteen of the fifteen gin drink recipes don't specify what kind or style, and the fifteenth calls merely for "old gin," without indicating its origin. Given this lack of detail, most modern readers and mixologists assumed that Thomas's Gin Cocktail, Gin Julep, Gin Smash, and all the rest were based on English-style gins, either the lightly sweetened Old Tom or the unsweetened London dry. In the course of researching this book, it became increasingly clear to me that the gin Thomas had in mind was in fact Hollands; a Dutch genever or an American approximation of it (this would explain that "old gin" in his book; despite its name, Old Tom gin was generally not aged any longer than the time it took to ship the barrels to their destination, whereas Dutch gins were often aged).

For one thing, English-style unsweetened gin was not available in America in any quantity until the 1890s. Even Old Tom gin, although sold in America since at least the 1850s, had very limited distribution until the early 1880s: Before that it was known and occasionally called for, but it was still a relative rarity. On the other hand, Dutch brands such as Meder's Swan (one of the most popular brands of spirits in America for much of the nineteenth century) and Olive Tree were frequently advertised. Import figures tell the tale. In the 1850s, the port of New York was clearing between 4,500 and 6,000 120-gallon pipes of genever a year (roughly equal to some 2.7 to 3.6 million 750-milliliter bottles) as opposed to 10 to 20 pipes of English gin.

What's more, if distillers' handbooks are to be believed, domestic American gins were modeled on the heavier, maltier Dutch style rather than the lighter, cleaner English style.

In the 1876 second edition of his book, Jerry Thomas added a further six gin drinks but still did not specify which kind; again, one must assume either that he meant genever or that he considered genever and Old Tom close enough in style that it made no difference which was used (both were in fact sweetened). The only mention of unsweetened gin in America I've been able to find before the 1890s is a recommendation of its virtues as a fabric cleaner.

Eventually, with the introduction of dry vermouth as a mixing agent and the American public's turn to lighter cocktails in the 1880s, Old Tom and then London dry gin (as well as the also-unsweetened Plymouth gin) began to displace the richer Dutch style as Martinis and Gin Fizzes edged aside old

standbys such as Gin Fixes, Cocktails, and Slings (which continued to be primarily genever drinks). Finally, in the anonymous 1887 revision of Thomas's book, we find gin styles specified. Eight of the drinks call for Old Tom gin, including the Martinez. But there are still twelve drinks calling explicitly for "Holland" gin. It was only with the rise of the Dry Martini, in the 1890s, that Dutch gin began disappearing from the bartender's armory. Unfortunately, it mixes poorly with dry vermouth, and that would prove to be the death of it as a dominant spirit in America. In 1897, 145,000 gallons of Dutch gin went through New York, but English gin was only 5,000 gallons behind that. The next year, imports of both were down: English gin amounted to only 107,000 gallons. Dutch gin, however, was at a dismal 75,000. It would never again recover its supremacy or even come close.

From then until Prohibition, unsweetened gins—Plymouth and London dry—are the cutting edge, although one still finds plenty of Cocktails and other drinks calling for Old Tom and even Holland gin.

Fortunately, since the first edition of this book came out, there has been a renaissance in gin distilling, and the unavailable Old Toms and genevers whose lack I bemoaned therein are no longer lacking. For an Old Tom like you would have found from 1880 until Prohibition, its commercial heyday here in the United States, Hayman's or Tanqueray's Old Tom is the stuff to get. For an older version, from when it was a much more loosely defined category, there's the Ransom, which has a little barrel age (fair warning: It's another one of those odd old-style spirits I had a hand in developing). As for Hollands, what you want is either a *korenwijn* (also spelled *corenwyn*) or an *oude genever*, both of them thick, malty, and divine; the former, in particular, shows the spirit's surprisingly close kinship with whiskey (jonge genever, the style most popular in the Netherlands, is an artifact of World War I, when the Dutch had to cut the good stuff with large amounts of neutral spirit). Korenwijns are still thin on the ground here, but Bols genever, in its handsome gray bottle, is a fine example of oude genever and widely available, thank God.

For an idea of what Americans were doing with gin in the days of Willard and Cato Alexander, there's (yet) another project with which I've lent a hand, New York Distilling Company's Chief Gowanus, an attempt at executing Pennsylvania distiller Samuel McHarry's 1809 formula for making "a resemblance of Holland Gin out of Rye Whiskey," something we had been doing for generations. American distillers, like their English predecessors, considered the Dutch product unmatched in terms of smoothness and mellowness, and the

Chief, while most Dutch in flavor, is indeed rather more rambunctious than a true genever.

RUM

Artemus Ward's decidedly unfavorable opinion of New England rum was more than just him funning around. In the nineteenth-century in the Caribbean, rum was (as the Jamaican sugar-planter and distiller Leonard Wray defined it in 1848) a spirit "made on sugar estates from the molasses and skimmings resulting from the manufacture of sugar." Molasses (the residue left after most of the sugar has crystallized out; basically, industrial waste) was mixed with the scum that floats to the surface when you boil sugarcane juice in open vats (some of the juice always being skimmed off as well) and a healthy shot of "dunder" (the stuff that's left in the still when the alcohol has been boiled off, often left to ripen in funky, even malodorous open pits), fermented for up to two weeks and then run through copper pot stills. This process yielded a highly complex spirit that split the difference between a modern molasses rum and a cane-juice agricole. New England, however, had no cane fields and hence no juice to skim, and its rum was made from molasses alone. Fastidious drinkers disdained it, preferring the rich, funky rums from Jamaica and the lighter, yet still rich and flavorful, rums from Santa Cruz (St. Croix) in the Virgin Islands.

In the twenty-first century, sugar is no longer boiled in open vats and there are no skimmings, and even if there were, most non-agricole rum is made far from the fields where the cane is grown, out of molasses alone. In other words, it's all New England rum. There's not a hell of a lot we can do about that.

Nonetheless, Jamaica still makes some impressively funky, strong pot-stilled rums. Wray & Nephew's White Overproof, the most popular rum on the island, is one of them. It is, however, unaged, while the ones Jerry Thomas called for had some barrel age (although usually less than one might think from the color, which was invariably boosted with burnt sugar).

Santa Cruz rum is more difficult to substitute for because it's more difficult to pin down exactly what the hell it was beyond its status as the un-Jamaica. References to it are as common as detailed descriptions are rare. Through the good offices of my friends Salvatore "Il Maestro" Calabrese and Stephen "Rums R Us" Remsberg, however, I've been able to taste a couple of well-preserved examples from the nineteenth century. Old, it's dry and cedary and bourbony, with a goodly hit of molasses. Young, it's got an immediate hit of the old Jamaican "hogo," or funk, but then there's lots of Cuban-rum vanilla and

agricole grass. Skimmings! The only substitute I've been able to find for it is a blend of one part Smith & Cross, two parts lightly aged rum paille from Martinique and three or four parts of a young, but not too young, Cuban-style rum.

Speaking of the Cuban-style rums. Through the kindness of Mr. Remsberg and a few other curatorial individuals, I've also been able to examine, by which I mean drink, very old examples of Bacardi rum, the rum that made Americans drink Cuban. Pre-Prohibition Bacardi white rum resembles the current stuff the way a goat resembles a Komodo dragon. There are four legs, a head, and a tail, but that's about it. The early Bacardi (the samples I've tasted are from the 1910s) was a pot-stilled rum; thick-textured; creamy, grassy, and a little sweet, with a whiff of sugarcane headiness. It was all rum. It remained remarkably consistent through the 1940s, only beginning to drift away in the late 1950s. None of the modern substitutes quite nail it, but many make a fine drink anyway. I prefer the ones with a little hogo, such as the Havana Club three-year-old or the Banks 5 Island Blend.

TEQUILA

Tequila was a rare visitor to the shelves of the classic American saloon, but it wasn't unknown. In the Southwest, it and mezcal were common enough, particularly in the rougher sort of bars. Occasionally bottles would turn up elsewhere: In the 1880s, you could, if lucky, get an excellent Tequila Punch in Washington, DC (of course, that was at the Mexican Embassy, so perhaps not available freely to all), and shipments of the stuff intended for cocktail use were being sent to Indianapolis, of all places, in 1907. Outside the border regions, however, it's safe to say that Tequila Cocktails never amounted to more than an occasional novelty. In those border regions, and in Mexico itself, they were common enough (by 1880, Mexico City had several American bars, but so did most cities in Central and South America; Yanquis were a traveling people, and everyone likes a proper Cocktail). In any case, if incorporating tequila into your nineteenth-century mixology you'll need a 100 percent agave, reposado version and an old-fashioned one at that (think Siete Leguas); if mezcal—Del Maguey.

VERMOUTHS

There were basically three kinds of vermouth available to American bartenders in our period. French vermouth, the dry, off-yellow oxidized sort that Noilly Prat sells everywhere but the United States,* was available in select

markets, as they say, since the 1830s, but didn't really catch on until fifty years later. "Vino Vermouth," as it was known—the red, sweet, Italian kind—was in wide distribution from the 1860s. Chambery vermouth, the semisweet, white kind, doesn't appear to have been in the United States before Prohibition, although it was in Cuba. In terms of re-creating old drinks, you're on your own: vermouth doesn't keep well enough for us to have any good idea of what was in those bottles so many years ago. My only advice is be careful of overusing the Carpano—a little goes a long way. Oh, and if you can find Vermouth del Professore, buy it. Don't mind the lack of color—it's a real-deal Italian vermouth, and an excellent one.

VODKA

As with tequila, so with vodka. It was not unknown, but it was for the most part untasted. In the later years of the nineteenth century it was easy enough to find, if you were in one of the big industrial cities. Just go to where the immigrants were. Few bartenders, however, mixed with it. Should you wish to emulate those few, use an eastern European vodka, preferably one at 50 percent abv.

WHISKEY

While the distillation of bourbon and rye has changed a good deal since the late 1800s in terms of scale and a certain amount in terms of technique (this is particularly true in the case of rye, which used to be made in the peculiarly American three-chamber still from a mash with no corn in it and no backset), the way the resulting product is aged has changed very little indeed, and experienced whiskey makers tell me that aging accounts for some 70 to 80 percent of the finished whiskey's flavor. Good enough. In short, any bourbon or rye aged between four and fifteen years and bottled at 90 proof or above will work just fine (anything at lower proof would have generated adverse comment and, most likely, shooting). For the very earliest drinks here, though, you'll have to lay out a little more money and pick up a bottle of Old Potrero, which is a wonderfully archaic pot-stilled rye whiskey (in fact, there are two kinds, one aged in uncharred barrels in the eighteenth-century style and one in charred barrels in the nineteenth-century style).

For Scotch whisky, you'll want something young, strong, and smoky and definitely single malty. The Laphroaig Cask Strength and the Talisker both fill the bill, but there are many others. For drinks from the very end of the nineteenth

century and the beginning of the twentieth, though, you'll want a blended Scotch. I like Johnnie Walker Black, Buchanan's or one of the fine Compass Box blends.

For Irish whiskey, it's all about the pot still, which makes the Redbreast or the Green Spot your man. Until the 1950s, Irish pot-stilled whiskey was made with malted barley and unmalted barley, the way it is today, but with significant portions of rye and oats and sometimes wheat thrown in, yielding a spicier whiskey. Experiments are being conducted now, so who knows?

Finally, whiskey geeks might be interested to know that the convention by which American and Irish varieties of the stuff are spelled with an *e* and Scotch and Canadian without is entirely a modern invention.

IV. QUANTITIES

The quantities prescribed in Jerry Thomas's book and those of his contemporaries and immediate successors are not only inconsistent between the various books but within them as well. Mixologists tended to pick up recipes from all over and few bothered to straighten out little differences in recipe-writing styles.

There are some small-scale measures that were never fully standardized. The "wineglass"—the standard dose of spirits in Jerry Thomas's book—has been treated as one of them, but it was in fact a standard measure, representing 2 ounces (although there is the occasional puzzling reference to a "small wineglass" and a "large wineglass"; these will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis). The teaspoon, on the other hand, is variously quoted as $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce and $\frac{1}{6}$ ounce (the modern teaspoon). Since the things measured in teaspoons are usually sweet, using the modern measure may lead to some drinks being more austere than they need be. In other words, if interpreting the recipes yourself use your judgment. It's worth keeping in mind as a data point the fact that antique barspoons generally measure out to $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce.

If there are two possible teaspoons to choose from, that's nothing compared to the dash. Then, as now, no measure is more variable. If, in his 1863 book, Jerry Thomas could note that "four or five dashes of syrup" equaled 1 teaspoon of sugar, to apply this prescription to the drinks of his contemporaries would yield many a thin Cocktail and tooth-strippingly sour Punch. On the other hand, the "half-teaspoon" given as a dash in the 1871 *Gentleman's Table Guide*, an English work written with the cooperation of an American professor ("whose unsurpassed manipulation was the pride successively of the St. Nicholas, the Metropolitan and Fifth Avenue Hotels"), if applied to the same formulas might render them sticky. So whenever a recipe is sweetened by dashes, I've tried to suggest a more measurable quantity, but be aware that there is more than a dash of arbitrariness in my suggestions. The only exception is when it comes to bitters. There, a dash is whatever squirts out of the top of the bottle.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS

1 quart (Imperial) = 40 ounces 1 quart (wine) = 32 ounces

1 bottle = ca. 24 ounces; French Champagne was imported in liter and half-liter bottles, which were called “quarts” and “pints”

1 pint (Imperial) = 20 ounces 1 pint (wine) = 16 ounces

½ pint (Imperial) = 10 ounces ½ pint (wine) = 8 ounces

1 gill (Imperial) = 5 ounces 1 wineglass = 2 ounces

1 jigger = 1 wineglass; later, also 1½ ounces or, in the bars around Wall Street, 1¼ ounces 1 pony = ½ wineglass or jigger, or 1 ounce 1 tablespoon = ½ ounce

1 teaspoon = ⅓ or ½ tablespoon (see text) 1 dash = 1 dash (see text) A

NOTE ON THE RECIPES

The next eight chapters are full of old recipes, which I’ve presented as close to verbatim as possible. Jerry Thomas and his peers have left little or nothing to posterity beyond these formulas, making the ways that they are phrased and organized the only traces we have left of their individuality; in effect, their fingerprints. Accordingly, all I’ve done with them is expand an abbreviation here and there, and occasionally consolidate several almost-identical recipes into one (for example, the Gin Fix, the Brandy Fix, and the Whiskey Fix). Where this has caused me to alter anything, I’ve indicated that with brackets. Where it’s caused me to omit anything, I’ve deployed a line of dots. Where the original recipe uses an obsolete or imprecise unit of measurement or calls for a quantity of something that, according to my experience and testing (usually checked against other contemporary recipes), needs adjustment, I’ve taken the liberty of adding my own suggested quantity, in brackets. Note that this won’t always jibe with the table of measurements [here](#)—for instance, I’ve suggested bumping the size of many of the cocktails up from 2 ounces to 3 ounces, to fit modern glassware and tastes—but you’re of course always free to make it the way the original recipe says.

There are passages in the chapters that follow, I should also note, where the grain of the historical detail gets rather fine. Many of these drinks are entangled in tenacious (and widely publicized) webs of myth, falsehood, and incomplete information, and I can think of no other way to extricate them than to lay out the facts in all their minute, even trivial detail. I’ve done my best to keep this within reasonable bounds—you should see what I left out—but where I’ve failed, I ask your indulgence. At least the anecdotes and citations that convey the detail are for the most part newly excavated from the archives and will thus, I hope, have

the force of novelty.

PUNCHES

For nearly 200 years, from the 1670s to the 1850s, the Kingdom of Mixed Drinks was ruled by the Bowl of Punch, a large-bore mixture of spirits, citrus, sugar, water, and spice that bears the same relation to the anemic concoctions that all too often pass under its name today that gladiatorial combat does to a sorority pillow fight. This isn't the place to go into its origins or its early history; for those things, see my book *Punch: The Delights and Dangers of the Flowing Bowl* (Perigee, 2010), where you will find them discussed in exhaustive (some would say exhausting) detail.

At its peak, the ritual of the Punch bowl was a secular communion, welding a group of good fellows together into a temporary sodality whose values superseded all others—or, in plain English, a group of men gathered around a bowl of Punch could be pretty much counted on to see it to the end, come what may. This was all in good fun, but it required its participants to have a large block of uncommitted time on their hands. As the eighteenth century wore into the nineteenth, that time was less and less likely to be there. Industrialization, improved communications, and the rise of the bourgeoisie all made claims on the individual that militated against partaking of the Flowing Bowl. Not that the Victorians were exactly sober, by our standards, but neither could they be as wet as their forefathers. In 1853, *Household Words*, the magazine edited by Charles Dickens, printed a nostalgic little piece titled “A Bowl of Punch,” prompted by the author—the article was unsigned, but it well may have been Dickens himself—going into the Cock Tavern in Fleet Street and finding that the familiar old china Punch bowls that had occupied a shelf in the barroom, all ranked in a row ready for use, had been stacked up in a corner “as if no longer asked for.” This was in fact the case. As Robert Chambers put it in 1864, “Advanced ideas on the question of temperance have doubtless . . . had their influence in rendering obsolete, in a great measure, this beverage.”

The same fate befell the bowl of Punch in America, only two generations sooner. It's not that Americans suddenly stopped liking Punch. But they were busy, or at least thought it a virtue to seem that way. To sit around at a tavern

ladling libations out of a capacious bowl was as much as to confess that you didn't have anywhere to be for the next few hours, and America was a go-ahead country, as everyone was always saying. (Americans were in no way averse to daytime drinking, I hasten to add; but it had to be quick.) From a workhorse of daily drinking, the bowl of Punch got promoted into a job that was largely ceremonial. It became a thing to be trotted out at club banquets and on holidays.

Its size and potency aren't the only things that sidelined the bowl of Punch. Improvements in distilling and, above all, aging of liquors meant that they required less intervention to make them palatable. The maturation of the global economy made for greater choice of potables and a more fragmented culture of drink. To some degree, central heating dimmed the charms of hot Punch. Ideas of democracy and individualism extended to men's behavior in the barroom, where they were less likely to all settle for the same thing or let someone else choose what they were to drink. In short, like all long-running social institutions the Bowl of Punch was subject to a plethora of subtle and incremental strains. By the time Jerry Thomas set pen to paper, it was already old-fashioned, and though his book contained recipes for fifty-nine Punch-bowl drinks, it's safe to say that most of them were foisted on him by his publishers and were essentially obsolete. The 1887 edition of his book finally acknowledged this by bumping the section on large-bore Punches from the front of the book to the back and replacing it with the one on Cocktails. In other bartending guides of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the section devoted to bowls of Punch is truly vestigial, generally offering something like a dozen formulas and no more. I have followed this tradition, and then some, by doing away with all of the recipes for Punch by the bowl, at least as far as this volume is concerned: You will find a wide selection of Punch-bowl recipes from Thomas's book in *Punch* as well as a detailed discussion of the techniques involved.*

We didn't stop drinking Punch when the bowls went up on the shelf; it was too delectable and cooling a drink for that. We just figured out a way of having it quick and on the spot—as a people, Americans hate to hear the word *no* and like nothing better than having it both ways. And we're willing to pay for it. Where there's someone willing to pay, there's usually someone willing to take that money. When Captain Fitzgerald saw Willard at the City Hotel, you'll recall, he was “preparing and issuing forth punch and spirits to strange-looking men.” This suggests a much higher level of activity than the landlord's leisurely mixing of a bowl of Punch; it's likely that Willard was making them to order, one glass at a time. That's certainly how he was doing them later, and that's also how, before

long, everybody else was taking them. The American plan has always been “I want mine now,” and why shouldn’t that apply to Punch as well? In fact, Willard wasn’t even the first: According to the memoirs of the rowdy rambler Big Bill Otter, by 1806 plenty of New York bars were selling Punch by the glass, both large and small. In this chapter, we’ll tackle the Greater Punches, as it were, the ones generally made long and strong.

I. A LARGE GLASS OF PUNCH

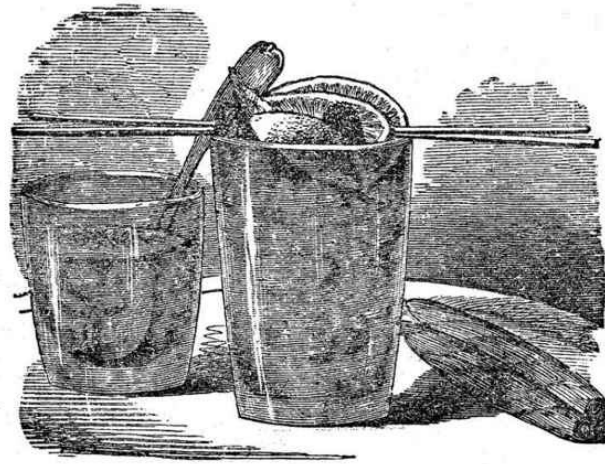
By Jerry Thomas's day, there were a great many one-shot Punches in circulation. Sadly, few were preserved: The formula for Willard's famous Extra Extra Peach Brandy Punch appears to have died with its creator, and for the Punch with which Delmonico's, America's first temple of gastronomy, would warm its chilled communicants on a blustery winter's day, all we have is Sam Ward's tantalizing recollection as an old man in the 1870s of a "hot, rosy whisky punch, sweetened with currant jelly and heightened by a dash of peach brandy."* I present here a generous selection of the most important and, of course, tastiest of the survivors.

BRANDY PUNCH

The first drink in Jerry Thomas's book—and indeed quite possibly his first acknowledgment as a bartender: On February 7, 1853, page 4 of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* carried a set of verses on a newspaper P. T. Barnum had launched, including these lines, satirizing Barnum's support of Prohibition (which had been enacted in Maine in 1851, with the lax and arbitrary enforcement that usually accompanies such schemes):

*In Yankee land, the papers say,
Barnum talks "Maine Law" all day,
But beneath his monster show,
Brandy punch is all the go.*

BRANDY PUNCH.



Brandy punch; note cigars at right (from *The Bon Vivant's Companion*, 1862; author's collection).

If Thomas and George Earle were still running the Exchange under Barnum's Museum and Thomas was making the Punch the same way at age twenty-three as he was at age thirty-two when his book came out, small wonder it was all the go. In Thomas's hands, the individual Brandy Punch is the epitome of the Fancy Drink; indeed, he felt so strongly about it that one of the book's few illustrations was devoted to it.

The popularity of Brandy Punch peaked before the Civil War, with the popularity of brandy itself. Postwar, many of the gents who drank it—the ones who survived the shooting, that is—seem to have switched their attention to the Sour, for which see the next chapter. A cautionary note, though: Like many of the Professor's drinks, this one's not for the novice tippler. It's a potent drink for long, slow sipping.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL RASPBERRY SYRUP

2 TABLESPOONFULS [2 TSP] WHITE SUGAR

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] WATER

1½ WINEGLASS [3 OZ] BRANDY

½ SMALL-SIZED LEMON

2 SLICES OF ORANGE

1 PIECE OF PINEAPPLE

Fill the tumbler with shaved ice, shake well, and dress the top with berries in season; sip through a straw.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The sugar should be superfine, the brandy cognac, and the berries whatever strikes your fancy. The illustration in Thomas's book appears to show a raspberry and a strawberry.

Thomas provides three close variations for this: To make this into Curaçoa Punch, substitute that liqueur for the raspberry syrup, replace 1 ounce of the brandy with Jamaica rum and "sip the nectar through a straw." For West Indian Punch, "add a clove or two of preserved ginger, and a little of the syrup." For Barbadoes Punch (as Thomas spells it), "add a tablespoonful of guava jelly." All are very fine drinks, particularly if you drop the raspberry syrup in the last two and use ½ ounce of sugar. These two should also be made with 2 ounces of brandy and 1 ounce of rum, with Mount Gay or Cockburn's in the Barbadoes Punch and pretty much any rum you like in the West Indian. From the 1867 *American Barkeeper* (that is, Jerry Thomas's second book), we collect another West Indian variation, the Tamarind Punch. Make as the Brandy Punch, cutting the brandy back to 2 ounces, substituting 1 tablespoon of tamarind jelly for the lemon juice and dashing a fragrant Jamaica rum liberally on top at the end. This is truly delicious.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Begin by squeezing the lemon into the glass. Add the sugar and the water and stir. Then pour in the syrup and the brandy. The orange slices and the pineapple are a matter of taste and conjecture. The engraving accompanying the recipe shows them as a mere garnish, but there's every possibility that that was mere artistic license and everything, berries included, was all shaken up together; that's what the 1869 *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* states, anyway, and very clearly at that. If done in a Boston shaker with plenty of ice, the result would be a gooey mess. But rolled back and forth with shaved ice, which lacks the kinetic energy to break up fruits, it would be rather more attractive. In short, I'll use the fruits as garnish if all I've got is bar ice; if I've

got shaved or finely cracked ice, I'll give everything a gentle shake, reserving a couple of berries for the top.

The jellies in Barbadoes Punch and Tamarind Punch take special handling because they will not readily dissolve in cold water. Put the jelly in the glass first and add a splash of hot water ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce), stirring well before adding the rest of the ingredients (the water should be reduced accordingly). If making a bunch of these, you can do this in advance, preparing a sort of syrup with equal parts water and jelly.

VANILLA PUNCH

One more quick Brandy Punch variation from Professor Thomas. Clearly it was a specialty of his, and I'll respect that. This one is simple and very tasty. The 1869 *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* published by Haney & Co. in New York calls this a Scadeva Punch and notes that "this drink is seldom called for at a bar, and is known to only a few prominent bartenders" (the name is either a typo or a mangling of something intelligible or it's the Italian word for "it fell off," which is hard to explain unless the recipe fell off the back of a dray-wagon).

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL [2 TSP] OF SUGAR

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF BRANDY

THE JUICE OF $\frac{1}{4}$ LEMON

Fill the tumbler with shaved ice, shake well, ornament with one or two slices of lemon, and flavor with a few drops of vanilla extract.

This is a delicious drink, and should be imbibed through a glass tube or straw.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: If at all possible, use a good vanilla extract, such as the one made by Charles H. Baldwin & Sons of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, an old

Yankee brand if ever there was one.

PISCO PUNCH

“You should have had a snort of Mrs. Sykes’ Pisco Punch. . . . It was said New York had not before ever seen or heard of the insidious concoction which in its time had caused the unseating of South American governments and women to set world’s records in various and interesting fields of activity. In early San Francisco, where the punch first made its North American appearance in 1856, the police allowed but one drink per person in twenty-four hours, it’s that propulsive. But Mrs. Sykes served them up like *pain, à discrétion*, as the signs used to say in front of the little restaurants in Paris, meaning you could have all the bread you wanted. As a consequence, discretion vanished.”

In 1950, when A. J. Liebling’s pal James A. MacDonald, alias Colonel John R. Stingo, was recalling these events (which transpired when a party of San Francisco con artists came to New York), Pisco Punch was the mixological equivalent to a lost Mozart symphony. Before Prohibition, this particular twist on the old Brandy Punch had been San Francisco’s secret weapon, a drink so smooth, delightful, and potent that, well, as the Colonel says. . . . Though, as Harold Ross of the New Yorker later recalled, “All San Francisco bars used to serve them, and one or two served nothing else,” it was universally acknowledged that the one true and authentic recipe—complete with secret ingredient—was in the sole possession of a closemouthed old Scot by the name of Duncan Nicol, proprietor of the historic Bank Exchange saloon; he died in 1926, his secret seemingly intact. Five or six years later, the historian Herbert Asbury scoured the town “industriously, even desperately” for a bottle of pisco, the clear South American brandy on which the drink was based; he found none. Nor did the situation improve much after Repeal: There was a short-lived attempt to sell a bottled Pisco Punch, and San Francisco maintained a “House of Pisco” for a while in the mid-1940s, but by 1950 both Punch and pisco had effectively

vanished from the American pharmacopoeia. While I cannot in good conscience call this a tragedy, it is certainly a shame. For the seventy-odd years leading up to Prohibition, San Francisco had witnessed the finest flowering of the American sporting life—that created by the “gentleman of elegant leisure,” as one early San Franciscan defined his occupation, and the soiled doves with which he associated—and Pisco Punch was its Oil of Anointment. That life is beyond recovery, but thankfully the Punch is not. Although a few recipes were published in the 1900s and 1910s, this one, from Nicol’s bar manager, John Lannes, has the greatest claim to authenticity (Lannes tried to bottle and sell the stuff after Prohibition, following Nicol’s formula, but was put out of business by low-cost, low-quality competitors).

1. Take a fresh pineapple. Cut it in squares about ½ by 1½ inches. Put these squares of fresh pineapple in a bowl of gum syrup to soak overnight. That serves the double purpose of flavoring the gum syrup with the pineapple and soaking the pineapple, both of which are used afterwards in the Pisco Punch.

2. In the morning mix in a big bowl the following:

½ PINT (8 OZ) OF THE GUM SYRUP, PINEAPPLE FLAVORED AS ABOVE

1 PINT (16 OZ) DISTILLED WATER

¾ PINT (10 OZ [SIC]) LEMON JUICE

1 BOTTLE (24 OZ) PERUVIAN PISCO BRANDY

Serve very cold but be careful not to keep the ice in too long because of dilution. Use 3 or 4 oz punch glasses. Put one of these above squares of pineapple in each glass. Lemon juice or gum syrup may be added to taste.

SOURCE: WILLIAM BRONSON, “SECRETS OF PISCO PUNCH REVEALED,” *CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY*, 1973.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: If possible the pisco should be of the varietal known as Italia (BarSol and Don Cesar are two particularly good brands). One of the early recipes claims that lime juice can also be used. It can. It has been suggested to me that Nicol’s secret ingredient was cocaine, at least until it was outlawed. I don’t recommend it.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Nicol had his own procedure for preparing this, which

included compounding part of it in secrecy in the basement every morning. Pauline Jacobson, a color writer for the *San Francisco Bulletin* who did a piece about the Bank Exchange in 1912, watched Nicol assemble the drink and recorded one of the regulars' commentary on the process:

See . . . he is squeezing a f-r-e-s-h lemon. In the bar uptown they have the lemon juice already prepared, which leaves a bitter taste after drinking. And Duncan n-e-v-e-r uses any of them effervescent waters. . . . He always uses distilled water.

This, combined with Jacobson's description of Nicol, "intent upon his work, with hands trembling with the years, yet measuring with the nicety of an apothecary," prompts me to suggest the following procedure:

First, prepare the pineapple syrup, as above. Mix this with the pisco, with three parts pisco to one part syrup and bottle it (this will keep in the refrigerator for at least a couple of weeks, and longer if you strain out the sediment that it will throw off). To assemble the drink, combine in a cocktail shaker 2 ounces of the pisco-syrup mix, $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce distilled water (or bottled water, or tap water if yours is good), squeeze the juice of half a (small) lemon or lime into this, add ice, shake, and strain into a small bar glass; add a chunk of syrup-soaked pineapple and serve.

COLD WHISKEY PUNCH

While the early mixographers pretty much ignored American whiskey Punches, their nonliterary peers and their customers didn't. "An iced monongahela punch," as a correspondent in New Orleans informed the readers of the *Brooklyn Eagle* in 1852, "is not at all bad to take . . . it forms a most admirable thirst-quenching and exhilarating drink. The liquor should have age to render it excellent."

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

TAKE ONE TEASPOONFUL OF POWDERED WHITE SUGAR, DISSOLVED IN A LITTLE WATER

JUICE OF HALF A LEMON OR ONE LIME

ONE AND A HALF WINE-GLASSESFUL [3 OZ] OF RED TOP RYE

FILL GLASS WITH SHAVED ICE

ADD TWO DASHES [1 TSP] OF RUM

Shake well and strain into cool stem punch glass. Add two thin slices of lemon and any other seasonable fruit. Serve with a straw.

SOURCE: ANON., *RED TOP RYE GUIDE*, CA. 1905.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Red Top is no more, but any good straight rye or, for that matter, bourbon will make a tasty Punch like this. The rum should be a Jamaica style.

HOT WHISKEY PUNCH

For this Caledonian staple, see the [Whisky Skin](#).

GIN PUNCH

By far the most common form of single-serving Gin Punch was the John Collins, which you'll find immediately following. But that didn't reach the height of its popularity in America until the 1870s. Before that, we had this—and very tasty it is, too.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL OF RASPBERRY SYRUP

2 TABLESPOONFULS [2 TSP] OF POWDERED WHITE SUGAR

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF WATER

1½ WINEGLASS [3 OZ] OF HOLLAND GIN

[JUICE OF] ½ SMALL-SIZED LEMON

2 SLICES OF ORANGE

1 PIECE OF PINEAPPLE

Fill the tumbler with shaved ice.

Shake well, and ornament the top with berries in season. Sip through a glass tube or straw.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The anonymous 1887 version of Jerry Thomas’s book adds “1 or 2 dashes of Maraschino,” which is a good idea, and a “slice of lime,” which is neither good nor bad.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Begin by dissolving the sugar in the lemon juice.

THE COLLINS TWINS: JOHN AND TOM

I have delved into the origins and early history of this Prince of Long Drinks in some detail in *Punch*, but here is the telegraphic version: New York—Stephen Price, theatrical manager—Gin Punch drinker—cold soda water in his, please—moves to London—manages the Garrick Club—actors, royals, other celebrities—his Punch catches on—John Collins, headwaiter,

Limmer's Hotel, makes a version—his version makes him famous—his clientele runs to admirals and baronets, dukes and generals—they spread the drink around the world.

We first hear of Collins's Punch in the 1830s; twenty-odd years later, it had made him famous, or vice versa. By 1864, it had jumped the Atlantic to Montreal, where it was being served at the famous Dolly's Tavern. Or at least *something* had jumped the Atlantic: As far as we can tell, nobody ever wrote down Collins's precise formula. No matter; authentic Limmer's recipe or not, a Gin Punch with Collins's name welded onto it was loose upon the land and sea, and before you knew it "England's morning 'John Collins' [was] following the sun and circling the world" (thus Webster). The *New York World* claimed in 1877 that the vector for transmission was officers of the British army, which is entirely plausible. Dolly's, for instance, was indeed popular with British officers—and Confederate ones, too: During the Civil War it was frequented by the many Southern spies, merchants, and diplomats who were in Montreal; John Wilkes Booth even drank there, in 1864. It's worth noting that many of those shadowy figures slipped down to New York, where Confederate sympathy ran disturbingly high. According to the *World*, the drink had already made it there in the late 1850s, when "a very eminent officer of the Royal Artillery" taught it to the boys behind the bar at the Clarendon Hotel, his New York headquarters, but if so it doesn't appear to have been picked up by the papers. By the beginning of the 1870s, anyway, it had caught on in American saloons, although at first it was generally made with a Dutch-style gin rather than the Old Tom that Mr. Collins apparently used. Before too many years passed it would be accepted nationwide as one of the indispensable summer drinks.

But America's a big country, and things echo strangely in all that space. That happened to the John Collins in the 1870s. When it turns up in the new edition of Jerry Thomas's book in 1876, it's somehow turned into a "Tom Collins." What gives?

It's that echo. In 1874, you see, an annoying bit of tomfoolery began crisscrossing the country. It couldn't be simpler: Turn to the guy standing next to you at the bar and say that you heard Tom Collins was going around bad-mouthing him and that you just saw said Mr. Collins in a bar around the corner, down the street, across town, wherever. Exit guy, steaming. At the next place, when he asked for Mr. Collins those who were in on the gag would repeat the procedure. It sounds moronic, but judging from newspaper

accounts of the high jinks that ensued—only a few of them fatal—it worked. At any rate, for people who had never heard of Limmer’s or Old John, Tom Collins must have made more sense as a drink name—particularly because the many were beginning to make it with the proper Old Tom gin, one of the growth spirits of the time. Before long, the drink was a Tom Collins, and the name John Collins was reserved for the Hollands version.*

Old John was spared news of this travesty. Having put in his forty-odd years at Limmer’s and seen a great deal of life in the process, he retired in the early 1850s to a cottage outside London, where Dickens once visited him (Boz was a Gin Punch man from way back). By 1855, he was gone.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

TEASPOONFUL OF POWDERED SUGAR

THE JUICE OF HALF A LEMON

A WINE GLASS OF OLD TOM GIN

A BOTTLE OF PLAIN SODA

Shake up, or stir up with ice. Add a slice of lemon peel to finish.

SOURCE: *NEW YORK SUN*, 1873, VIA UNDATED SUPPLEMENT TO THE 1869 *STEWART & BARKEEPER’S MANUAL*.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For a John Collins, use a genever; this is particularly nice with an aged one. That bottle of soda would be the small kind, which held 6 ounces. As for variations: In 1876, Jerry Thomas (who was of the Tom gin school) listed whiskey and brandy versions alongside the gin one. The formulas were otherwise the same.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: There are few arguments in the world of bartending more perennial than the distinction between Collinses and Fizzes. They both have essentially the same ingredients and both are tall, so it ultimately comes down to what you do with the ice: Do you leave it in or take it out? Considered historically, the way is a little clearer than many make it out to be.

The glasses of Gin Punch Old John would have been handing around would have been made with chilled soda water, but would not have had ice in them. In America, however, there was more ice and tall Punches were generally made with it in the glass, and this was a tall Punch (although the influential formula the *World* printed in 1877 left the matter up to individual taste). America’s bartenders were also used to shaking drinks and straining them. This is how Jerry Thomas made his, adding the cold soda at the end. But this is also how he

made his Gin “Fiz”—in fact, the only difference between the two is that the Collins uses more of everything and goes into a bigger glass. The Fizz is, essentially, a short drink: It’s meant to be drunk down with dispatch. The Collins, however, is too big for that. This distinction is what bartenders seized on. Because it had some staying power in the glass, the Collins also had the potential to get warm. The answer to this is to put ice in the glass, and once you’re doing that there’s no point to shaking and straining. This, then, became the classic distinction between the drinks: a Fizz is shaken and strained, a Collins built in the glass over large, slow-melting cubes—and the larger the glass, the better. Eventually, the Tom Collins would have its own glass, a big, long 16-ouncer (bars were stocking special “John Collins” glasses as early as 1884).

The *World* had one stir the sugar in at the end, which will make the drink foam in a pleasing manner.

CLARET PUNCH

“You never see the perspiring laborer, with brawny arms bared to the elbow, and a brow beaded with huge drops of honest sweat, step up to a bar in a hot Summer’s day, and call for a claret punch!” No, for him it will be “Bourbon, rather than the delicious claret punch. . . . But your fine snob, or your cultured gentleman, will wipe his brow with his perfumed handkerchief, while he sips his punch, and insinuate that it’s ‘very hot, by Jove, you know.’”

Well, that’s the way the *Brooklyn Eagle* saw things in 1873, anyway. The *Eagle* says nothing about the Sauterne Punch that Thomas included in his book (simply substitute a cheap Sauternes for the claret), but if Claret Punch is a dude’s drink, that’s got to be one, too.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1½ TABLESPOONFUL [2 TSP] OF SUGAR

1 SLICE OF LEMON

2 OR 3 SLICES OF ORANGE

Fill the tumbler with shaved ice, and then pour in your claret, shake well, and ornament with berries in season. Place a straw in the glass.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The wine doesn't strictly have to be a Bordeaux; any full-bodied, dry red will do just fine.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Dissolve the sugar in a little water first (or just use an equal quantity of gum syrup). Add the wine, the citrus, and the ice, and shake vigorously. Pour unstrained into a tall glass and finish as directed.

MILK PUNCH

As a Punch-bowl drink, Milk Punch goes back to the late 1600s or early 1700s (at the time, its invention was attributed to Aphra Behn, wit, actress, courtesan, and the first woman ever to earn her living solely by writing). But Milk Punch in a glass and Milk Punch in a bowl or bottle are two entirely different drinks. In the latter, the cream is deliberately made to curdle and then strained out. This makes for a drink that's stable and undeniably smooth, but not necessarily lush. But in the former, where stability isn't a concern since it only has to sit around long enough for the sport who ordered it to pick it up and insert it into his head, it's all about the cream. And, in the case of the Professor's formula, the alcohol. Not that he was alone in this regard: As the *Brooklyn Eagle* noted in 1873, speaking no doubt from experience, Milk Punch is "the surest thing in the world to get drunk on, and so fearfully drunk, that you won't know whether you are a cow, yourself, or some other foolish thing."

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL [2 TSP] OF FINE WHITE SUGAR

2 TABLESPOONFULS [2 TSP] OF WATER
1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF COGNAC BRANDY
½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF SANTA CRUZ RUM
⅓ TUMBLERFUL OF SHAVED ICE

Fill with milk, shake the ingredients well together, and grate a little nutmeg on top.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: This drink will not lose its appeal should you follow the path of discretion and cut back by half the brandy (use a good cognac) and the rum (which should be smooth, rich, and well-aged). For the variation known as Egg Milk Punch, see [Egg Nogg](#), which is the same thing.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Begin by dissolving the sugar in the water; shake with extreme prejudice (and if using an egg, with even more violence than that). Serve with a straw.

MOUNTAIN PUNCH

“This drink is favorable with the hardy mountaineers of the Alps, and was kindly explained to me by a young Swiss lady in Geneva, Switzerland.” If these are indeed the words of Jerry Thomas (they come from the 1867 Campbell book), then the Mountain Punch is a liquid souvenir of the Professor’s 1860 European tour. With an eyebrow-raising 5 ounces of liquor in it, it suggests delivery by St. Bernard’s neck rather than bartender’s hand.

(USE LARGE BAR GLASS.)

ONE TABLESPOONFUL OF SUGAR
ONE WINEGLASS [2 OZ] BRANDY
ONE AND A HALF WINEGLASS [3 OZ] ST. CRUZ RUM

Separate yolk from white of an egg; place the yolk in a tumbler, and beat the white. Fill the tumbler two-thirds with ice, and complete with

milk. Shake well, and place on top the white of the egg, and ornament with colored sugar.

SOURCE: CHARLES B. CAMPBELL, *AMERICAN BARKEEPER*, 1867 (THAT IS, JERRY THOMAS, 1863).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: “Use goat’s milk, if possible,” quoth Thomas. Goat or cow, you’ll want whole milk here. It’s not a terrible idea to cut the liquors in half.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: I like to incorporate a teaspoon of the sugar in with the egg white before I whip it (which can be done in the shaker, without ice, of course). I’ll stir the other 2 teaspoons of sugar together with the milk before adding the ice, booze, and egg yolk. If ornamenting with colored sugar, I suggest making a simple stencil, a thick paper cross, so you can dust the top in red sugar leaving a white cross in the center, thus giving you a Swiss flag. Or you can say the hell with it and forget the colored sugar, which is probably more sensible.

MISSISSIPPI PUNCH

I don’t know if Jerry Thomas picked this up when he was at the Planter’s House in St. Louis or in New Orleans, Keokuk, or somewhere else during his days “along the Mississippi,” as he put it. Wherever it’s from, it testifies to the capacity and taste of our forebears.

Cut all the boozes in half and you have the El Dorado Punch, which was included in the section of new drinks tacked on to the end of the 1876 second edition of Thomas’s book. Was this a liquid reminiscence of his Forty-Niner days? The fact that it wasn’t included in the first edition somewhat militates against that, but maybe he just forgot and took the opportunity to correct his error.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF BRANDY

½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF JAMAICA RUM

½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF BOURBON WHISKEY

1½ TABLESPOONFUL [1 TBSP] OF POWDERED WHITE SUGAR

¼ [½] OF A LARGE LEMON

Fill a tumbler with shaved ice.

The above must be well shaken, and to those who like their draughts “like linked sweetness long drawn out,” let them use a glass tube or straw to sip the nectar through. The top of this punch should be ornamented with small pieces of orange, and berries in season.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Brigade-Major Thomas Unett, of Her Majesty’s 19th Regiment of Foot, included a Mississippi Punch in the list of “American summer drinks” he collected on an American tour and published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1850; his version relied on “one glass [2 oz] of Outard [*sic*] brandy, half ditto of Jamaica rum [and] a tablespoonful of arrack” for its motive power. This is delightful, if you can get your hands on the arrack (what you want here is the Indonesian kind; look for Batavia Arrack van Oosten).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Squeeze the lemon into the mixing glass, add the sugar, and stir to dissolve it. Then add the spirits and the ice and shake well. Serve unstrained.

ST. CHARLES PUNCH

The St. Charles Hotel was one of New Orleans’s two finest. Where the St. Louis (which stood on the site now occupied by the Royal Orleans) served the French Quarter, the St. Charles was on the avenue of the same name, across Canal in the American part of town. There’s no shortage of lore about the St. Charles, which before the Civil War was for a time considered one of the two or three best hotels in America, but the stories will have to await another venue. Suffice it to say that its Punch, which Thomas must’ve picked up in New Orleans, speaks for it eloquently.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL [1 TSP] OF SUGAR

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF PORT WINE

1 PONY-GLASS [1 OZ] OF BRANDY

THE JUICE OF ¼ OF A LEMON

Fill the tumbler with shaved ice, shake well, ornament with fruits in season, and serve with a straw.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The port should be a decent ruby; the brandy, cognac; the ice, cracked; and the fruits, berries. With a few simple changes, this becomes Jerry Thomas's aptly named Enchantress (as poached by Charles B. Campbell): Simply double the brandy, replace the sugar with 2 teaspoonfuls of orange curaçao, shake with ice (although Thomas's is in fact un-iced, making it technically a Scaffa, an iceless assemblage of wines and spirits briefly popular in the middle of the century), and strain the whole thing into a "small wine goblet"—I like to use a Champagne flute. Then smile.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Begin by dissolving the sugar in the lemon juice.

PRINCE OF WALES'S PUNCH

Another drink extracted from Campbell, and hence presumably Thomas's second book, this one commemorates the prince's 1860 visit to America and is quite possibly the fancy drink he received from Thomas's hands (or one of them, depending on which account of his New York walk on the wild side you believe). Sure, George Forrester Williams claimed that the drink in question was a Mint Julep, but the line between Punch and Julep was somewhat blurred at the time, as no doubt were Williams, his friend Doesticks, and the prince. In any case, this is precisely the sort of thing the prince liked (see the [Prince of Wales's Cocktail](#)).

(USE LARGE BAR GLASS.)

ONE TABLESPOONFUL [1 TSP] OF SUGAR

HALF PONY GLASS [½ OZ] OF CURAÇOA

HALF PONY GLASS [2 TSP] OF MARASCHINO
ONE WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF BRANDY
ONE PONY GLASS [1 OZ] JAMAICA RUM
THREE SLICES ORANGE AND ONE SLICE PINEAPPLE

Fill with shaved ice; shake well, ornament with berries, and dash with port wine.

SOURCE: CHARLES B. CAMPBELL, *AMERICAN BARKEEPER*, 1867 (THAT IS, JERRY THOMAS, 1863).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Use the best cognac you can afford—hey, it’s for royalty.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Begin by muddling the sugar with the fruit. Thomas would have served this in the glass it was shaken in. Modern practice suggests straining it over fresh ice, in which case you don’t need to bother with fine ice or muddling the fruit before shaking.

NATIONAL GUARD SEVENTH REGIMENT

PUNCH

The Seventh Regiment was the National Guard—before that title was applied to all the states’ militias, it was applied to New York State’s, and before that only the Seventh was entitled to it. If there’s such a thing as a white-shoe regiment, the Seventh was it—or rather, a “Silk Stocking Regiment,” as it was known. With a roster that was virtually cut and pasted from the Social Register, it was the toniest of outfits. And if the only fighting it saw as a unit during the Civil War was in quelling the New York City Draft Riots, for which it was called back while on its way to Gettysburg, the Seventh made up for it by taking on the Hindenburg Line in World War I.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL [2 TSP] OF SUGAR
THE JUICE OF ¼ [½ OZ] OF A LEMON
1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF BRANDY
1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF CATAWBA WINE
FLAVOR WITH [1 TSP] RASPBERRY SYRUP

Fill the glass with shaved ice. Shake and mix thoroughly, then ornament with slices of orange, pineapple, and berries in season, and dash with Jamaica rum. This delicious beverage should be imbibed through a straw.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The brandy should, of course, be cognac. For the Catawba, you can hunt around for a real one or use any sweetish white—yea, even unto a white Zinfandel. In 1887, though, the revised edition of Thomas’s book calls for sherry instead; the results are not bad (use an oloroso).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Begin by dissolving the sugar in the lemon juice.

SIXTY-NINTH REGIMENT PUNCH

Where the Seventh was Fifth Avenue, the Fighting Sixty-Ninth (a nickname given to it by Robert E. Lee) was the old East Side. Irish, Catholic, rough and tumble, Democratic, it was everything its rival wasn’t, and vice versa. It fought just as hard, though, if not harder. Repeatedly cut to pieces at Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, it nonetheless battled through until Appomattox. The unit is still around and still fighting hard, having lost twenty-three members in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Sixty-Ninth’s Punch, homely but stalwart, stands in the same relation to the Seventh’s that the Fighting Irish did to the National Guard.

The Punch combines Scotch and Irish whiskies, which is rather puzzling, what with the Scots being largely Protestant—not entirely, though, and if you use a malt from the Western Highlands, which are still in part

Catholic, you might just be able to squeak by.

(IN EARTHEN MUG.)

½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF IRISH WHISKEY

½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF SCOTCH WHISKY

1 TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR

1 PIECE OF LEMON

2 WINEGLASSES [4 OZ] OF HOT WATER

This is a capital punch for a cold night.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Both whiskies should be pot stillled, if at all possible; see the [Whisky Skin](#). The sugar should be Demerara or turbinado. The lemon—use a half wheel—can be studded with three or four cloves in the modern Irish style.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: See the [Hot Toddy](#).

HOT MILK PUNCH

The nineteenth century may have lacked Ambien, but it had this.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL OF FINE WHITE SUGAR

.....

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF COGNAC BRANDY

½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF SANTA CRUZ RUM

.....

Fill with [hot] milk, [stir] the ingredients well together, and grate a little nutmeg on top.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Again, the spirits can be safely reduced here without affecting the drink's epicurean qualities.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: As the reviser of Jerry Thomas's book reminds us, "in preparing any kind of a hot drink, the glass should always be first rinsed rapidly with hot water; if this is not done the drink cannot be served sufficiently hot to suit a fastidious customer."

GENERAL BURNSIDE'S FAVORITE

Quoth Jerry Thomas in his 1863 *Portrait Gallery*, "This superb drink was forwarded to me by special messenger from the General." The stolid Ambrose Burnside, whose A-to-B-to-C leadership allowed the brainless slaughter of Fredericksburg to unfold, was not averse to looking on the wine when it sparkled or the whiskey when it was frisky, although when it came to drinking he was no Ulysses Grant. Unfortunately, when it came to fighting he was no Grant either. The drink is delicious, anyway, once you cut the orgeat back and let the booze get in and do its work.

(LARGE BAR GLASS.)

HALF A LEMON SQUEEZED

WINEGLASS [2 OZ] BRANDY

HALF WINEGLASS [1 OZ] JAMAICA RUM

WINEGLASS [¾ OZ] OF ORGEAT

Fill with hot water, stir well, and grate nutmeg over top.

SOURCE: CHARLES B. CAMPBELL, *AMERICAN BARKEEPER*, 1867 (THAT IS, JERRY THOMAS, 1863).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: VSOP or thereabouts for the brandy, please. If you go with Smith & Cross or some other flag waver for the rum, I suggest cutting it back. In any case, there's a lot of booze in this one—unless you've just lost Fredericksburg, may be best to cut the brandy back to 1½ ounces, the rum to ¾ ounce, and the lemon and orgeat to ½ ounce each.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Use a mug or London Dock glass. Before building the drink, rinse whatever receptacle you're using with boiling water.

BOSTON RUM PUNCH

By the end of the nineteenth century, the simple, forthright glass of Punch might have seen itself lapped by all its vigorous upstart offspring, as we'll see detailed in the next chapters, but it was still on its feet and walking. Sure, it wasn't getting the attention it once had, but it still had its drinkers and its expert compounders. Consider the case of a certain General R——, from Portland, Maine, who liked to come down to Boston every so often to take the waters, so to speak. “He would secure a first-class room in a hotel,” as the barkeeper at one of them told a *Globe* reporter in 1889, “hand over several hundred dollars to the proprietor and tell him that he wanted permission to draw upon the bar . . . for any amount at any time.” Then he used that permission, placing himself “constantly in a state of most delicious intoxication” for the next two weeks, never “mak[ing] himself obnoxious to other people” and always retaining the ability to walk a “nearly straight” line and just enough sense to “keep his mouth shut and not to get in the way of other people.” The general's drink of choice? Rum Punch, as made by our loquacious barkeep. “He had an idea,” the man told the *Globe* reporter, “that when I put the liquid into shape it tasted better than it did when the other men mixed it.”

He may very well have been right about that. His secret was simplicity. “It is not always the elaborateness of the drink that makes it acceptable to the taste,” as he explained.

When I mix a rum punch I simply take a good dose [2 oz] of first quality rum, put it into a glass with cracked ice, pour over it a dipper [3 oz] of liquid from the lemonade bowl, put the cover over the glass, give it a short mixing shake, and then, after taking the cover off, I put on the finishing touches in the shape of half a strawberry and a thin slice of sound orange.

SOURCE: *BOSTON GLOBE*, 1889.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the rum, use a hardy Jamaican such as Smith & Cross or one of the new rums from the microdistilleries popping up all around the Boston area. I find Old Ipswich works particularly well in this. To make the lemonade, peel 4 lemons with a swivel-bladed peeler. Put the peels and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Demerara sugar (fine-grained, if possible) in a 1-pint Mason jar, seal, shake, and let sit overnight in a warm place (or three or four hours in the sun). Carefully open the jar, add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup lemon juice, reseal, and shake until the sugar has dissolved. Combine with 3 cups cold water, straining out the peels, then bottle and refrigerate. This will keep for a couple of days at least.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: For perfect authenticity, serve this in the mixing glass it's been shaken in. For less than perfect, yet still adequate, authenticity, strain it over fresh ice.

THE HERALD PUNCH

Patsy Duffy of County Roscommon came to New York at age sixteen and soon finagled a bellboy job at the Ashland House, a smallish hotel on Fourth Avenue that enjoyed an extensive theatrical, literary, and sporting clientele. That was in 1884, the year before Jerry Thomas died. From bellboy, he advanced to barback, bartender, and head bartender, a position he held from 1891 (or thereabouts) until he left to open his own little bar, across the street, in 1894. Unlike the Professor, Duffy was the sort who kept his mouth shut and his ears open. The 109-page autobiographical sketch he typed out forty years later contains no white rats, no tracing of flaming arcs of

whiskey through the barroom murk, no high stakes gambling or diamond shirt studs, at least not on his part.

When John L. Sullivan comes into his bar, Duffy engineers a meeting between him and J. P. Morgan, who was sitting at another table. He does not attempt to join them as Thomas would have no doubt done. Only a few pages of his memoir are devoted to himself and his doings. The rest—well, the rest. While for the purposes of this book it would have been far more useful had he delved into the minutiae of bartending and mixology, instead he spent page after page dissecting the literary, theatrical, and political celebrities whom he served, from Sullivan and Morgan to Edwin Booth, Oscar Wilde, and Tom Thumb (who always came in with Barnum's Chinese giant, Chang), with details of their conversation and reflections on their respective characters. This is the world that Prohibition destroyed, a world where you could pop into a bar for a glass of something cool and find yourself standing next to, and soon conversing with, a senator, a playwright, and a sculptor of renown. The culture was convivial and the barrier to acceptance was low.

Duffy's little bar lasted only four years; when the lease came up, renewal was denied as the block was being built on by the Metropolitan Life Company (the current Metropolitan Life building, on the same spot, houses the restaurant Eleven Madison Park, whose bar does as much as any in the country to carry on that old culture). Duffy then worked at the Hotel Empire, at Broadway and Sixty-Third Street, for a few years before opening another bar nearby. In 1907 he went back to Roscommon. In 1921, tired of all that fresh air, he came back to Brooklyn, where he ran rooming houses (and just maybe a speakeasy or two) for the rest of his days. In 1933, as Patrick Gavin Duffy, he published the *Official Mixer's Manual*, one of the two or three books that did the most to bring back the bartender's craft after Repeal.

Patsy Duffy was no mixologist. He only had one drink that ever got any traction with the general public, a Punch that he dedicated to the *New York Herald* in 1901.* Nonetheless, he knew what he was doing: Duffy's Herald Punch is a corker and a fitting way to end this chapter.

The juice of one rich orange [2 oz], one teaspoonful powdered sugar, one ordinary drink of rye [2 oz], with enough St. Croix [rum] to flavor [½ oz]; shake thoroughly in shaved ice and strain into sour glass or

serve in the ice with the usual fruit decorations in hot weather.

SOURCE: *NEW YORK HERALD*, 1901.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: I have no earthly idea what a “rich orange” is, but if blood oranges are in season, by all means use them. The quantity of rum (I like an amber Trinidadian one here) is up to you: The ½ ounce was what “a jury of Americans who can stand their liquor” came up with in Paris when it set about “fixing the requisite quantity of rum for flavoring,” a no doubt challenging task. The usual fruit decorations include berries, pieces of orange, a sprig of mint, a baton of pineapple or, really, whatever you fancy.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir the sugar into the juice before adding the booze.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHILDREN OF PUNCH: COLLINSES, DAISIES, FIZZES, SOURS, COBBLERS, COOLERS, AND A GLANCE AT THE SWIZZLE

The big glass of Punch went forth in the new land and multiplied, begetting a whole host of other, less mighty drinks. Even the Cobbler, an unpunchy drink if ever there was one, can be seen as one of its offshoots, combining as it does wine, sugar, ice, and a couple of slices of citrus shaken in.

I. THE LESSER PUNCHES: FIXES AND SOURS (AND A COUPLE OF BOSTONIAN FANCIES)

One of the many questions that could have easily been answered by knowledgeable and careful inquiry at the time and now is probably past recovery is, Wherefore the rise of the “short drink” in mid-Victorian America? Was it due to the increasing popularity of the Cocktail? Or was it merely a symptom, an acknowledgment of the accelerating pace of urban life? Whatever the reason, the decade or two before the Civil War saw American barkeepers making, and American tipplers tipping, pocket versions of those two mainstays of bar drinking, the Mint Julep and the glass of Punch, versions made and served not in the large bar glass but in the small one.

Nineteenth-century Americans dearly loved to make up names for things (see the map of North America), and these drinks rapidly took on identities and, as it were, lives of their own. You’ll find the baby Julep listed herein as the Smash, which is the only name it was ever known by. The lesser Punches, however, were more numerous in their generation and their classification is not easy.

The two earliest classes of lesser Punch—the Fix and the Sour—entered the historical record at the same time, in a Toronto saloon’s drink list that is dated, by hand, to 1856 (see Chapter 9 for more on this extraordinary document), which means there is no surefire way of determining which one came first. But when comparing ancient manuscripts, one of the principles scholars rely on is the idea that the *lectio difficilior*, the “more difficult reading,” is the one most likely to be older because the monks who copied out the manuscripts tended to simplify what they didn’t understand. According to this principle, the Fix should have seniority over the Sour, since it is the more involved drink to make. The fact that its distinguishing feature is the same ornamental garnish that graced Willard-era Punches works to support this conclusion.

BRANDY, GIN, SANTA CRUZ, OR WHISKEY

FIX

Difficilior or not, the Fix, or Fix-Up (which gives us a clue as to its etymology), isn't exactly complicated—it's merely a short Punch with fancy fruit garnish. As such, it's a surprisingly mysterious beverage: It appears in just about all the bartender's bibles published before Prohibition and is among the few drinks listed as essential for the bartender to know in Paul Lowe's influential *Drinks: How to Mix and Serve* from 1909—and yet devil a drinker do you find actually ordering one. (I suspect that most people, not well up on their technical mixology, would have simply described it as a "fancy Sour," which may explain why we don't hear of it.)

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL [1 TSP] OF SUGAR

[JUICE OF] ¼ OF A LEMON

½ A WINEGLASS [1 TBSP] OF WATER

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

Fill a tumbler two-thirds full of shaved ice. Stir with a spoon and dress the top with fruit in season.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The 1887 edition of Thomas's book adds "3 dashes [say, 1 tsp] of Curaçoa," which ain't a bad idea. By the 1880s, recipes were calling for the sugar to be replaced by ½ ounce of pineapple syrup. This, too, works well. For garnish, pieces of pineapple and orange, lemon peel (which is rubbed around the rim of the glass before being dropped in), and berries in season are idiomatic.

As for spirits: The canonical ones are brandy (cognac, preferably), Holland gin, Santa Cruz rum, and eventually, plain old domestic whiskey. Without input from its drinkers, it's impossible to say which was ultimately most popular.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Most would shake this one.

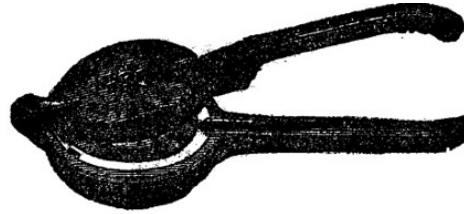
BRANDY, GIN, SANTA CRUZ, OR WHISKEY

SOUR

“When American meets American then comes the whisky sour.” Thus declared the *Atlanta Daily Constitution* in 1879, and it wasn’t wrong. From roughly the 1860s to the 1960s, the Sour, and particularly its whiskey incarnation, was one of the cardinal points of American drinking and, along with the Highball, one of the few drinks that could come near to slugging it out with the vast and aggressive tribe of Cocktails in terms of day-in, day-out popularity. It began pulling away from its siblings among the lesser Punches early: In 1858, we find it popular enough that the *New York Times* could attach the epithet “Brandy-sour” to the name of a certain Mr. Brisley and expect people to know what that meant. In 1863, matters had already reached the point that the local paper from across the river in the great and liberal city of Brooklyn considered “compounder of cocktails, skins and sours” an acceptable circumlocution for “barkeeper.”

Two things appear to have driven the Sour’s quick elevation to indispensability: It was simple, and it was flexible. “The . . . sour,” wrote Jerry Thomas, “is made with the same ingredients as the . . . fix, omitting all fruits except a small piece of lemon, the juice of which must be pressed in the glass.” So: spirits, sugar, water, lemon, ice. The only real question here is the ratio of sugar to lemon. But that one’s a doozy (it still is—if you want to get a mixologist riled, tell him he’s put too much sugar in his Sour). There were essentially two schools: those who took the name seriously and those who considered it akin to a child’s protestation that she’s not tired at all, really. The former, among whom we may count the author of the *Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual* and whoever reworked the Professor’s book, call for the juice of half of a lemon and a teaspoon or so of sugar—a tart and tasty drink. But Jerry Thomas himself, and most who followed him—Harry Johnson, George Kappeler, Bill Boothby—show what is perhaps a more realistic view of human nature and make their Sours sweet, restricting the lemon juice to a few dashes or a quarter of a lemon’s worth at most, and

making sure that there's plenty of sweet to balance it out.



No. D 375. Porcelain Lemon Squeezer.
Price.....20c
Iron japanned frame, with porcelain bowl. AP
old reliable article.

By 1902, when this handy cast-iron and porcelain juicer was included in a hotelware catalog, it was obsolescent; a generation or two earlier, though, it must have been a revelation (author's collection).

One notable innovation was to cap a Whiskey Sour with a float of red wine, to give it what one Chicago bartender called “the claret ‘snap’” (in the language of the saloon, red wine was always called “claret,” no matter how distant its origins from the sunlit banks of the Gironde). This worthy, who was interviewed in 1883, claimed ownership over this bit of fanciness, adding that “men who drink our sours expect a claret at every bar, and when it is not put in they ask for it. It’s getting circulated now, and other places are adopting our flourish.” (One is entitled to be skeptical, as he claimed to have invented the Manhattan as well, but there does exist another description of a Chicago bartender assembling a Whiskey Sour that same year, and lo and behold, he tops it off with claret, too.) Whoever invented it, this Continental Sour, Southern Whiskey Sour, or—the name it finally settled on after Prohibition—New York Sour was broadly popular.* As our Chicago barkeep noted, “the claret makes the drink look well and it gives it a better taste.”

In the 1890s, some of the fecundity with which bartenders were generating new Cocktails and Fizzes touched the humble Sour as well, and where before there had been only the basic versions, named after the spirits that animated them, suddenly the bars are festooned with signs for Blackthorn Sours (with sloe gin, pineapple syrup, and a splash of apricot liqueur), Sours à la Creole (brandy and Jamaica rum with lime juice and “a little ice cream on top”), Dizzy Sours (rye with a dash of Bénédictine and a Jamaica rum float), Jack Frost Whiskey Sours (apple “whiskey”—that is, applejack—with an egg and cream), and the like.

But by this point the Sour was already being attracted away from its

orbit around Punch and into a new one around the Cocktail. This realignment was greatly facilitated by a trend that began early: The *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* instructed that “in the manufacture of fixes and sours a small bar-glass or ordinary tumbler is employed, and a strainer placed in the glass to drink through.” This use of the strainer was popular for a time, but by the 1880s bartenders had taken control of the device back from the drinker and were serving their Sours up, in a special Sour glass—basically, a footed glass, rather deeper than a Cocktail glass (to make room for the drink’s somewhat more generous proportions, for the garnish that it had swiped from the Fix, and for the seltzer with which it was sometimes lightened). After 1905 or so, most new short drinks with citrus became Cocktails (see Cocktail Punches) and the Sour’s flirtation with fanciness ceased.

I’ve provided the formula from the *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* as it’s a little more precise than Thomas’s.

ONE WINE GLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

HALF WINE GLASS [1 OZ] OF WATER

ONE TABLESPOONFUL OF SUGAR

HALF OF A LEMON

Squeeze a portion of the lemon into the tumbler, which should be a quarter full of ice, and rub the lemon on the rim of the glass. Stir with a spoon. . . . In the manufacture of fixes and sours a small bar-glass or ordinary tumbler is employed.

SOURCE: *STEWARD & BARKEEPER'S MANUAL*, 1869 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: By the 1880s, 1 tablespoonful of sugar was considered excessive, and the amount was reduced to two-thirds, and indeed 1 teaspoon or ¼ ounce is sufficient; I will not dictate as this is a personal matter. The water, included at the beginning to help the sugar dissolve, was soon replaced by a squirt of seltzer, which migrated to the top of the drink once bartenders switched to syrup for sweetening (use 1 to 2 teaspoons of gum, if you must: As with all sours, educated opinion preferred to stir the sugar directly into the citrus juice). In either case, sugar or syrup, the water may safely be omitted. The canonical Sour spirits were brandy (the early favorite), Holland gin, applejack (this made for a Jersey Sour), bourbon (generally, but not always favored over rye—a New

York Sour, for instance, calls for rye), and Santa Cruz rum (these last two being the latter-day favorites). The 1887 edition of Thomas's book adds a dash of curaçao.

For an Egg Sour, use 1 ounce each of brandy and curaçao for the spirits and add a whole egg. In 1922, the great Anglo-Belgian (shades of Hercule Poirot!) bartender Robert Vermeire suggested that “a few drops of white of egg improve all Sours.” This, the dominant European school of Sour making, was the one that would recolonize America after Prohibition, and the Sour with a head on it was a standard specialty of FDR-era Cocktail lounges. Of course, it had its origins over here: As early as 1883, Patsy McDonough was printing a recipe for a Frosted Sour, shaken up with an egg white and served in a sugar-rimmed glass. (Nor is that weird Sour mix with the foaming agent in it anything new: As early as 1904 the *Chicago Tribune* was talking about an artificial, presweetened “acid and white of egg mixture” that was sold to bars by the gallon, though it was never considered good form to use such a thing.)

NOTES ON EXECUTION: For a midcentury Sour, begin by squeezing the lemon into a small bar glass, add the sugar and water, stir, then finish with spirits and ice. Done. The claret, always a nice touch, is best applied with a dasher top, squirted lightly over the back of a spoon held at the meniscus of the drink. Failing that, careful pouring from a jigger (use about ½ ounce) over said back of spoon will do. The idea is to have a “pleasant-looking, red-headed drink,” as the *Chicago Tribune* observed in 1883.

For one of the advanced Sours of the 1880s, use syrup and shake everything but the float, if using one (and don't forget the curaçao!). Strain into a 4-or 5-ounce footed glass, add a healthy splash of seltzer if you like, float the float if you want that, and finish with a piece of pineapple, a couple of orange wedges, and a few berries. But now you're in Daisy territory, for which see later in this chapter.

PISCO SOUR

By 1900, North American ideas of mixing drinks had penetrated to just

about every corner of the world. In South America, you could find, for instance, a Manhattan in Punta Arenas, Patagonia; a San Martín in Buenos Aires, Argentina (see Chapter 8); a Torino Cocktail in Iquique, Chile; and so on, all the way up the continent. Outside of Buenos Aires, which had a thriving local Cocktail culture, it's safe to say that the majority of these Cocktails were made by Yankee hands; by expatriates mixing their native drinks for a mostly North American audience. South America was considered to be a land of opportunity, and northern carpetbaggers abounded—some respectable, others more like Robert Leroy Parker and Harry Alonzo Longabaugh, alias Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, who fled the States for Argentina and then Bolivia.

One of those more respectable expatriates was Victor “Gringo” Morris, a Utahn who had spent more than a decade in Peru working for a railroad company before opening an American bar in Lima. That was in 1916. Among the drinks he served his mostly English-speaking clientele was an egg-white Sour based on pisco. For years, he has been considered the father of this indispensable drink. In early 2014, however, the Peruvian writer Raúl Rivera Escobar posted online a scan of a little pamphlet, the *Nuevo Manual de Cocina a la Criolla: Comida*, published in Lima in 1903 by one S. E. Ledesma. In it was a recipe titled simply “Cocktail”: egg white, pisco, sugar, lime juice, agitated together in a cocktail shaker (and hence presumably with ice). A Pisco Sour, in other words. That's not to say Victor Morris didn't make a great Pisco Sour or do heroic work in bringing the drink to the world's attention. But in 1903, he was still in Yanquilandia.

No matter. Between its title and its use of the “cocktaslera” or “ponchera,” Ledesma's recipe still demonstrates the spread of North American drinkways to South America: Somebody had to have been in Peru flashing the cocktail shaker around; somebody had to have the bright idea of cutting the Punch that Peruvians had been drinking for a century and more on a short, North American pattern. American in Peru, or Peruvian in America, somebody had already made the fusion.

COCKTAIL

Un clara de huevo, una copa de pisco, una cuchardita de azúcar fina y unas gotas de limón á voluntad, os abiría un buen apetito. . . . Todo esto se bate en una cocktaslera [sic] ó ponchera, hasta formar un ponchesito.

(An egg white, a cup [2 oz] of pisco, a teaspoon of fine sugar and a few

drops of lime juice to taste [$\frac{1}{2}$ oz] will open up a good appetite for you. . . . All this is shaken in a cocktail shaker or punch shaker until it makes a nice little punch.)

SOURCE: S. E. LEDESMA, *NUEVO MANUAL DE COCINA A LA CRIOLLA: COMIDA*, 1903.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The egg should be small and the pisco (naturally) Peruvian. I prefer an Italia or other aromatic style here, but modern Peruvian custom indicates a lighter acholado. In Peruvian tradition, the foam atop the drink is of course dotted with aromatic bitters. There is no reason on earth not to do that.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Put the lime juice in the shaker first and stir the sugar into it. Fill the shaker with ice before shaking, of course. Shake hard and strain into a chilled Cocktail glass.

MORAL SUASION

Not every American drink was easily classifiable. Many a so-called Fancy Drink flickered into existence, lighting its own path, as it were, for a few brief seasons until the tippling public moved on to other things. The Moral Suasion is one such firefly, a fancy Sour with a story behind it.

One December day in 1842, Dr. Charles Jewett of Boston, “the indomitable foe of alcohol,” as a New York temperance journal labeled him, stopped in at Peter Brigham’s new “gentleman’s gorgeous and neat saloon” (as a contemporary newspaper described it), to see what all the fuss was about. Jewett did not consider the topical names of some of the drinks on the list Brigham offered his customers amusing or their variety as evidence of American ingenuity. Indeed, he came away thoroughly disgusted. Neither did he keep his thoughts to himself. “How can you for paltry gain,” he addressed Brigham in the pages of the *Journal of the American Temperance Union*, “destroy the peace of families, the hopes of parents, the health and lives of your fellow citizens, and the souls of men?” There was a lot more just like that.

Brigham was not the sort to be easily buffaloed. After Jewett's hit at him, he came up with a new list. A bigger list. Among the many new, fancifully named additions—the Race Horse Julep (one of eleven Juleps on the list), the Ropee, and the Pig & Whistle; he included a Jewett's Fancy and a Moral Suasion. The first, of course, was a personal hit at Jewett, playing on drinkers' suspicions that the temperance crowd was all a pack of secret toppers, preaching abstinence for the masses while clandestinely tucking it away like so many sailors on leave. The second jabbed back at the whole movement, which at the time had not yet fixed on legal prohibition of drinking as its preferred tactic to sober the country up but rather preferred to rely on “moral suasion”—basically, arguing people out of their thirst. Brigham's Moral Suasion was conceived as a counterweight to their argument, a drink so seductive that it would make even a Dr. Jewett reconsider his policy. The list was widely reprinted and some of his drinks were picked up by bars all around the country and indeed in Europe as well. One of the most popular, and most controversial, was the Moral Suasion.

Unfortunately for us, when he sat down to write his book Jerry Thomas chose not to include the Suasion or most of Brigham's other topical creations: The minty Fiscal Agent, the Tip and Ty (a Stone Fence variation, named after William Henry “Tippecanoe” Harrison and his vice president, John “Ty” Tyler), and the mysterious Vox Populi were all popular drinks and yet didn't make the cut either. Perhaps they were too controversial or merely too closely tied with Brigham and his bar. Nor can we look to the newspapers to make up Thomas's omission: Journalists of the 1840s and 1850s only rarely stooped to describing the contents of a particular drink, let alone precisely how it was mixed. If a contemporary recipe for any of these drinks has survived, I have yet to find it.

The Moral Suasion, at least, lasted long enough to have a formula published for it in 1873, in a landmark article the *New York Sun* published on “American Fancy Drinks,” one of the first to take the subject seriously and offer actual recipes. The anonymous bartender who gave the *Sun* that formula, however, attributed it to Edward Barry, bartender at New York's tony Everett House, in consultation with one of his customers. It's of course possible that Barry's drink was entirely unrelated to Brigham's, especially because Census records have him born in the mid-1840s, putting him first behind the bar a few years after the drink's heyday. Moreover, his formula contains Bénédictine, an ingredient not used in American drinks of the

1840s.

And yet there are three things that suggest that the *Sun*'s formula is more an adaptation of Brigham's version than an entirely new drink. Barry's customer, for one: James Jay Mapes was a prominent chemist, agronomist, and spiritualist who, more important, was born in 1806 and died in 1866 (which means that the drink must have been created when Barry was head bartender at Windust's, the famed theatrical bar on Park Row). If indeed he prompted Barry to mix up a Moral Suasion, it would have been with full knowledge of Brigham's version. Furthermore, the formula itself, with its peach brandy base and fancy garnishes, is more reminiscent of the 1840s than the 1870s, a Baroque Age drink if ever there was. Finally, there's *Ebenezer*, an 1879 novella by Charles G. Leland, a popular journalist who also knew his drinks (indeed, Jerry Thomas printed his recipe for Fish-House Punch). In it, we find a Moral Suasion that, with its "blended flavours of old peach-brandy and fresh honey" and "dreamy suggestion of maraschino and rose," agrees broadly with Barry's version, without being obviously derived from it. If we run the two Suasions together, we end up with a wickedly delightful drink, a variation on the classic Peach and Honey that, if not true to Brigham's brainchild in every detail, is at least true to it in spirit: Just keep it away from your teetotaling aunt.

[T]he "Moral Suasion" . . . is made by placing a teaspoonful of sugar in a tumbler moistened with a little [$\frac{1}{2}$ oz] lemon juice, a wineglass [2 oz] of peach brandy, a little [1 tsp] Curaçoa, a tablespoonful [$\frac{1}{2}$ oz] of Benedictine, a tumbler of shaved ice, a dash [2 tsp] of Cognac, seasoned and ornamented with strawberries and slices of orange, lemon and pineapple.

SOURCE: *NEW YORK SUN*, 1873.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the peach brandy, look to the microdistillers. Based on Leland's description, replace the Bénédictine with maraschino—preferably the mellow Maraska brand, rather than the pungent Luxardo one—and the sugar with honey (put it in the shaker first with a like quantity of hot water, giving it a quick stir), adding also a couple of dashes— $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon, at most—of rosewater. The cognac should be as old and aromatic as you can afford.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Shake everything but the cognac and the berries and fruit. Pour it unstrained into a large tumbler for perfect authenticity, or fill the tumbler

with finely cracked ice and strain the drink into it if that's not a concern. Float the cognac on top, pouring it over the back of a spoon held at the meniscus of the drink. Ornament as instructed.

KNICKERBOCKER

Many of the drinks on Peter Brigham's famous list did of course make it into Jerry Thomas's book, but that's only because Smashes, Juleps, Cobblers, and Punches were already standard American drinks when Brigham listed them. There was, however, one drink peculiar to the Bostonian's establishment, one of the original ones that Jewett found on his inspection tour, which also turns up in the *Bon Vivant's Companion*: the Knickerbocker. Now, we don't know if it was original with Brigham or even if it's the same drink. But Brigham has a Knickerbocker and so does Jerry Thomas—and, for that matter, so does the English mixographer William Terrington, who has a version in his 1869 *Cooling Cups and Dainty Drinks* that's close to Thomas's without being the same, suggesting that he and Thomas were both offering a drink that was out there for the taking (Terrington also has a recipe for at least one other name from Brigham's list, the Ching Ching, although again we have no way of checking its authenticity).*

In any case, whether the drink started with Brigham or he was simply retailing a drink he had picked up elsewhere, the name would have brought drinkers straight to New York, then thickly populated with Knickerbocker thises and Knickerbocker thats, from the *Knickerbocker Magazine* to the Knickerbocker Club to the Knickerbocker Cottage restaurant to the venerable Knickerbocker Ice Company. It's entirely possible that the drink was a New York creation; it was certainly popular there, as far as we can tell, through the Civil War and on until the beginning of the Classic Age of American mixology. The last one hears of it as a going drink is in 1882, when a writer for the *New York World* admonished, "in the resumé of what is good to drink in the summer-time the Knickerbocker should not be

forgotten.” An old-timer, no doubt. But the thing is, he’s not wrong: With its rum and its lime juice, its syrups and liqueurs, the Knickerbocker is the spiritual progenitor of the Tiki drink. Think of it as an 1850s Mai Tai—similar drink, different island.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

½ A LIME OR LEMON, SQUEEZE OUT THE JUICE, AND PUT RIND AND JUICE IN THE GLASS

2 TEASPOONFULS OF RASPBERRY SYRUP

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] SANTA CRUZ RUM

½ [1] TEASPOONFUL OF CURAÇOA

Cool with shaved ice; shake up well, and ornament with berries in season. If this is not sweet enough, put in a little more raspberry syrup.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Choose the lime over the lemon. Some find this recipe too tart. Rather than adding more raspberry syrup (which can be purchased in larger organic markets or easily made by macerating raspberries in rich simple syrup), I prefer to increase the curaçao to 2 teaspoons. Raspberries, blackberries, orange pieces, even pineapple can be part of the garnish. The only difference between Thomas’s Knickerbocker and his White Lion is that the latter replaces three-quarters of the raspberry syrup with pulverized sugar. I’ll take the knee pants.

In his 1863 book, Thomas offers a “Knickerbocker Punch” that’s half brandy and half port, with pieces of orange and pineapple in the glass; delicious, but no Knickerbocker.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: This drink should be built and shaken in the glass for authenticity. But if you don’t have a shaker small enough to cover a 6-to 8-ounce tumbler and would prefer not to pour it back and forth between glasses, the floor, your shirt, and the boss’s wife, g’ahead and cheat and make it in the big shaker. It really doesn’t make a damn bit of difference to the final drink. Just don’t shake the lime rind in with everything else; it can make the drink bitter.

II. DAISIES AND FIZZES

If the Sour has one fault, it's that it lacks zip (this of course is also its virtue; zip is a fine thing, but all zip all the time can get to be a bit much). Whereas Punches are capacious enough in size and conception to allow clever combinations of liquors to be deployed, not to mention several kinds of juice and extra dashes and fillips of this and that, the Sour is a drink designed for mass production: straightforward, efficient, and a little bland. But charge your basic Sour with fizz water, and it sparkles and dances in the glass, bland simplicity transforming itself into clean directness. This is particularly true if you strain the Sour before you charge it.

This secret was long known to the makers of Gin Punch and, indeed, as embodied in the John Collins, had been revealed to the American tippling public since the late 1850s. But it didn't come into its own until after the Civil War, and when it did there was—as so often in American saloon culture—a certain amount of confusion about what to call it. Was it a John Collins? A Daisy? A Fizz? Why not all three? Eventually, each of these names would be applied to its own class of drinks, all broadly similar but nonetheless possessing the small, idiomatic differences that are the mixographer's delight.

We've already examined the Collins option (which has its own nomenclatural confusions). Now for the other two. We'll begin with the Daisy because it's the first to make it into the historical record.

THE DAISY

Charlie was detailing his romantic troubles to a couple of friends. Naturally wanting to help, Harry ordered “three cocktails, strong, cold, and plenty of it!”

“Stop,” interrupted Charlie, as the waiter was about to leave the room, “Stop, no cocktails for me. I'll take a glass of lemonade!”

“A glass of what?” thundered Harry.

“Ha! ha! ha! Lemonade. Well that's a good thing for a man in the dumps! Wouldn't you rather have a concentrated zephyr, in a daisy, or an iced dew drop. Nonsense, man. . . . Lemonade, indeed.”

Thus Henry Llewellyn Williams in his 1866 novel, *Gay Life in New York*, or

Fast Men and Grass Widows. I must applaud Harry's judgment. While many a nineteenth-century formula for concentrating zephyrs has survived, as this book readily attests, the Iced Dew Drop appears lost forever. Not so the Daisy, which flourished for a time, practically died out, and then came roaring back in spectacular, albeit disguised, form to be one of the most popular drinks of our time, and is almost always just the thing for a man or woman in the dumps or out of them.

After Williams's novel, the next we hear of the Daisy is on July 7, 1873, when it was actually invented. (Who says cocktail history has to follow the same dull linear path sober history does?) On that day, according to later, yet still unusually precise, memory, Billy Taylor walked into former Hoffman House bartender Fred Eberlin's popular stand on New Street, around the corner from the New York Stock Exchange, and asked Frank, the bartender, for something new. Taylor "called out one ingredient after another, which Frank mixed and set before him," as the *New York Press* explained twenty-four years later (when Frank was still behind the bar). Taylor sipped. "By George, that's a daisy!"

Unlike Williams's Daisy, which may have been something he made up for his novel, there's a surprising amount of evidence for the Eberlin's story. From the 1870s to the 1970s, Fred Eberlin's was indeed one of the most popular of the eating houses that catered to Wall Street brokers. Up until Prohibition, it was also renowned for its basement bar, a place perennially crowded with traders nipping in for a quick go of whiskey (some of them were supposedly good for forty bumps a day; traders). In 1883, one of the men behind the stick there told a reporter from the *New York Journal* that "a drink called the 'whisky daisy' was introduced down here a few years ago, and became quite popular . . . it is made something like the whisky sour, with the addition of seltzer" (according to him, the brokers generally took seltzer with their whiskey).

This tweaked-Whiskey-Sour-with-soda jibes perfectly with the first recipe for the Daisy to appear in print, in the 1876 second edition of Jerry Thomas's *BarTenders Guide* (although he sweetened his with orange cordial), so we're on pretty firm ground here. Indeed, Eberlin's was famous for its Daisies (and its Jack Roses; see Chapter 9)—particularly when "Old Frank" Haas, who tended bar there until Prohibition, was shaking them up. His secret? A dash of "something else" in the drink. That something else? "Old Frank, that's all."

The Daisy had its vogue, mostly as a whiskey drink but with other spirits, too, and then faded, unless you were in the vicinity of New Street and didn't mind drinking in a basement. It didn't help that it was little different from the

Fizz, which made its debut a couple of years later but was less confusing a drink—where the Daisy couldn't make its mind up whether it was a short drink or a long one, a Sour or a Cocktail, the more streamlined, more classic Fizz went long right out of the gate and swept the field.

But that doesn't tell the whole story. In the 1890s, the Daisy began to evolve into something of a dude's drink, a little bit of fanciness that came empinkened with first raspberry syrup and then grenadine—the new, wonder sweetener of the age—and decanted into some sort of *recherché*, ice-filled goblet (or even a stein, as the swells out at the Dunwoodie Golf Club in Westchester took theirs) and tricked out with fruit and whatever else was in the garnish tray. Stodgy old whiskey was out and gin was in—and none of that old Dutch stuff, either. English gin was hot, and that's what the revamped Daisy got. By the time Prohibition rolled around, both kinds, the old, orange liqueur-up kind and the newer, grenadine-rocks kind, were in circulation.

It's worth going into this much detail about the Daisy because of something that happened in Mexico while the Great Experiment was running its course in el Norte. First off, in 1929 or thereabouts, the new American-financed gambling and golf resort at Agua Caliente, outside Tijuana, introduced its house cocktail, the “Sunrise Tequila.” Tequila. Lime juice. Grenadine. A little *creme de cassis*. Ice. Soda. In other words, a tequila Daisy, modern type. Second, a little after Repeal, journalists and other travelers who visited Mexico started talking about a “Tequila Daisy,” and in 1936 this even pops up north of the border, in Syracuse, New York, of all places. Unfortunately, nobody bothers to record which kind of Daisy they're drinking, the old-school one, which was often served in Cocktail glasses with only a minimal amount of fizz, or the new-school one, like Agua Caliente's Sunrise. This is important because of the Spanish word for “daisy.” If they were drinking them old-school, you see, they were drinking tequila, orange liqueur, lime juice (much more common than lemon in Mexico), and maybe a little splash of soda—and ordering them as Margaritas.

WHISKEY, BRANDY, GIN, OR RUM DAISY

(OLD SCHOOL)

The original Daisy of the 1870s.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

3 OR 4 DASHES [1 TSP] GUM SYRUP

2 OR 3 DASHES [1½ TSP] ORANGE CORDIAL

THE JUICE OF HALF A LEMON

1 SMALL WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

Fill glass half full of shaved ice.

Shake well and strain into a glass, and fill up with Seltzer water from a syphon.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1876 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The Whisky Daisy at Eberlin's was made with—well, accounts differ. In the 1910s, anyway, Haas was making his Daisies with “a dash of lemon, a dash of orange, raspberry [syrup]” and, of course, the Old Frank—but just try finding that at Whole Foods or Cocktail Kingdom; you'll have to supply your own. The lemon and orange appear to be a trademark of his (go with a scant ½ ounce of each), but the raspberry syrup there might have been a concession to modernity. There's no particular reason to believe that Jerry Thomas got the drink fundamentally wrong. His clientele certainly included a great number of Wall Street men who would have known.

Thomas made all his Daisies according to the same pattern; for the orange cordial, I like to use a good imported orange curaçao. Whoever it was that revised his book in 1887, however, recommended varying the cordial according to the spirit used, calling for maraschino with rum (specifically Santa Cruz) and gin (Hollands), with orgeat syrup replacing the gum in the latter. With whiskey, there's no cordial at all, but again orgeat steps in for the gum. Other mixologists liked other cordials; Harry Johnson, for example, was particularly fond of yellow Chartreuse in a Daisy, although he used an awful lot of it: ½ ounce, on top of ½ tablespoon of sugar, and all to balance out 2 or 3 dashes of lemon juice.

In Jerry Thomas's Daisies, anyway, the cordial is intended as an accent, not as the main sweetener. As always, the precise amounts will be a matter of taste.

Thomas's reviser suggests finishing the Brandy Daisy with “2 dashes of Jamaica rum.” Rum with brandy? You bet.

By the way, the term *small wineglass* appears to be a reaction to the obsolescence of that measure; within a few years recipe writers would be

claiming that a wineglass was 4 ounces (by then they were measuring spirits in 2-ounce jiggers, just to be safe).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: The big question here is what kind of glass to put the thing into. In 1876, it would have been the standard small bar glass. In 1887, the guy who revised Thomas's book has his strained into a "large cocktail glass." Others went for a Fizz glass, a Punch glass, or a "fancy bar-glass." I prefer the Cocktail glass, since it limits the amount of fizz that goes into the drink, ensuring that it sparkles yet still has a Cocktail-like throw-weight to it. It should be noted that in the context of 1887, a large Cocktail glass held approximately 3½ ounces.

GIN, BRANDY, RUM, OR WHISKEY DAISY

(NEW SCHOOL)

The fancy Daisy of the 1910s. The gin version was by far the most popular.

BRANDY DAISY

RUM DAISY

GIN DAISY

WHISKEY DAISY

ALL THE ABOVE DAISIES ARE MADE AS FOLLOWS:

JUICE ½ LIME AND ¼ LEMON

1 TEASPOONFUL POWDERED SUGAR

2 DASHES [1 TSP] GRENADINE

1 DRINK [2 OZ] OF LIQUOR DESIRED

2 DASHES [½ OZ] CARBONATED WATER

Use silver mug, put in above ingredients, fill up with fine ice, stir until mug is frosted, decorate with fruit and sprays of fresh mint and serve with straws.

SOURCE: HUGO ENSSLIN, *RECIPES FOR MIXED DRINKS*, 1916.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Where Ensslin says *powdered*, we would today say “superfine.” Others used a good deal more carbonated water in their new-school Daisies. Still others—Jacques Straub, for one—used none at all. It’s your choice. I like a goodly splash in mine. For the fruit decoration, berries in season, pieces of orange and pineapple, and maraschino cherries are all appropriate (as, for that matter, are kiwi, starfruit, and Buddha’s hand, if not idiomatic). For a Gin Daisy, you’ll want a London dry, a Plymouth, or an Old Tom. The grenadine should probably be artisanal or at least made from pomegranates.

GIN, WHISKEY, BRANDY, OR SANTA CRUZ

RUM FIZZ

San Francisco has a knack for generating great bartenders. If Jerry Thomas was the first, or one of them, he was by no means the last. One of the good ones at the turn of the last century was Ernest P. Rawling. Judging by his 1914 *Rawling’s Book of Mixed Drinks*, he was a sensible, patient sort who gave a good deal of thought to the right and wrong ways of doing things. But he also had a poetic side: “While the Cocktail is unquestionably the most popular drink on the Pacific coast today,” he wrote,

the next in favor is surely the Fizz—the long drink par excellence. At any time or in any place where the tongue and throat are dry; when the spirits are jaded and the body is weary; after a long automobile trip on hot and dusty roads; it is then that the Gin Fizz comes like a cooling breeze from the sea, bringing new life and the zest and joy of living.

And in the “morning after the night before,” when the whole world seems gray and lonesome, and every nerve and fibre of the body is throbbing a complaint against the indiscretion, just press the button and order a Gin Fizz—“Not too sweet, please!” It comes. Oh, shades of the

green oasis in the sandy desert of life!

Truer words were never written. Not about the Fizz, anyway. Of course, that green-oasis effect works only if you're having just one. Maybe two. But not forty. Definitely not forty.

That's how many Gin Fizzes "Professor" Denton, of Brooklyn, New York, used to put away in a day, back in the early 1890s. Of course, he was "the champion gin fizz drinker in America," as he used to bill himself while he went around the Williamsburg bars cadging drinks, so he was perhaps exceptional (and not an example to be emulated, seeing as he died from internal hemorrhaging after betting that he could drink a Fizz and eat the glass, too). But Gin Fizzes are definitely moreish. Have one and you want another and that way danger lies. That's the essence of the Fizz—as the Japanese ambassador reportedly said upon trying one in the early 1890s, "it buzzes like a fly and stings like a wasp."

By the time Professor Denton and the Japanese Ambassador crossed its trail, the drink had been around for fifteen years and popular for ten, and its manufacture held no secrets. If the Gin Fizz, or "Fiz," as Jerry Thomas—the first to write about it, in 1876—called it, was *primus inter pares*, before long there was no shortage of other Fizzes in circulation, based on all the canonical liquors including applejack, with variations. Silver, Golden, Morning Glory, Police Gazette, Elks', Electric Current, Green, Sitting Bull, Ramos—the list goes on. But then again, they needed a lot of 'em. A Fizz, you see, was what a sporting man would moisten the clay with directly upon arising—an eye-opener, corpse reviver, fog cutter, gloom lifter. A hangover cure. Into the saloon you'd go, the kindly internist behind the bar would manipulate a bottle or two, and zam! There stood the glass, packed with vitamins, proteins (assuming you went for one with egg in it, such as a [Silver Fizz](#)), and complex sugars, foaming brightly and aglow with the promise of sweet release. Civilization proceeds, but not always forward.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

4 OR 5 DASHES [1½ TSP] OF GUM SYRUP

JUICE OF HALF A LEMON

1 SMALL WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

Fill the glass half full of shaved ice, shake up well and strain into a

glass. Fill up the glass with Seltzer water from a siphon and drink without hesitation.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1876 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Thomas doesn't say what kind of gin to use here, but judging by his contemporaries it would have been Old Tom; one does not see Hollands recommended for this drink—not that it makes a bad Fizz, but the lighter English styles give it more snap.

A Crushed Strawberry Fizz is a standard Gin Fizz with two or three strawberries muddled into it (use at least 2 teaspoons of gum). It was a specialty of New York's venerable St. Nicholas Hotel in the 1880s.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Use a narrow-mouthed, 6-to 8-ounce glass. This can and should be chilled in advance, but when receiving the drink it should not have ice in it, nor should any be added once the glass is full. A Fizz is meant to be drunk off quickly, like a Cocktail, not lingered over, like a Collins.

If making a Crushed Strawberry Fizz, begin by quickly muddling the strawberries in with the lemon juice and syrup. Add gin and ice, shake well, and double-strain it (with the Hawthorne strainer in the shaker and the Julep strainer held over the glass). You can do the same thing with raspberries, of course, and you don't even have to muddle them: the shaking will do that just fine.

It was an old Fizzmaker's trick to not sweeten the drink until the very end, when a large spoonful of superfine sugar would be stirred in. If there's enough soda in the drink and not too much extraneous matter (eggs, cream, and such), this should make the drink fizz up most impressively.

SILVER FIZZ

In 1883, Fred Hildreth, head bartender at one of Chicago's top saloons, mentioned the Silver Fizz to a man from the *Tribune* as one of the “popular fancy drinks” of the day. It would remain so for another forty years, during which it did yeoman service as a lifeline for the overhung.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

ONE-HALF TABLESPOON OF SUGAR
2 OR 3 DASHES [½ OZ] OF LEMON JUICE
1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF OLD TOM GIN
1 EGG (THE WHITE ONLY)

Three-quarters glass filled with fine shaved ice; shake up well with a shaker, strain it into a good sized fizz glass, fill up the glass with Syphon Selters [*sic*] or Vichy Water, mix well, and serve.

SOURCE: HARRY JOHNSON, *NEW AND IMPROVED BARTENDER'S MANUAL*, 1882.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For an industrial-grade katzenjammer, try taking Johnson's Golden Fizz: Simply replace the egg white with the yolk and, optionally, the gin with whiskey. The result is a very soothing drink, and much tastier than it sounds.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: As with all egg drinks, this one will take some serious shaking.

MORNING GLORY FIZZ

An early and quite successful attempt at mixologizing with Scotch. Other than the likelihood that this is a Harry Johnson original (for whom see the [Bijou Cocktail](#)), little about the drink is known. As with any drink that goes by the name Morning Glory, this is a hangover helper.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

In all first-class barrooms it is proper to have the whites of eggs separated into an empty bottle, providing you have a demand for such a drink as above, and keep them continually on ice, as by doing so, considerable time will be saved; mix as follows:

THREE-QUARTERS TABLESPOONFUL OF SUGAR
3 OR 4 DASHES [½ OZ] OF LEMON JUICE
2 OR 3 DASHES [¼ OZ] OF LIME JUICE

3 OR 4 DASHES OF ABSINTHE [$\frac{1}{2}$ TSP], DISSOLVED WELL WITH [A] LITTLE WATER

THREE-QUARTER GLASS FILLED WITH FINE SHAVED ICE

1 EGG (THE WHITE ONLY)

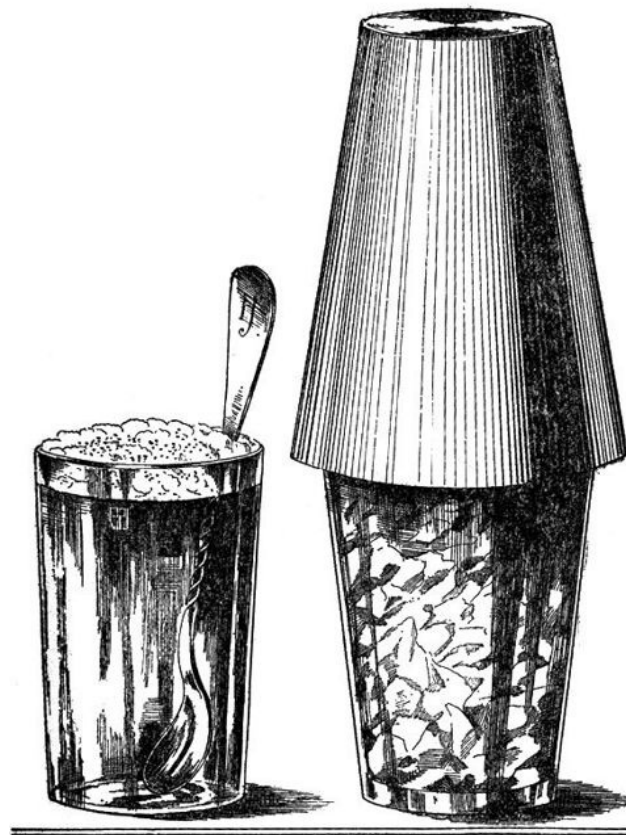
1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF SCOTCH WHISKEY

Shake up well with a shaker; strain it into a good-sized bar-glass; fill up the balance with Syphon Selters [*sic*] or Vichy water, and serve.

The above drink must be drunk as soon as prepared, so as not to lose the effect of it. The author respectfully recommends the above drink as an excellent one for a morning beverage, which will give a good appetite and quiet the nerves.

SOURCE: HARRY JOHNSON, *NEW AND IMPROVED BARTENDER'S MANUAL*, 1882.

PLATE No. 7.



MORNING GLORY FIZZ.

The Morning Glory Fizz, as mixed (right) and served (left) (from Harry Johnson's *New and Improved Illustrated Bartender's Manual*, 1888; courtesy Ted Haigh).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: One cannot assume that the Scotch here is the blended kind, which was yet to begin its main assault on American shores; with one of the pungent, under-aged malts of the time, this is a fierce drink. In a fine bar like Harry Johnson's, though, it's possible that he had something better—either a well-aged malt or one of the new blends, then only imported in tiny quantities. Don't worry about dissolving the absinthe in water.

For the equally effective Saratoga Brace Up, found in the 1887 edition of Thomas's book, use a whole egg, replace the Scotch with brandy, lose the lime juice, cut the absinthe down to 2 dashes, and add a couple of dashes of Angostura. OK, that's a lot to change, but the results are worth it.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Begin with the juices and 1 teaspoon or so of water, stirring the sugar into it. Shake vigorously.

NEW ORLEANS FIZZ, ALIAS RAMOS GIN

FIZZ

In 1888, a New Orleans bartender by the name of Henry Charles Ramos—everyone called him Carl—took over Pat Moran's Imperial Cabinet saloon at the corner of Gravier and Carondelet Streets in the heart of the "Faubourg Americain," the city's Anglo-dominated business district.* Business at the Imperial Cabinet (named after a brand of whiskey that Moran had served) went on pretty well for a while, and then it went really, really well. For whatever reason, New Orleans really took off as a tourist destination in the late 1890s, and suddenly everyone was interested in its quaint, historic saloons (even if they were only twenty years old). Maybe this was because Dixie and the Midwest were going dry at an alarming rate. In any case, one of the biggest beneficiaries was Carl Ramos: suddenly his bar, a courtly, decorous joint that closed at eight every evening, was packed to the gills with punters all clamoring for one of his house special Fizzes. In 1900, the *Kansas City Star* anointed the Imperial Cabinet "the most famous gin fizz

saloon in the world” and went on to add, “Ramos serves a gin fizz which is not equaled anywhere.”

All that business meant work: Ramos’s One and Only One, as he called his brainchild, took a lot of shaking. You see, it supplemented the gin and citrus juice—split between lemon and lime, a common epicurean touch at the time—with the two ingredients that are hardest to mix: egg white and cream. Individually, not such a problem, and certainly nothing new (as early as 1891, William Schmidt had published a Cream Fizz recipe; for the egg white version, see the [Silver Fizz](#)). But use both, and you’re going to need some muscle to get them to emulsify. Which is precisely what Ramos had: For each of his bartenders—in 1900, during Mardi Gras, he was employing six on a shift—there was a “shaker boy,” a young black man whose sole job was to receive the fully charged shaker from the bartender and shake the bejeezus out of it. Contemporary accounts say that this went on for fifteen minutes, but I’m willing to bet it only seemed that long, especially to the guy who had to do all the work.

It also took a lot of eggs. As *Leslie’s Illustrated* reported in 1899, Ramos used “the whites of 5,000 eggs a week” in his Fizzes. The yolks were a problem, but—characteristically—Ramos turned them into an opportunity, using some in the [Sherry Flips](#) he would push, others in egg yolk omelettes for the free lunch counter and shipping the rest “all over the country, to bakers, to be used in making sponge-cake.” To supply all this, he had “the largest hennery in the country,” up north of New Orleans.

In 1907, Ramos moved a couple of blocks to larger quarters, taking over the operation of the Stag Saloon, across from the St. Charles Hotel (the Stag was owned by the notorious Tom Anderson, “Mayor” of Storyville). Business was even better than before: During Mardi Gras, 1915, he had thirty-five shakermen on. Evidently, the procedure had changed: Now, one man shook until his arms were tired and passed it to another, in a long chain. It was something to see.

When Prohibition came, unlike Duncan Nicol, who took the Formula of his Pisco Punch to his grave, Ramos told everyone exactly how to make ’em. For this, he deserves the title *benefactor generis humani*, a “benefactor of the human race.” Here’s his formula as he dictated it to a reporter for the *New Orleans Item-Tribune* a few years before his death in 1928.

(1) ONE TABLESPOONFUL POWDERED SUGAR

THREE OR FOUR DROPS OF ORANGE FLOWER WATER

ONE-HALF LIME (JUICE)

ONE-HALF LEMON (JUICE)

(1) ONE JIGGER [1½ OZ] OF OLD TOM GIN. (OLD GORDON MAY BE USED BUT A SWEET GIN IS PREFERABLE)

THE WHITE OF ONE EGG

ONE-HALF GLASS OF CRUSHED ICE

ABOUT (2) TABLESPOONSFUL OF RICH MILK OR CREAM

A LITTLE SELTZER WATER (ABOUT AN OUNCE) TO MAKE IT PUNGENT

Together well shaken and strained (drink freely)

To those who may have forgotten, a “jigger” is a stemmed sherry glass holding a little more than one ounce.

SOURCE: NEW ORLEANS ITEM-TRIBUNE, 1925.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For *powdered*, read “superfine.” Otherwise, as the man says. And take that business about the drops of orange flower water seriously—too much of it and that’s all you’ll taste.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: “Shake and shake and shake until there is not a bubble left but the drink is smooth and snowy white and of the consistency of good rich milk,” as Mr. Ramos told the reporter. This takes at least a minute. When making this for guests, I like to pass the shaker around and let everyone have at it until their arms get tired. Both Ramos’s recipe and all the accounts of practice at his bar imply that the seltzer was shaken in with the drink, but modern practice is to strain the drink into a tall glass and then add the seltzer, giving it a quick stir. In either case, this drink isn’t meant to actually fizz. (If you do it Ramos’s way, wrap a towel around the middle of the shaker, as the extra pressure from the gas in the seltzer tends to make it leak.)

III. THE COBBLER

“America is fertile in mixtures: what do we not owe her? Sherry Cobbler, Gin Sling, Cocktail, Mint Julep, Brandy Smash, Sudden Death, Eye Openers.” So said Charles Reade, the Victorian novelist, in 1863. If he were writing today, of course, the list would be rather different: Apple Martini, Screaming Orgasm, Dirty Girl Scout, Irish Car Bomb—like that: Insert your own pointed observation on the decline of public morality in America.* At least, if past performance is any guarantee of future results, we can be fairly certain that our mixological indiscretions won’t live on to embarrass us. Reade’s list represented the state of the art of mixed drinking in his day. What survives? The Julep (once a year, anyway), and the Cocktail, in the form of the Old-Fashioned (OK, that one’s a victory of recent years, even if people do insist on getting creative with it and thus sapping its elemental powers). Years of Cocktail revival have not managed to reestablish the Smash or the Sling, and for the Sudden Death, alas, not even a recipe remains.

If someone had waved Reade’s little list under the nose of the average drinking man of 1863 and made him choose one drink to survive the test of time, odds are heavy he would’ve gone for the Sherry Cobbler. It was, Harry Johnson observed in the 1888 edition of his *Bartender’s Manual*, “without doubt the most popular beverage in the country, with ladies as well as with gentlemen.” And not just this country, either—“the sublimity of the sherry cobbler” as one old Virginian called it, was a worldwide hit. In 1855, a traveler through Panama pokes his head into “a drinking saloon,” only to find “the sallow bar-keeper . . . concocting a Sherry-Cobbler for a fever-stricken Yankee.” In 1862, it’s a gang of Aussies piping ’em into a visiting English cricket team. And in 1867, if the French judges at the Exposition Universelle de Paris deemed our Hudson River School paintings worth but a single medal, and that of the second class, the French crowd lined up at the Exposition’s American Bar held different views regarding our Sherry Cobblers: They were going through 500 bottles of sherry a day.

All well and good, but what exactly is the Sherry Cobbler? Nothing but sherry, sugar, a lot of ice, a bit of fruit (a slice or two of orange muddled in with the ice and a few berries on top), and a straw. The straw is key: As the *Grand Island Times* (that’s in Nebraska) pointed out in 1873, the “straw is a very useful

article—when one end is bathed in a Sherry Cobbler.” Not only was it useful but it was also something much more important. It was new. Now, I’ve never seen a definitive history of the drinking straw, but from what I’ve been able to gather, the Sherry Cobbler was the killer app that brought it into common use. When Mr. Tapley builds one for Dickens’s Martin Chuzzlewit, “plunging a reed into the mixture . . . and signifying by an expressive gesture that it was to be pumped up through that agency by the enraptured drinker,” poor Martin’s astonished. They didn’t do that sort of thing in Europe. Leave it to those mad, ingenious Yanks.

The ice was pretty new, too. Nobody seems precisely sure where the Cobbler got its name, but the most plausible theory posits that it’s from the little “cobble” of ice over which it was originally built. It’s significant that the drink first appears in the late 1830s, the decade that saw the “frozen water trade” take off in America. The first reference to it I’ve found comes from 1838, when Katherine Jane Ellice, the vivacious young wife of the private secretary of the governor of Canada, encountered it in the resorts of upstate New York; she found it “delicious & easy of composition,” recording the recipe in her diary. In 1840 one Brantz Mayer of Baltimore, in an article in the New York weekly *New World* titled “What Is a Sherry Cobbler?,” calls it “the greatest ‘liquorary’ invention of the day” and wonders, “How happens it that ’t was not discovered before?” Without ice, a glass of sweetened sherry with a little orange bruised into it doesn’t hold much excitement. Add ice, whether in cobbles or, as Janie Ellice found it, “ice shavings . . . done with a plane,” and it’s fascinating.

In the fullness of time, the Cobbler treatment got applied to an array of other wines; Jerry Thomas lists a Catawba Cobbler, a Claret Cobbler, a Hock Cobbler (with a German white wine) and a Sauternes Cobbler. Most of these pop up in travelers’ accounts from the 1850s, so somebody was drinking them, anyway. He even lists a Whiskey Cobbler, which rather goes against the nature of the drink (to this we may add a Brandy Cobbler, which seems to have been current in New York in the 1850s, and even a Gin Cobbler—although that one’s English, and they had a way with American drinks, and not a good way). But the Sherry version remained far and away the most popular, and indeed, along with the Mint Julep, was one of the two drinks that introduced America and the world to the pleasures of taking ice in your alcoholic beverages as a matter of course.

But we’ve gone and left poor Mr. Chuzzlewit hanging: “Martin took the glass with an astonished look; applied his lips to the reed; and cast up his eyes once in ecstasy.” While I wouldn’t go that far, I’d certainly rather have a Sherry

Cobbler than not and sometimes—when it’s beastly hot, or when I’m in the mood for a caress rather than a left hook—a lot rather.

SHERRY COBBLER

The basic trunk from which all other Cobblers branched.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

2 WINE-GLASSES [4 OZ] OF SHERRY

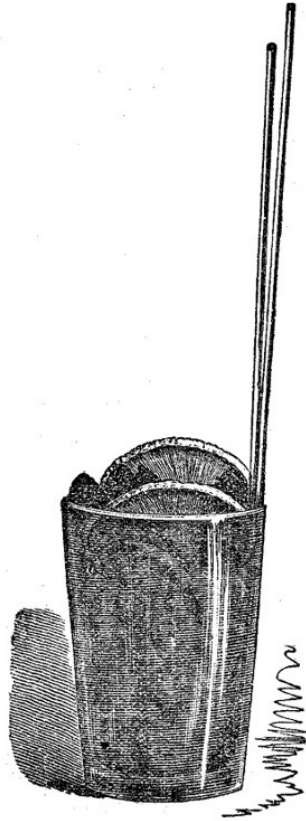
1 TABLE-SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

2 OR 3 SLICES OF ORANGE

Fill a tumbler with shaved ice, shake well, and ornament with berries in season. Place a straw as represented in the wood-cut.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The amount of sugar (superfine) used should vary according to the kind of sherry. There were two kinds of sherry in general use: pale and brown. While it’s notoriously difficult to pin down historical styles of wine, it’s safe to say Thomas’s recipe is calibrated to the dry kind—perhaps not a fino or a manzanilla, but certainly a dry amontillado and not an oloroso. On the other hand there is the bit from Charles Astor Bristed’s 1852 novel, *The Upper Ten Thousand*, where one of his characters, expert in these matters, insists that “we use dark sherry for this, both for strength and the colour. It makes the mixture of a beautiful golden hue; with amontillado or Manzanilla it would look too weak.” If you go with a lighter sherry, I’d still use a little less sugar than Thomas specifies, but not much less—say, 2 teaspoons. If using a sweeter, darker sherry, such as an oloroso or, especially, a Pedro Ximenez, I’d use still less sugar—1 teaspoon or less. The same rules apply to Cobblers made with other still wines.



The Sherry Cobbler (from *The Bon Vivant's Companion*, 1862; author's collection).

For a Catawba Cobbler (“Can there be sin in such a nectar?” asked the *Knickerbocker* in 1855), you’re probably out of luck: Quality Catawba wine is still made, but it’s not easy to find. A few brands to look for from Doug Frost, who knows everything about native American varietals: Stone Hill, St. James, Mt. Pleasant, Ferrante, Hazlitt 1852, Hosmer, Bully Hill, Leidenfrost, Swedish Hill, Lakewood, Atwater, Knapp, Torrey Ridge, and Keuka Spring. For a Hock Cobbler, use a nice Moselle, and a Bordeaux or other big red wine for the Claret Cobbler. For a Whiskey Cobbler, be aware that Thomas’s recipe calls for a full 4 ounces of the stuff and is a heavy cargo to carry. It calls for no ornamentation.

Mr. Mayer of Baltimore instructs that “every particle of [the ice] is broken up into lumps not larger than a pea” and makes no mention of orange in his Ur-Cobbler, merely pouring the sherry over “the fine cut peeling of half a lemon” and letting it sit for a couple of minutes. Janie Ellice concurs with the lemon peel instead of the orange; if this was the drink’s original form, the orange soon took over, and rightly so.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: As Thomas writes, “The ‘cobbler’ does not require much skill in compounding, but to make it acceptable to the eye, as well as to the

palate, it is necessary to display some taste in ornamenting the glass after the beverage is made.” See the illustration, which shows “how a cobbler should look when made to suit an epicure.” The best way to execute this is by dissolving the sugar in an equal amount of water in a cocktail shaker, adding the wine and orange slices, filling it with cracked ice, and shaking vigorously (the shaking will muddle the fruit). Then pour it unstrained into a tall glass, or—if truly fastidious—strain it over fresh, shaved ice, lance it with a straw, and berry it up. The *Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual* suggests that the berries be shaken in with the rest. That makes for a fruitier drink, but a less attractive one.

CHAMPAGNE COBBLER

This one requires a somewhat different technique.

(ONE BOTTLE OF WINE TO FOUR LARGE BAR-GLASSES.)

1 TABLE-SPOONFUL [1 TSP] OF SUGAR

1 PIECE EACH OF ORANGE AND LEMON PEEL

Fill the tumbler one-third full with shaved ice, and fill balance with wine, ornament in a tasty manner with berries in season. This beverage should be sipped through a straw.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: This is a nice one to make with a rosé Champagne.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: It should be reinforced that the formula is per glass, not per bottle. Dissolve the sugar first in a splash of water (or, of course, use a like amount of gum syrup).

IV. THREE POPULAR COOLERS

Among the drinks Hinton Helper encountered in Gold Rush–era San Francisco was something called a “Cooler.” Unfortunately, he gives no description of it. But it’s a pretty safe assumption that it had ice, and liquor of some kind, and maybe some soda water. That’s what all the others had, anyway. It took a while for this loose derivation of the old soda water and citrus Gin Punch to propagate, but by the turn of the century the bartender’s bibles were full of Coolers; of simple, tall things that are of little mixological interest but are mighty refreshing on a hot day, especially with air-conditioning still a generation or two over the horizon.

Every town had one. Chicago had its Mamie Taylor, with Scotch and lime and ginger ale (Taylor was a comic actress of the 1890s). Atlantic City had its Horse’s Neck, which was simply ginger ale with a long, long lemon twist—although many liked theirs with a “stick” of rye or gin in it. New York had its Remsen Cooler, named after a member of the Union League. (Old Tom, long, long twist, plain soda—Harry Johnson thought this was a Scotch drink, but he was confusing it with the Ramsay Cooler, made with Ramsay whisky, from the Port Ellen distillery on Islay; unfortunately, his confusion has infected the annals of mixology.) There was a Boston Cooler, with rum and lemon and soda, a Narragansett Cooler (bourbon, orange juice, and ginger ale), and so on. You could fill a book with them, if you were of a mind to. There are three, however, that are worth special notice: the first because of its overwhelming popularity, the second because of its story, and the third because of—well, because it’s the Singapore Gin Sling. You’ve heard of that.

THE JOE RICKEY (AND THE GIN RICKEY)

“Colonel” Joe Rickey was a wheeling-dealing Democratic lobbyist from the town of Fulton, in Callaway County, Missouri. He was a veteran of the Confederate Army, liked the races, knew how to play poker, and could fill a

back room with smoke with the best of them. Somewhere along the line, he invented a simple Cooler that he would have bartenders make for him.

Various places have been given as the scene of inspiration: The bar across the street from the Southern Hotel in St. Louis, the St. James Hotel in New York (this little hostelry, right up Broadway from the Hoffman House, was a favorite resort of the Sporting Fraternity), the Gilsey House, New York (another Broadway hotel with a sporty clientele), and Joe Chamberlin's in Washington. I have no doubt at one point or another the colonel instructed the bartenders in all those places how to make his drink. He instructed bartenders everywhere how to make it. But the first place he seems to have done it, at least so as anyone noticed, was at Shoomaker's, a quiet, skew-angled old place on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, famed for the quality of its whiskey and the political wattage of its clientele (some called it the "third Room of the Congress"). There, sometime between 1883, when Rickey hit town, and 1889, when the drink made it into the *Washington Post*, Rickey had George Williamson, the saloon's beloved head barkeeper, start making 'em for him. He could do that: At the time, he owned the place.

They couldn't be simpler: a slug of whiskey, and only whiskey (some say rye, some say bourbon, but there is agreement that Rickey preferred the fine Belle of Nelson brand), the juice of half a lime or a whole one if the limes were small, some ice, and some soda water. Done. You'll note the absence of sugar. That's because it was intended as a Cooler, and as Rickey went around saying, "Any drink with sugar in it . . . heats the blood, while the Rickey, with its blood-cooling lime juice, is highly beneficial" (thus the *Brooklyn Eagle's* Washington correspondent in 1892). In any case, the drink spread from "Shoo's" (as Shoomaker's was known) to all Washington, from Washington to New York, and then to points all over the globe. Except Kansas. At least, that's what the *Kansas City Star* said in 1890: "When a Kansas man orders a 'Joe Rickey' he instructs the barkeeper to leave out the ice, the lime juice and the soda."

Kansans notwithstanding, the drink was a sensation. Rickey moved to New York and went into the soda-water business and got his face on a whiskey label. In 1903, though, he took carbolic acid in his room at the Hoffman House and died. His health had been failing and his finances troubled. Or maybe it was just that everybody was going around putting gin in his drink, and had been doing so for at least eleven years. The drink, anyway, lived on, and deservedly—that business of sugar heating the blood

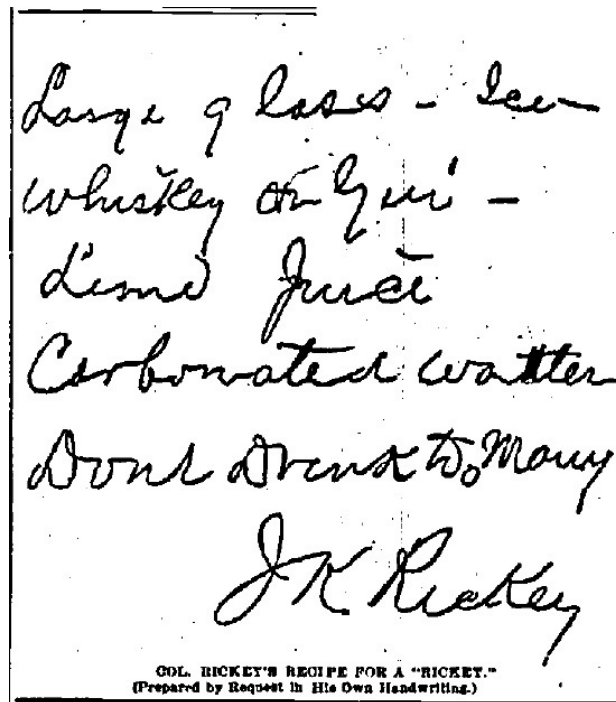
is probably bunk, but its absence certainly makes for a drink of unparalleled coolness, while the soda works to dilute any excess acidity.

Here's the recipe Rickey wrote out by hand for a Syracuse newspaper in 1895, by which point he had already given up defending the frontiers of his creation against the incursion of gin:

**LARGE GLASS—ICE—WHISKEY OR GIN—LIME JUICE [—] CARBONATED
WATTER [SIC]**

Dont [sic] Drink too Many

SOURCE: SYRACUSE EVENING HERALD, 1895.



Joe Rickey's Rickey (author's collection).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Bourbon, preferably well-aged and bonded, however much seems reasonable to you (I like 1½ ounces, more or less). Half a normal-size lime is plenty; 3 ounces of soda. For a Gin Rickey, use Old Tom. For a Gin Buck, which the *Kansas City Star* identified in 1903 as the hot new drink of the summer in that dusty, thirsty town, use a dry gin and replace the carbonated water with ginger ale.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: The *Brooklyn Eagle's* man explained it perfectly: "The juice of [half] a lime is squeezed into a goblet, which is then filled with crushed

ice. Then a portion of whiskey or gin, in quantity to suit the taste, is poured in. The glass is then filled up with club soda or carbonic water.” Illuminati would quibble on one point only: As the *Philadelphia Times* noted in 1895, “cracked ice . . . is an abomination in any drink that is not taken through a straw.” Use a cube or three.

FLORODORA

In 1900, *Florodora*, a thoroughly silly bit of musical fluff imported from the London stage, opened at New York’s Casino Theater. Monster hit. It wasn’t the plot, which involved perfume manufacture, phrenology, and a skein of tangled attractions, set half on the fictitious Philippine island of Florodora and half in Wales. (Wales?) It wasn’t Leslie Stuart’s music, although that was popular enough to make him rich. (He blew it all in the approved manner, on Champagne, horses, and chorus girls.) It wasn’t the leads, the dancing, or the scenery—not the fixed scenery, anyway. You see, Cyrus W. Gilfain, who owns the island of Florodora, has a daughter, Angela. And Angela has six friends who go everywhere together—six well-developed young friends with shapely ankles, who all happen to be brunettes five feet four inches tall, with a penchant for dressing in identical costumes. In an era when sex was sex and public entertainment was most certainly not sex save in the most abstract terms, the “Florodora Sextette” was hot, hot stuff.

The six girlies involved—Daisy Green, Marjorie Relyea, Vaughn Texsmith, Margaret Walker, Agnes Wayburn, and Marie Wilson—were catnip to New York’s rich young (and not-so-young) sports, and they knew it. Wilson parlayed a stock tip from James R. Keene into a \$750,000 score, and then turned around and married his horse-racing pal Frederick Gebhard. Green caught a Denver financier, Wayburn a South African diamond magnate, and Texsmith a silk-manufacturer, all seven-figure men. Marjorie Relyea won out with a Carnegie, who promptly died and left her a pile. We don’t know exactly what happened to Miss Walker, but Broadway legend has it that all six pretty maidens married millionaires; the odds are certainly

in her favor.

If ever there was a show that demanded to be commemorated with a drink, and preferably a fragrant, slightly silly one that hits like a roll of quarters in a clutch purse, it was this one. Lo and behold:

A party of professional people were in a Columbus avenue restaurant in New York the other night after the show. One of the “Florodora” pretty maidens was in the crowd, and her persistent refusal to partake of anything but lemonade irked the rest.

“If you’ll get me something brand new,” she said, “I’ll drink it.” Jimmy O’Brien, the head inventor of drinks, was called. He thought until the noise of his thinking drowned the whirl of the electric fans.

Then he turned out this drink. That was in 1901, as reported by the *New York Evening World*. The girl was Susie Drake. She may not have been one of the original sextette, but she sure had the chorus girl thing down, didn’t she?

Put three or four dashes [2 tsp] of raspberry syrup in the bottom of an ordinary glass, squeeze in the juice of a whole lime, add just enough Plymouth gin to catch the taste [1½ oz] and half fill the glass with finely cracked ice.

Then pour in the best ginger ale until the glass is brimming. Vibrate the mixture with a long bar spoon until it is ice cold and turn it into a cold stein. Float a slice of orange and a pitted cherry on top, put the stein to your lips, shut your eyes and take an express transport to Elysium.

SOURCE: *NEW YORK EVENING WORLD*, 1901.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: If you want to turn this into a Florodora Imperial Style, replace the gin with cognac. You should probably replace the ginger ale with Champagne while you’re at it: The recipe, from Jacques Straub’s 1914 *Drinks*, doesn’t mention it, but “Imperial” or “Royal” drinks almost always have Champagne. This, as far as I can tell, is the debut of the cherry-orange slice “flag” garnish formerly ubiquitous on long drinks.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: You can also build the whole thing in the glass you serve it in.

SINGAPORE GIN SLING, ALIAS STRAITS

SLING

While the English were openly appreciative of America's idiot-savant way with iced beverages when they were over here, perspiring through a New York summer or a spring day in Savannah, once they got our drinks off to the side where nobody was looking they couldn't help poking and prodding them in a most ungentlemanly way. American travelers, ordering one of their native tipples over an English bar, were generally dumbfounded at what the barmaid passed them. Cocktails contaminated with tinctures of calumba and capsicum and served hot, Cobblers vigorously dosed with curaçao and dusted with heavy spices, Juleps swimming in orange juice—the spirit of international comity prevents me from saying more. There is at least one case, however, where something good came out of this.

The Sling, for which see Chapter 6, is a simple drink, even elemental: spirits, sugar, water. Perhaps a bit of nutmeg scraped on top. Ice, if you've got it. Nothing to it. For the English, this wasn't enough. They liked the general idea of a long drink with spirits in it, but they wanted . . . more. In English hands, the formula for the Sling spread its arms to embrace citrus juices and, later, liqueurs, making it into nothing more than a long Punch in a glass and a Sling in name only. Thus it appears in the 1862 *Cook's Guide, and Housekeeper's and Butler's Assistant* by Charles Elme Francatelli (Queen Victoria's chef) and other early transatlantic works of mixography, and thus it appeared in Singapore, at the end of the nineteenth century.

Now, the Raffles Hotel in Singapore has gotten away for years, decades even (although not too many of them) with promulgating a bunch of malarkey about one Ngiam Tong Boon, a bartender at the hotel, developing the drink in 1915 or thereabouts. This is simply not true. For one thing, the drink was universal in Singapore from at least 1897, when the *Straits Times* (Singapore at the time was technically the Straits Settlement of the Federated Malay States) made the observation that “the Settlement goes about, morning after morning, with a woe begone appearance, very much at

a discount, seeking slings and dark corners, where the light will not affect the eyes.”

The drink wasn’t just a hangover cure, though. It was an everything cure. Page through the Singapore newspapers of the time and you find numerous references to “the ‘materials’ for making slings” (1899), “pink slings for pale people” (1903), “rickshaws and gin-slings” filling the (white) inhabitants’ days (1904), and the like. Indeed, you could get one at Raffles; that cannot be denied. But it wasn’t even the most famous place to do so. That honor belonged to John Little, a department store with a rather serious bar (Target, take note). “Every white person in town,” as Robert “Believe It or Not” Ripley observed in 1924, after taking a Gin Sling there, “and a few who are not so white, come here each day near noontime to soothe their parched souls and fill their vacant ears with gossip.” It was, by then, “the proper thing to do.”

A decade earlier, that judgment was still in doubt: There was one place in town at least where you couldn’t get a Gin Sling. The directors of the august Singapore Cricket Club considered them a vulgar novelty and not a part of serious drinking, only deigning to allow them to be served when visiting clubs were being hosted, as an accommodation to their (apparently somewhat *déclassé*) guests. “What! Gin slings in the Cricket Club? Whoever heard such rot; / Contamination—my dear sir, the place would go to pot,” as one wag versified in the *Straits Times*. Fortunately, the younger members disagreed, to the point that they took steps and in the process recorded the drink’s original formula for us.

They walked into the S.C.C. and ordered one Cherry Brandy, one Domb [that is, D.O.M. Bénédictine], one Gin, one Lime Juice, some Ice and water, [and] a few dashes of bitters—and then enjoyed a really decent Sling.”

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: In Singapore at the time a measure of spirits was one-fifth of a gill, or 1 ounce, so go with 1 ounce of each spirit, 1 ounce of lime juice (freshly squeezed), and 1 or 2 ounces of (sparkling) water. Those “pink slings” mentioned earlier and the *Straits Times*’s 1913 claim that the drink’s “picturesqueness of colour is self-apparent” lay to rest the oft-floated idea (I myself have been a floater) that the “dry cherry brandy” called for in Robert Vermeire’s 1922 *Cocktails: How to Mix Them*, the drink’s first appearance in a cocktail book, is a clear kirschwasser rather than a red liqueur such as Cherry

Heering. Add that the only cherry brandies that turn up in local liquor advertisements are the red Bols Cherry Brandy or the aforementioned Heering, and that's done (that "dry cherry brandy" was probably the version Bols used to market at the time, which was their regular red stuff blended with cognac). The gin would be London dry or Old Tom and the bitters Angostura—I like to lash 'em in with a heavy hand. For the record, the Japanese Tan San brand mineral water seems to have been the sparkling water of choice here; reenactors will reach for the Apollinaris, San Pellegrino, or the like.

The proper construction of the Singapore Gin Sling was a subject of debate as early as 1930, and there were those who preferred to pinkify the thing with claret or sloe gin rather than with the cherry brandy. Some tinkering suggests that their positions were not without merit. These proportions are also not immutable: I suggest reducing the lime juice by a quarter and the Bénédictine by half and increasing the gin by half.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Build in a Collins glass over ice. Stir briefly. Intubate with a straw. If you must garnish, a spiral lime peel is your man.

V. A GLANCE AT THE SWIZZLE

If, in his sailor days, Jerry Thomas made landfall anywhere in the British West Indies, it's certain he would have come across an early form of the peerlessly refreshing Swizzle. It's also understandable that he didn't bother collecting the recipe: Up until the middle of the nineteenth century it was a surpassingly simple drink, merely "cold rum and water, very weak," as *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* defined it in 1833, and unlikely to impress someone conversant in the mysteries of the Mint Julep or the Sherry Cobbler. Nonetheless, the Swizzle apparently had some mysteries of its own, if we believe the magazine's addendum that it was something "which a West Indian only can mix."

Soon those mysteries would be deepened: By the end of the 1860s, the new availability of ice in the Caribbean* would whipsaw the Swizzle through an evolution similar to the one American drinks went through, in a fraction of the time. The fossil record offers us several well-preserved specimens. The early stages of development can be seen in *Under a Tropical Sky*, published by John Amphlett, a young English gentleman-at-law, in 1873, where he details the example, simple but "insinuating exceedingly," that he found the residents of Georgetown, Guyana, the sweltering capital of a sweltering land, drinking "in plenty, at all hours of the day, but more especially before breakfast and before dinner." Note the technology used, an ultra-low-tech West Indian alternative to the cocktail shaker:

It is a species of cocktail made of Angostura bitters and gin or brandy, and frothed up by rapidly turning round in the glass, between the palms of the hand, a stick called a swizzlestick, consisting of a long stem with four or five short prongs sticking out from it at the bottom.

To cool it, "plenty of ice is inserted" before swizzling—at a penny a pound, the prevailing local price, plenty wasn't a problem. Neither were the imported spirits, if you could afford them (based on other accounts, the gin was almost certainly a Dutch genever, then prevalent in the islands, and never dirt cheap). His Swizzles might also have been sweetened with sugar; some contemporary accounts of the Guyanese Swizzle include it, some don't.

If Amphlett's Swizzles, with their Angostura and their ice, were closer to

the Cocktail than the Grog-like Caribbean Swizzle of yore, the next evolution would see the drink return to the realm of Punch, from whence it most likely descended in the first place. As far as we can tell, the Ice House in Bridgetown, Barbados, was, if not the first to add lime juice to the Swizzle, then certainly the place that popularized the addition. By 1894, the bartenders there were making them with “gin, lime juice, and Angostura,” as one traveler noted (he left out the sugar, but it was in there as well). A cool, reddish Ice House Swizzle was in its way a perfect drink.

GREEN SWIZZLE

But there was one further evolution that took the Swizzle beyond perfection to radiance. Indeed, so impressive was it that when P. G. Wodehouse’s Bertie Wooster, in time of tribulation, encountered it at the West Indies bar of the British Empire Exposition at Wembley, London, in 1924, he resolved then and there that “if ever I marry and have a son, Green Swizzle Wooster is the name that will go down in the register.” The mighty Green Swizzle was the king of Caribbean drinks from the late 1890s until the early 1930s, when it was dethroned by the Daiquiri #2, as served at the Floridita in Havana. A regular Swizzle made green by the addition of “wormwood bitters,” a simple infusion of wormwood in gin or rum, its provenance is not easy to discern: It appears at roughly the same time in Trinidad, Barbados, and Grenada. Informed sources at the time attribute it to the Bridgetown Club, Barbados, but if that’s where it was born it was soon adopted, and some would say perfected, by the legendary Queen’s Park Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad, on whose broad verandah the officers of Teddy Roosevelt’s Great White Fleet, interrupting their cruise around the world, engaged with it in 1903.

It is impossible to give a definitive recipe for the Green Swizzle. How many swizzlers, so many Swizzles. This problem was apparent as early as 1908, when a correspondent of the *New York Herald*, finding himself in the West Indies, tried to thresh the subject out. “The best swizzle is made of

rum,” one adept told him. “The only genuine swizzles are made of Tom gin,” said another. Quoth a third, “The real swizzle is made of Angostura bitters and whiskey.” And so on, throughout the whole construction of the drink. There are really only three constants: spirits, wormwood bitters, and ice. Lime juice and sugar are each sometimes omitted. In Barbados, the drink was always sweetened with Falernum, a sort of prebottled Punch base made from limes, sugar, spices (chiefly bitter almond), and a little bit of rum; in Trinidad, they used Carypton, the Angostura company’s rather higher-proof version of the same, and omitted the booze entirely (when either was used, many swizzlers would often omit the lime juice). Angostura bitters sometimes feature—a 1912 traveler to Trinidad rhapsodized about the drink’s “green shading gradually into the dark red of bitters near the surface”—as does soda water.

All that said, this 1908 version closely tracks with what they were serving at the Bridgetown Club, and cannot be denied:

Take a tall glass, three tablespoonfuls [1½ oz] of rum, two tablespoonfuls [1 oz] of falernum, a dash [1 barspoon] of wormwood bitters; half fill the glass with shaved—not cracked—ice, twirl the swizzlestick rapidly between the palms until the shaved ice is melted and the beverage almost frappé; strain into a cocktail glass and drink.

SOURCE: *NEW YORK HERALD*, 1908.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The rum should be a flavorful white one, although Wray & Nephew is probably going too far. Old Tom gin or genever carry just as much authority and make for a very refreshing Swizzle indeed, as does Plymouth gin. In any case, an extra ½ ounce will do no harm. The Falernum can be purchased (Carypton, alas, cannot; the Angostura company discontinued it decades ago), but the wormwood bitters must be made. Fortunately, that’s easy: Simply put 5 or 6 sprigs of wormwood or 1 ounce dried and—a pro tip for which we have Eleanor Early’s 1937 Caribbean travelog, *Ports of the Sun*, to thank—the thin-cut peels of three tangerines in a clean 750-milliliter bottle, fill with so-called Navy-strength gin such as Hayman’s Royal Dock or Wray & Nephew White Overproof rum, let sit for a couple of days, decant, and strain. Alternatively, you can use one of the awkward, wormwood-forward Czech absinthes. The amount of wormwood bitters or absinthe must be governed by taste; I like a barspoonful. The ice should be shaved, or pounded in a Lewis bag until it’s practically snow.

Personally, I favor a maximalist Green Swizzle, with 1 ounce of lime juice to balance the Falernum's sweetness, 2 ounces of chilled soda water, and a rosy cap of Angostura bitters dashed on top—say, a good 12 dashes. Made thus, it is a polar expedition for your gullet. All the engineering genius of Willis Carrier could construct no better Cooler.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Swizzles occupied a number of niches in the ecosystem of Caribbean drink, including the one occupied by the Cocktail in other climes. If strained into a Cocktail glass, as the *Herald* suggests, the Green Swizzle is a perfectly delicious drink. But in its soul it is a long, slow sipper, and it achieves its full potential only when served in the glass it has been swizzled in, tall, pale, and frosty. Once you've swizzled it—swizzle sticks are easily procured in this Internet age—fill the glass with more ice, add the soda and dash on the Angostura (if you wish), add a straw and, well, chill.

A HANDFUL OF EGG DRINKS

I have given what were generally known as “egg drinks” a little section of their own, as they are neither Punches nor part of the lineage of the Cocktail. In segregating them, I am mirroring their place in the psyche of the Jerry Thomas-age drinker. Formerly a major part of day-to-day drinking, by the middle of the nineteenth century drinks made with eggs had seen their role greatly diminished. There were exceptions. Some Fizzes used eggs, or at least parts of them. There was a Flip of sorts, that took the mighty quaff of Colonial days—when Flips were made from quarts of ale and gills of strong rum, thickened with eggs and sugar and poured back and forth from pitcher to pitcher in the traditional rainbow arc—and shrank it to something that would fit in a Cocktail glass. And there was the Tom & Jerry, the cold-weather favorite that carried the egg drink’s banner into the twentieth century, if not always at full height. But the only time that egg drinks really recaptured their former importance was on Christmas and New Year’s Day, when they were mandatory.

EGG NOGG

“Dec 25—Cloudy & thawy—very muddy—Christmas day—good many drunken ones around town & some few arrests for drunk & disorderly—got up 12—read paper—went down to Charley Ockel’s [saloon] & got some egg-nog.” Thus did Alf Doten, then living in Virginia City, Nevada, begin his Christmas in 1866. But that’s how everyone began their Christmas, if they could afford it and knew where to get their hands on some eggs (in the days before 7-Eleven, not a given) and weren’t infected with temperance principles. The very idea of Christmas or New Year’s Day without the stuff . . . it just wouldn’t be a holiday.

When Jerry Thomas wrote in 1862 that Egg Nogg “is a beverage of American origin, but it has a popularity that is cosmopolitan,” he was not wrong: The drink’s earliest mention comes from a 1788 Philadelphia newspaper, and all the other early mentions are American. And if early European travelers to the United States viewed it as one of the novelties Americans were inflicting on the art of drinking, by the 1860s it was a drink of comfortable middle age, with a wide, if strictly seasonal, popularity (when Thomas added that in the North “it is a favorite of all seasons,” he was certainly overstating the case). It was established enough to have spawned numerous variants, most of them sharing the characteristic that Doten recorded on Christmas Day 1871: “Egg nog is deceitful.” In fact, that’s what people always liked about it, as can be seen in an article printed in the *Pittsburgh Gazette* in 1801 describing the “Late, Mad Circuit of Judge Brackenridge through Washington County,” in the course of which this distinctly unsober judge finds himself at a country inn. “He ordered egg nogg to be made; upon tasting it he swore and damned so horribly that the whole family were terrified at his profaneness and all this merely because the egg nogg had not whiskey enough in it.” (Using whiskey in the Egg Nogg was strictly a backwoods practice; swells and epicures preferred brandy and rum, or fortified wines in theirs. But any port in a storm, as the saying goes—in validation of which there’s even a mezcal Egg Nogg on record, made by “Texian” prisoners in Mexico, back in the Lone Star days. See [here](#).)

Of Thomas’s six Egg Noggs, I have included the three best, one for a largish group and two for individual drinks. I’ve also added the Texian one, because—well, Texas will not be denied.

BALTIMORE EGG NOGG

I'm not sure if I completely agree with Thomas that "Egg Nog made in this manner is digestible, and will not cause headache," or that "it makes an excellent drink for debilitated persons, and a nourishing diet for consumptives," but I will say that it is thoroughly delicious.

(FOR A PARTY OF FIFTEEN.)

Take the yellow of sixteen eggs and twelve table-spoonfuls of pulverized loaf-sugar [3–4 oz superfine sugar], and beat them to the consistency of cream; to this add two-thirds of a nutmeg grated, and beat well together; then mix in half a pint of good brandy or Jamaica rum, and two wineglasses [4 oz] of Madeira wine. Have ready the whites of the eggs, beaten to a stiff froth, and beat them into the above-described mixture. When this is all done, stir in six pints of good rich milk. There is no heat used.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The 1887 edition of Thomas's book suggests, correctly, that 10 eggs are enough; in any case, they should be large, not jumbo. As for the spirits: I prefer to split the difference, going with 5 ounces of cognac and 3 ounces of rum. In 1862, there was a far greater variety of Madeiras available than there is today. I like a Bual in this.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: This is best mixed in advance and refrigerated for two or three hours.

EGG NOGG (INDIVIDUAL)

The individual version.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLE-SPOONFUL OF FINE WHITE SUGAR, DISSOLVED WITH

1 TABLE-SPOONFUL COLD WATER

1 EGG

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF COGNAC BRANDY

½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF SANTA CRUZ RUM

⅓ TUMBLERFUL OF MILK

Fill the tumbler ¼ full with shaved ice, shake the ingredients until they are thoroughly mixed together, and grate a little nutmeg on top. Every well ordered bar has a tin egg-nogg “shaker,” which is a great aid in mixing this beverage.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For Thomas’s Sherry Egg Nogg, replace the cognac and rum with two wineglasses of oloroso sherry and use only the yolk of the egg. Then “quaff the nectar cup.”

NOTES ON EXECUTION: This is the only drink in Thomas’s book that explicitly calls for the use of the Cocktail shaker.

GENERAL HARRISON’S EGG NOGG

William Henry “Old Tippecanoe” Harrison ran for president in 1840 on the “log cabin and hard cider” ticket, the idea being that he was a common man of the people who just wanted to drink cider and sit on the porch of his cabin. The people bought it.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 EGG

1½ TEA-SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

2 OR 3 SMALL LUMPS [½ GLASS] OF ICE

Fill the tumbler with cider, and shake well. This is a splendid drink,

and is very popular on the Mississippi river. It was General Harrison's favorite beverage.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The cider should of course be hard. Try to get something artisanal, made from whole cider apples, not concentrate.

TEXIAN EGG NOGG

In 1843, General Thomas Green of the Army of the Texas Republic and some 160 of his fellow Texians were being held prisoner by the Mexican general Santa Ana of Alamo fame after a failed border raid. Conditions in the Perote prison were grim, but nonetheless to celebrate the seventh anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21 (the victory that guaranteed Texas's independence from Mexico), the Texians were able to bribe their guards to smuggle in, as Green related in 1845, ass's milk, sugar, eggs, and mezcal, which they brought in in animal-gut tubes curled up under their shakos. With this, the Texians commandeered all the prison's cooking utensils and, with three of the officers whipping the eggs, another pounding the sugar and Green himself supervising the assembly, got tight for Texas on "such egg-nog," as Green recalled, "as never before was seen or drank under the nineteenth degree of north latitude." Or, I suspect, any other. In any case, Green's claim that "the juice of the agave inspired the soul" of his men while "the ass's milk filled the stomach" is entirely accurate: The drink is definitely a hearty one, and indeed not for the faint of heart.

We purchased seven gallons of *vino mascas*, and as many of ass's milk, thirty dozen eggs, a large loaf of sugar, and appropriated all our cooking utensils and water jars to the compounding of egg-nog . . .

SOURCE: THOMAS GREEN, *JOURNAL OF THE TEXIAN EXPEDITION*, 1845.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Since 7 gallons equals thirty-five bottles of mezcal, it's probably wise to shrink this down a bit. Assuming that your April 21 San Jacinto

Day celebration will be well attended, begin with one bottle of good mezcal—say, Del Maguey Chichicapa (for a smoother, less startling Noggy, use a good 100 percent agave reposado tequila). We don't milk a lot of donkeys in America these days, although ass milking seems to be on the upswing in Europe (the milk is apparently most healthy; opportunity alert!). Fortunately, 3 cups of raw cow's milk will work just fine. And 10 eggs should do it, and 1 cup of sugar. I like to grate a cake of Mexican chocolate into 1 cup of the milk, stir them together over very low heat until the chocolate has dissolved and let it cool. Not in the original recipe but delicious. A brass-rail scientist would say the chocolate "gives the mescal something to work on."

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Separate the eggs and the yolks, beat the yolks with the sugar until creamy and the whites separately until they form stiff peaks. Stir the mezcal in with the yolks and then fold in the whipped whites. Slowly stir in the milk and, if you can wait, refrigerate for two or three hours before attacking.

TOM & JERRY

The reporter came right out and asked him; what was he gonna do, say no? The Professor went into his spiel:

One day in . . . 1847 a gentleman asked me to give him an egg beaten up in sugar. I prepared the article, and then . . . I thought to myself, "How beautiful the egg and sugar would be with brandy to it!" I ran to the gentleman and, says I, "If you'll only bear with me for five minutes I'll fix you up a drink that'll do your heartstrings good." He wasn't at all averse to having the condition of his heartstrings improved, so back I went, mixed the egg and sugar, which I had beaten up into a kind of batter, with some brandy, then I poured in some hot water and stirred vigorously. The drink realised my expectations. It was the one thing I'd been dreaming of for months. . . . I named the drink after myself, kinder familiarly: I had two small white mice in those days, one of them I had called Tom and the other Jerry, so I combined the abbreviations in the drink, as Jeremiah P. Thomas

would have sounded rather heavy, and that wouldn't have done for a beverage.

By the early 1880s, when Alan Dale—the reporter in question—encountered him, Thomas must've been telling that story for thirty years. When his obituaries were written, he was unquestioningly credited with the invention of this popular drink. (Indeed, this anecdote appears almost verbatim in his obituary in the *New York Times*.) In his book, he says that people even called it “Jerry Thomas.” In a way, he was the drink. I'm sure he got to the point that he was almost believing that he invented it himself.

But he didn't, as this little item from the *Salem (Massachusetts) Gazette* demonstrates:

At the Police Court in Boston, last week, a lad about thirteen years of age was tried for stealing a watch, and acquitted. In the course of the trial, it appeared that the prosecutor [that is, the plaintiff] sold to the lad, under the name of “Tom and Jerry,” a composition of saleratus [baking soda], eggs, sugar, nutmeg, ginger, allspice and rum. A female witness testified that the boy . . . appeared to be perfectly deranged, probably in consequence of the “hell-broth” that he had been drinking.

Thomas, you'll recall, was born in 1830. This was published on March 20, 1827. Nor is this an isolated quote: Numerous references to the drink from the 1830s and 1840s have turned up, all from New England. It's quite possible, therefore, that Thomas mixed *his* first Tom & Jerry in 1847, while he was learning the bar business in New Haven, in the heart of the Tom & Jerry Belt. But *the* first? No way. No matter; if he didn't invent the drink, he certainly did more than any other man to promote it.

From after the Civil War until the late 1880s, come the cold weather in October or November, every saloon worth wrecking with a hatchet would get down the china Tom & Jerry bowl and the little “shaving mugs” that went with it (these sets were commercially available since at least the early 1870s) and the newspapers would start making spavined jokes about Thomas and Jeremiah, “two well-known sports” who had just showed up in town and “whose acquaintance should not be cultivated too deeply.” From then until spring, the bowl would be full of the foamy batter (or “dope,” as it was sometimes known), ready to be spooned into the little mugs, stiffened

with booze, and heated with a little water or milk from the little boiler on the bar. Everyone loved it.

But eventually tastes changed, and right around the time Jerry Thomas passed away, his semi-namesake began to share the fate of other drinks of its age and level of fanciness, to the point that in 1902 the *New York Sun* could write that it “seems to have vanished as absolutely as the dodo.” Fortunately, that was overpessimistic; you could still find it at the more traditional places until Prohibition, and even now, in the heart of the Upper Midwest, there are bars that make Tom & Jerries every holiday season.

(USE PUNCH-BOWL FOR THE MIXTURE.)

5 LBS [2 LB] SUGAR

12 EGGS

½ SMALL GLASS [1 OZ] OF JAMAICA RUM

1½ TEA-SPOONFUL OF GROUND CINNAMON

½ TEA-SPOONFUL OF GROUND CLOVES

½ TEA-SPOONFUL OF GROUND ALLSPICE

Beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, and the yolks until they are thin as water, then mix together and add the spice and rum; thicken with sugar until the mixture attains the consistence of a light batter. N. B.—A tea-spoonful of cream of tartar, or about as much carbonate of soda as you can get on a dime, will prevent the sugar from settling to the bottom of the mixture. This drink is sometimes called Copenhagen, and sometimes Jerry Thomas.

TO DEAL OUT TOM AND JERRY TO CUSTOMERS:

Take a small bar-glass, and to one table-spoonful of the above mixture, add one wineglass [2 oz] of brandy, and fill the glass with boiling water; grate a little nutmeg on top. Adepts at the bar, in serving Tom and Jerry, sometimes adopt a mixture of ½ brandy, ¼ Jamaica rum, and ¼ Santa Cruz rum, instead of brandy plain. This compound is usually mixed and kept in a bottle, and a wine-glassful [2 oz] is used to each tumbler of Tom and Jerry.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: By today’s standards 5 pounds is a crazy amount of sugar; 2 pounds should be plenty. The water can be replaced with hot milk, and

often was by the turn of the twentieth century. It's better that way, although there's a certain austere ruggedness to the water version (if using water, add an extra pound of sugar, to give the drink a little more body).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Whether you use water or milk, the mugs (an eBay item if ever there was one) should be rinsed with boiling water before being filled, to warm them.

SHERRY FLIP

Everyone plagiarized the Professor. After Jerry Thomas's book was unleashed on the public, there was a steady trickle of cut-price bartender's bibles, printed on cheap stock and wrapped in gaudy colored paper. One of them, Americus Bevill's 1871 *Barkeeper's Ready Reference*, was wholly original. A few at least took Thomas's work and insinuated a new recipe or two in among their pilfered goods. One of these is *The American BarTender; or the Art and Mystery of Mixing Drinks*, written, if that's the word I want, in 1874 by "H. L. W.," who claimed the recipes therein were "thoroughly examined, revised and added to" by one E. A. Simmons, who was "in charge of the Wine Department" at French's Hotel in New York.

Ed Simmons was more of a hotelkeeper than a bartender, and his revisions to the Professor's pirated recipes were cursory at best, but he did at least update the Mint Julep to a whiskey base. He also made one key addition: a streamlined and iced version of the old hot-and-heavy Flip. The drink was simple enough: a whole egg beaten up with sugar and shaken with brandy, whiskey, gin, or sherry; strained into a "small glass"; and sprinkled with nutmeg. I don't know if the drink was original with him, but if so he qualifies as another benefactor of the human race. A Flip made with sherry or port, which is the version that would go on to find the most favor with American drinkers, is, as Harry Johnson noted in 1882, "a very delicious drink" that "gives great strength to delicate people" (in case you know anyone like that). It also—an important consideration for the frugal among us—gives you something to do with the egg yolks left over from your

Ramos Fizzes. That's what Ramos used 'em for, anyway: Sherry Flip was what you drank in his bar when you were tired of Fizzes.

Unfortunately, we don't have Ramos's complete recipe. But Simmons's is sound—indeed, sounder than the one in the 1876 supplement to Jerry Thomas's book, which somehow managed to omit the egg (we all have days like that).

1 EGG BEATEN VERY THIN; 1 TEA SPOONFUL OF SUGAR; 1 GLASS [3 OZ] OF [SHERRY].

Mix with fine ice; strain in small glass.

Nutmeg on top.

SOURCE: H. L. W., *THE AMERICAN BARTENDER*, 1874.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the sherry, you want an oloroso; something nice and rich. For a Port Wine Flip, I find a nice tawny works best. To make Ramos's Sherry Flip, use only the yolk of the egg, add 1 ounce of "rich milk" or cream, 1 drop of vanilla extract and—here's the rub—1 ounce of "squee gee." What's that, you ask? According to the woman from the *Times-Picayune* who got the rest of the recipe from Ramos in 1925, it was a prebottled "secret blend of the Ramos brothers, perfected by years of study and experiment," which had "between fourteen and nineteen" ingredients, all of them the "choicest liqueurs" and "each in a different proportion." Beyond that, Ramos spake not. It's a situation of roll your own. I like a base of Dolin blanc vermouth, dashed with Peychaud's bitters, orange curaçao, Bénédictine, crème de cacao, and—and I've already said too much.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Best to stir the sugar together with a spoonful of water before proceeding, or use rich simple syrup. You don't need to beat the egg first: Simply use good, hard ice cubes rather than the fine ice and shake with vigor and patience. A coupe is the traditional receptacle.

TODDIES, SLINGS, JULEPS, AND SUCH

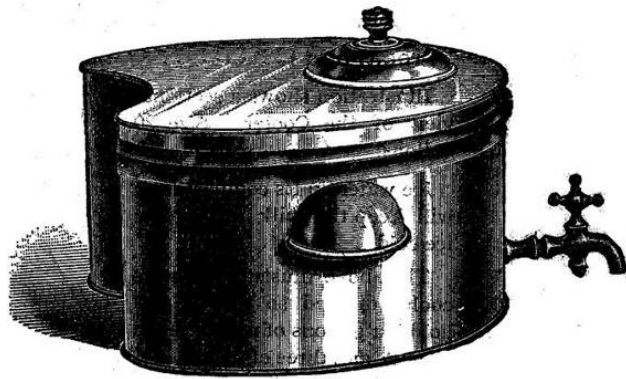
Before the Cocktail, there was the Toddy—or the Sling—or the Julep—or the Sangaree. Or anything else you wanted to call a glass of beverage alcohol with a little sugar in it, a little water if needed, and maybe a scrape of nutmeg over the top or a sprig or two of mint stuck in the glass.

The very simplicity of these drinks led to a good deal of confusion among them, particularly when regional and national differences in nomenclature are factored in (a Yankee's Sling, an Englishman's Toddy, and an Irishman's Skin might be made in the exact same way). Indeed, the three editions of Jerry Thomas's book give a sheaf of overlapping recipes for Toddies and Slings in particular that differ only in the temperature of the H₂O, the choice of base spirit, and the presence and absence of nutmeg.*

The works of his contemporaries only add to the confusion. While the general rule of this book is to present definitive, original recipes in unmodified form, if ever there's a place to break it, this is it. Since it's fair to say that, in general (although, ironically, not in Jerry Thomas's book), Toddy was perceived as a hot drink that you could also make cold, and Sling as a cold one that you could also make hot, I've used that as a sort of stick with which to thresh this large and incestuous family of drinks out into two master recipes, a Hot Toddy and a Cold Sling, each based on Jerry Thomas's 1862 edition but incorporating some of the handy hints from elsewhere. If you want a Cold Toddy or a Hot Sling, just make a Cold Sling or a Hot Toddy and change the name, manipulating the nutmeg *ad libitum*.

There are a few major variations, including the popular Sangaree, that achieved a life of their own; I've allowed them to roam free, in the following pages.

I. RUM, BRANDY, WHISKEY, OR GIN TODDY, HOT



CRESCENT SHAPE BAR KETTLE.

Made of heavy copper and nickel plated. Shaped so that it can be placed on top of stove to be heated; crescent groove made to fit around stove pipe.

Dimensions..... 7 inches high
"..... 14 " diameter.

Faucet of latest and best make.

Price, each..... \$3.69

Hot drinks, too, required special equipment. This handy heater was designed to go on top of the ubiquitous potbellied stove (author's collection).

Some time at the beginning of the 1750s, the great Early American portrait painter Charles Willson Peale—then a lad of twelve or so—put a vital question to a local Annapolis doctor. “What is the best drink for health?” The doctor, a gentleman of Scottish extraction, did not hem or haw. “Toddy, mun. The spirit must have something to act on, and therefore acts on the sugar and does nae injury to the stomach.” It’s a charming theory, anyway; how nice if it were true (another round of Piña Coladas over here, Ramon!). But whatever its benignity, Toddy hot in the winter and cold in the summer was one of the invariables of American drinking from the middle of the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth—and, in some places, beyond. When I was a child, which was not so long ago as all that (we had Batman on the TV and Johnny Eagle plastic M14s to shoot our little friends with), my New England-born mother would, in circumstances of extreme chill, administer Toddy to my brother and me under the guise of Hot Buttered Rum. It was strictly medicinal, of course, and very much on the weak side, but nonetheless.

Toddy—alias Sling, Sangaree, Skin, or Bombo, all more or less the same thing—is a simple drink in the same way a tripod is a simple device: Remove

one leg and it cannot stand, set it up properly and it will hold the whole weight of the world. This mixture of spirits, hot or cold water, sugar, and perhaps a scraping of nutmeg is the irreducible minimum of true mixology. Take away any ingredient and you're left with something less than a mixed drink. Except the nutmeg, that is—just as had occurred with the bowl of Punch, the element of spice was soon recognized as inessential. But without the sugar, it's just spirits and water. Sure, you can fit this out with a fancy name—call it a Grog or a Highball or a Swizzle—but it's still just watered booze. Without the water, it's essentially a liqueur (provided you can get the sugar to dissolve in the first place), and not fit for serious drinking. And without the spirits—well, no. But get everything right (and Lord knows it's easy enough) and it's a drink all right. Indeed, like all truly great drinks, it's sometimes a good deal more than that.

Under the proper circumstances, a Hot Toddy—particularly one constructed upon a foundation of good Highland malt whisky—is one of the clearest signs I know that there is a providential plan to the universe. Of course, those circumstances include things like faulty central heating, dripping eaves, gray mists, chill drafts, and moth-eaten cardigan sweaters, all of which are in short supply in modern American life. But it's almost worth artificially creating them just to feel the blissful warmth seeping farther into every muscle and nerve with each sip until, as far as your body is concerned, you're laying out on the Grand Anse beach in Grenada, not hunched against a cold and cutting nor'easter. The old days were hard, but the people who lived them found ways of making them tolerable.

Apparently of Scottish origin (although its print debut is found in a July 1750 issue of the *Boston Weekly Post Boy*), the “fashionable” Toddy—as the *Newport (Rhode Island) Mercury* dubbed it in 1764—was a fixture of American tippling for a century or more. It didn't hurt that, unlike Punch, the Toddy required no perishable ingredients or complicated formulas. Rum (or whiskey if you were out on the frontier, brandy if you were posh, applejack if you were from New Jersey, gin if you were of African or Dutch extraction, and so on). As much sugar as you liked or had—no worries here about balancing out the acidity of lemons or limes. Water, hot or cold. If you had some nutmeg, fine; if not, fine, too. If there was no sugar, honey or even blackstrap molasses would do. You could make it strong or you could make it weak and sip it all day, as John Ferdinand Smyth found the Virginia planters doing in the 1780s. You could make it one glass or mug at a time, or—well, consider the way Pennsylvanian Joseph Price spent May 11, 1802: “had 3 Pints Whis[key], they Complained of

Cold very much, at Mothers Got a bowl hot Toddy then they Came home with me and I Made them 2 Bowls, made their harts Glad & away they went.” (Who’s “they”? He never does tell us; perhaps he should’ve waited until May 12 to update his diary.) In fact, the first published recipe for Toddy that I’ve been able to find, the one in Samuel Stearns’s 1801 *American Herbal*, makes a hefty quart of the stuff. One hopes that that wasn’t intended for one person.

By Jerry Thomas’s day, the Toddy had settled into a respectable middle age. The size was reduced to what could comfortably fit in one hand and the sugar moved up the social scale to pure white. While there were a few holdouts in New England who plumped for Medford rum and some ethnics who went for gin (with the pot-stilled, whiskeylike Hollands, this is decidedly more pleasant than it sounds), most people preferred to stoke their Toddies with good domestic rye or, preferably, bourbon (some felt rye “doesn’t suit” as well in hot drinks) or, even better, imported French brandy. In fact, Brandy Toddy was often prescribed by doctors for its medicinal value (some ideas die hard).

Then, in the late 1870s, for whatever reason—the verminous phylloxera’s devastation of the vineyards of France, increasing Anglophilia, a sudden and uncharacteristic onrush of good sense—America at large discovered what a few had always known: that by far the best spirit in a Hot Toddy is pure Scotch whisky. Perhaps we were just able to get older whiskies: For most of the century, the Scotch whisky that came over here was the old, unblended Scottish malt whisky, made in a traditional copper pot still with its kettle and gooseneck and spiral condensing worm, shipped in barrels from the distillery and aged only as long as it took to get here; it was up to the wholesaler or end user to allow it to slumber in the wood for all those necessary years. (Some did, anyway; the others just stirred some caramel into it.) By the 1870s, that system began changing and well-aged, vatted malts were being shipped over in bottles. In any case, under the guise of Hot Scotch, the Hibernian version of the Toddy quickly rose to near-universal popularity as the sovereign remedy for a frosty night; indeed, until the golf-and-Scotch Highball craze of the 1890s it was just about the only way Scotch whisky was drunk in America. Judging by the contents of his bar’s cellar, which included barrels of a nice fifteen-year-old Caol Ila malt, Jerry Thomas was an early adopter (Andrew Johnson was another, although I don’t know if he took it up pre-or post-impeachment). Mark Twain came later to it, but made up for the delay by his regular devotion (according to his friend William Dean Howells, for years he took it before bedtime, deeming it “the only soporific worth considering”; in an age without benzodiazepines, he wasn’t wrong). The

only dissenters were the Irish-Americans, who maintained, like the “old rounder” quoted in an Ohio paper in 1888, that “Irish whisky can stand hot water better than any other under the sun.”

That rounder was onto something. In the late 1880s, you see, that old-style whisky was being edged out by the blended version, wherein the malt was cut by the much lighter (and purer) stuff that the new “patent” stills were turning out. The Irish, however, were still selling their whiskey unblended. All this might seem a bit technical, but it’s germane to our topic: After years of experience with the Hot Toddy, I’ve found that the one sure secret to success is to use pot-stilled spirits in it. The heavier body they possess gives the drink a silky texture that is hard to resist.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR

½ WINEGLASS [3–4 OZ] OF WATER

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

Stir with a spoon.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Again, pot-stilled spirits are essential here. Cognac or single-malt Scotch: always (this is an excellent use for a very peaty Scotch, particularly if it’s at cask strength). Dark rum, Irish whiskey, and Hollands: on a case-by-case basis (Redbreast Irish whiskey is pure pot still, and fabulous here). Bourbon and rye: Well, they’re kind of a special case, because they almost always come out of a patent still, but at a lower proof than usual (and hence with a heavier body); in fact, some of them have just the right thickness you need (Woodford Reserve is a particular favorite here, but then again, it’s supposed to be part pot still). Vodka, London dry gin, Bacardi, and so on: No. Tequila: It certainly might work, but you go first.

As for the sugar, you’ve got options here, too. For one thing, you can do without, as Mark Twain liked to (it was a Western thing). I don’t recommend that; not so much because I like a sweeter drink, but because the sugar adds thickness, and a thin Toddy is a sad Toddy. Some modern mixologists suggest sweetening Whisky Toddies with honey; personally, I think it clashes with the malt. Certainly the Professor and his colleagues never call for anything but sugar. Generally, this would have been the standard quick-dissolving powdered white sugar, but the presence of boiling water means that other kinds will work

as well. I favor Demerara or raw sugar in my Toddies: Their sugarcane notes bring a pleasing complexity to the drink (you can also get Demerara in cubes or, even better, irregular little lumps that just scream out “authentic”).

Water. The ideal proportion seems to be about one part spirit to one and a half to two parts water. Keep it as hot as possible. If you prefer nutmeg on your Toddy, well, according to the Professor that’s a Sling. His 1887 reviser, however, disagrees; myself, I find nutmeg works well with rum, brandy, or Hollands, but not so well with whisky. When you do use it, grate it fresh. Never use the stuff in a jar; you might as well be following the jocular (I hope) advice the British traveler Captain J. E. Alexander (“Late of the 16th Lancers”) gave in 1833: “If there is no nutmeg convenient, a scrape or two of the mudler (wooden sugar-breaker) will answer the purpose.”

NOTES ON EXECUTION: As he so often did, the 1887 reviser added clear and useful instructions: “First rinse the glass with hot water, put in the sugar, fill the glass half-full of boiling water, add the [spirits] and stir. Serve with a spoon.” If you’re using a glass, make sure it’s a heavy, tempered one. In general, I prefer a mug, which will keep the drink warm longer (try not to use a “World’s Best Dad” mug or other such cultural detritus; it cheapens the effect). If you’ve got a toddy stick, now’s the time to use it. Beyond that, there’s little to say. If you like lemon peel in yours, that’s a [Skin](#).

APPLE TODDY

From the beginning of the Republic, if not before, until the turn of the last century, if not after, one of the particular treats Americans looked to with which to solace their winters was Apple Toddy—a drink that has since disappeared with scarcely a trace. Indeed, before the Mint Julep and the Cocktail assumed the role it was so popular that it was something of a signifier of Americanness. That, certainly, is how it appears in the 1792 comedy *The Yorker’s Strategy*, its earliest citation.

As befits a truly democratic drink, the Apple Toddy was enjoyed up and down the social scale. If we find our Captain Alexander noting that, on the

Mississippi in 1831, “mint julep and apple toddy were the favourite liquors of the refined; cocktail and gin-sling were relished by the *Dii minorum gentium*” (that is, the “lesser gods”), we equally find the Gettysburg *Republican Compiler* singling it out just a few years later as the kind of swill drunk by the Democratic (with a capital *D*) mob. Whichever end of the scale you put senators on, to see Senator Beck of Kentucky drink one was “supposed to be a liberal education,” as one newspaper put it in the 1880s. When other drinks of similar vintage fell by the wayside, the Apple Toddy continued on into the era of electric light and moving pictures, just as popular as ever.

But then Prohibition came, and in all the excitement people had little time for such things as an Apple Toddy. After Repeal, whether roasting apples and mixing them up with sugar, water, and booze was too old-fashioned, too much work, or everybody just forgot, I do not know. But Apple Toddy was seen no more.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLESPOONFUL OF FINE WHITE SUGAR

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF CIDER BRANDY

½ OF A BAKED APPLE

Fill the glass two-thirds full of boiling water, and grate a little nutmeg on top.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Though Jerry Thomas and the *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* both favor “cider brandy” or applejack, the great Willard, whose iced version is one of four of his recipes to survive, preferred plain grape brandy. If you can get only the blended applejack Laird sells, use Calvados instead, or listen to Willard (preferably with a nice VSOP cognac); if you can get one of Laird's fine straight apple brandies, proceed with that. Whatever you use, it's worth bearing in mind what the *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* stated in 1869: “This drink ought never to be made with a suspicion of weakness. It is only drank [*sic*] in cold weather, and needs to be a little strong to be satisfactory to the epicurean” (its recipe called for a full 4 ounces of hooch).

Half an apple per drink should do. Just peel and core the apples, wrap them in wet brown paper as Willard suggests (otherwise they'll fall apart) and bake them in a 350°F oven for 30 to 45 minutes, until completely soft (or, as Willard

suggests, roast them in the embers of a fire). For sugar, see the notes on ingredients for [Hot Toddy](#); whichever kind you use, use 1 tablespoonful as Thomas indicates; this is no place to skimp on the sweetness. In his 1869 *Cooling Cups and Dainty Drinks*, the Englishman William Terrington suggests using boiling cider instead of water; that might just be a bit too much apple.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Put the sugar in a heated mug or heavy tumbler, add a splash of boiling water and stir (use a toddy stick, if you've got one, or a muddler); add the spirits and the apple and stir some more until its pulp is dissolved. Fill with another 1 or 2 ounces boiling water, stir and grate nutmeg over the top.

WHISKY SKIN

Late one night in early 1855, one Richard Slack was tending bar at a sporting-life joint on Broadway at Howard Street in New York, when three men walked in. One of them, a notorious yegg by the name of Patrick “Paudeen” McLaughlin, stepped up to the bar and, as Slack later testified, “called for a whisky skin.” When the seventeen-year-old bartender slid it over to him, Paudeen dashed it in his face, saying, “You son of a bitch—if your master was here I would scald his eyes out, too!” A few days earlier, you see, Paudeen had bumped into the bar’s owner outside the Astor House and called him “a pretty son of a bitch.” In return, the man had laughed at him, and, as the *New York Daily Times* later recounted, “tapping him by the side of the nose, said, ‘I’m too sweet for you,’” and turned his back on him. The comment rankled. A couple months later, Paudeen and a few other toughs managed to catch up with Slack’s master at another Broadway bar, the Stanwix Hall, which was right across the street from the Metropolitan Hotel, where Jerry Thomas would soon be working. They didn’t scald him with a Whisky Skin, either—after some tussling, they ended up shooting him three times. Thus ended the life of William “Bill the Butcher” Poole, of *Gangs of New York* fame; his last words, “I die a true American.” Jerry Thomas must have approved of the sentiment, although three years later he

would find himself traveling to England with the man whose creatures Paudeen and his band of toughs were, John Morrissey.

The Whisky Skin is nothing more than a Hot Toddy with a strip of lemon peel in it. The name for it was still quite new when Paudeen trotted it out to the unfortunate young Slack, its earliest known appearance being five years earlier in the *Brooklyn Eagle*. The drink itself is surely Irish, a small version of the almost-lemonless Punch popular there. According to Thomas, who gave only the Scotch version, it was also known—in Boston, anyway—as a Columbia Skin. There was also a brandy version, for the well-heeled epicure.

For a time Whisky Skin was a popular drink, celebrated onstage (it made a cameo in *Our American Cousin*, the play Lincoln was watching when he got shot) and in verse. It's still a damned good one.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF SCOTCH WHISKEY

1 PIECE OF LEMON PEEL

Fill the tumbler one-half full with boiling water.

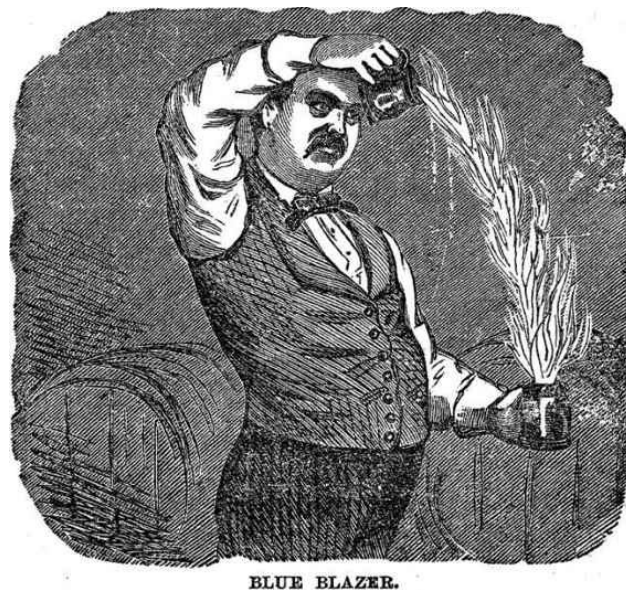
SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The 1887 edition specifies “Glenlivet or Islay”—that is, a mellow, rich malt on the one hand, or a briny, peaty one on the other. Both will work just fine—although the ones we get today are far older and smoother than what they would have been drinking then. It also adds an Irish Whiskey Skin, which is made the same way, but with the necessary substitution. If you can get the pure pot-stilled Redbreast, do so. Neither Thomas nor the 1869 *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* call for sugar in their Skins; others disagreed. Personally, I like 1 teaspoon of Demerara sugar in mine; call me what thou wilt. As for the lemon peel—a long strip pared away from the fruit without any of the white pith is what's wanted here. It's worth the effort.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Proceed as for the standard Hot Toddy. The lemon peel should go in with the sugar, to ensure maximum extraction of flavor.

BLUE BLAZER

Perhaps the most colorful part of Herbert Asbury's account of Jerry Thomas's life is the bit where a "bewhiskered giant laden with gold lust with three layers of pistols strapped around his middle" stomps into the El Dorado and roars, "Barkeep! . . . Fix me up some hell-fire that'll shake me right down to my gizzard!" The Professor measures his man and tells him to come back in an hour, whereupon, in front of a crowd filled with anticipation and booze, he proceeds to prepare a mixture of Scotch whisky and boiling water, light it on fire, and hurl the blazing mixture back and forth between two silver mugs "with a rapidity and dexterity that were well nigh unbelievable." The mixture is a success. "Right down to my gizzard! Yes, sir, right down to my gizzard!" the miner finally manages to whisper.



The Professor mixes a Blue Blazer (from *The Bon Vivant's Companion*, 1862; author's collection).

That's not how the Professor remembered it, or at least it's not what he told Alan Dale. According to that account, Thomas invented the drink while, as he said, "in a fit of musing." He was fiddling around one day with a cupful of Scotch, you see, and an empty glass, and "dreamily" he just happened to light the whisky on fire. As he watched "the pale blue flame flickering and dancing," he then poured it back and forth between vessels "until the whiskey was thoroughly burned." But then again, Dale was a gullible Englishman and the Professor—well, he liked to talk.

Whatever the circumstances of its creation,* considered from the unsentimental perspective of mixology, the Blue Blazer is not much of an

invention, being merely a Scotch Whisky Skin to which has been applied the bartender's standard procedure for mixing cold drinks. And, of course, fire. No matter: That fire was enough to make this a spectacular barroom stunt, especially in those gas-lit days. As Thomas wrote, "A beholder gazing for the first time upon an experienced artist, compounding this beverage, would naturally come to the conclusion that it was a nectar for Pluto rather than Bacchus." The spectacle was the thing, although there were those who justified the flames as necessary to "take the sting out" of the raw Scotch whisky that was available at the time by consuming its more volatile components. In any case, it was a drink well worth taking credit for, as Thomas did in his 1863 book when he added to the recipe that appears there, "This drink is solely my own." He even kept a photograph of himself making one right over the bar (I assume the engraving found in his book was based on it). But of course Thomas claimed the Tom & Jerry, too.

Whoever invented it, the Blue Blazer starts turning up in print in the late 1850s and enjoyed a certain amount of popularity through the 1890s, with bartenders doing to it what bartenders do—that is, making it with everything but Scotch (rum and brandy were particularly popular). As the century wore on, though, the stunt of pouring flaming hooch back and forth began to seem a bit hackneyed. "This drink is seldom called for over a first-class bar," as one Chicago barkeeper noted in 1883; "it is a great country drink, as the 'jays' think more of watching the blaze than they do of the drink." It wasn't just the desire to make the Blazer that was fading, as one Kansas City bartender noted that same year: "There used to be a dozen men in Kansas City who thought nothing of doing that, but you never see them now; why, a bartender on Main St. tried it the other day for fun and nearly burned his hand off." By 1900, it was effectively dead, not to be revived for another hundred years.

USE TWO SILVER AND PLATED MUGS, WITH HANDLES AND GLASS BOTTOMS.
TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR.

WINEGLASS SCOTCH AND IRISH WHISKY MIXED [1 OZ EACH].

Add one wineglass [1½ oz] of boiling water, then set it on fire, and while blazing pour from each into the other mug, being particular to keep the other blazing during the pouring process. Serve in small bar tumblers. Add piece of lemon skin, pour mixture into glass blazing, and cover

with cup. This drink is solely my own.

SOURCE: CHARLES B. CAMPBELL, *AMERICAN BARKEEPER*, 1867 (THAT IS, JERRY THOMAS, 1863).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Thomas would have used cask-strength whiskeys here—indeed, he would have had to because it's very difficult to get anything weaker to light. If you're using mixed Scotch and Irish, I can suggest nothing better or more authentic than the cask-strength Redbreast mixed with a cask-strength Caol Ila (the brand Thomas had in his cellars), if you want something smoky, or the Glenlivet Nàdurra, if you prefer smooth. You don't have to use both kinds of whiskey: In his 1862 book, Thomas called for Scotch alone, and that certainly works just fine—as, in fact, does almost any other rich-textured spirit that's over 52 percent abv or thereabouts. Over the years, I've made Blue Blazers out of everything from Navy-strength rum to Kweichow Moutai (now *that's* a fragrant drink). Some have even gone so far as to make them out of green Chartreuse (not bad) or absinthe (less not bad). Whatever I'm using, I always put in a little more booze than water; this ensures that it will light.

As with the Whisky Skin, I prefer the Blazer (lightly) sweetened; a barspoon of raw or Demerara sugar stirred into the drink after it's poured will do the trick.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: The Blue Blazer is all about the technique. First off, the warning: “The novice in mixing this beverage should be careful not to scald himself. To become proficient in throwing the liquid from one mug to the other, it will be necessary to practise for some time with cold water.” Thus the Professor, in 1862.

Next, the mugs: I use 1-pint silver-plated tankards, tulip-shaped as in the engraving. The flared rim makes them pour more neatly; here, you really, really want that. Thomas's glass-bottomed mugs will also work, as long as the rim flares outward and is not too thick—in fact, any mugs with a rim like that will work.

A long-handled wooden match is the best way to light the drink. It will burn better if you're making a double.

When pouring, make sure to hold the mugs pointing away from you, with the handles in the six o'clock position and pouring from the three o'clock position of the left-hand mug to the nine o'clock of the right one and vice versa. Heed Thomas's advice “to keep the other [mug] blazing during the pouring process” by pouring only about half the contents of each mug at a time. When the handles start to get hot, you're done.

To finish, approach the tea cups or small, heavy glasses you have laid out in

advance and prepared with a strip of lemon peel and (if desired) a spoonful of sugar in each and wrap things up as the recipe suggests (it's best to save the sugar for this stage; if you mix it in before pouring, any flaming liquid you happen to spill on yourself has a distressing habit of adhering to your skin).

Oh, and remember to dim the lights. It makes it easier to see the flames, both for your audience (and there's no point in making this drink without one) and, of course, for yourself. You want to see the flames.

II. GIN, BRANDY, WHISKEY, OR RUM SLING, COLD

About that quart of Toddy in Stearns's *American Herbal* being for one person. The thing is, it might have been. Americans drank far too much in the early years of the Republic and days like Joseph Price's May 11, 1802, with the three pints of whiskey, were far from uncommon. This gave his fellow Pennsylvanian Benjamin Rush pause. Signer of the Declaration of Independence, surgeon-general to the Continental Army (well, part of it, anyway), professor of medical theory and clinical practice at the University of Pennsylvania, and so on and so on, Dr. Rush was one of those amazing do-it-all gents without whom America could not have been built. He was also no dope. While the rest of his countrymen were engaged on a national binge that would put a U of T fraternity to shame, he had reservations. Nor did he keep them to himself. In 1785—astonishingly early; the American temperance movement wouldn't get into gear for another forty years—he published *An Inquiry into the Effects of Spirituous Liquors upon the Human Body*. While by no means coming out in favor of total abstinence, he did have qualms about Dr. Hamilton's most healthful of drinks: "To every class of my readers," he wrote, "I beg leave to suggest a caution against the use of Toddy." Sure, he knew a few men who, "by limiting its strength constantly, by measuring the spirit and water, and . . . by drinking it only with their meals," got off lightly. Others, though . . . Take the Philadelphia gentleman of Rush's acquaintance, "once of a fair and sober character," who took Toddy as his "Constant drink." Toddy led to Grog (a simple mix of rum and water). Grog led to Slings, Slings led to "raw rum," and next thing you know he was drinking "Jamaica spirits" with a tablespoonful of ground pepper in each glass ("to take off their coldness," he averred). Then he died.

The funny thing about this *descensus Averno*, if there is a funny thing, is Rush's description of the Slings his unfortunate acquaintance had been drinking: They were "equal parts rum and water, with a little sugar"—in other words, merely a strong Toddy (in those days a Toddy was, it appears, generally made with two or three parts water to one part spirits). If there was any other important difference between them, nobody in on the secret seems to have seen fit to confide it to posterity. Even Jerry Thomas, with his vast knowledge and experience, could come up with only a rather arbitrary rule that Sling had nutmeg and Toddy did not (something the man who revised his book in 1887

promptly contradicted). No matter—the Sling, particularly the gin variety (first attested to in 1800), soon became one of the iconic American drinks, consumed morning, noon, and night everywhere American was spoken. Rush was a voice shouting in the wilderness, and the American wilderness was vast.

Sling, which most likely takes its name from the act of “slinging” one back, seems to have been a purely American drink (or at least a purely American name for it); not only was Dr. Rush apparently the first to notice it in print but “gin sling” appears as one of the “peculiarities” an 1808 article in the *Philadelphia Port-Folio* noted as characteristic of the American way with the language. Peculiar or not, it was something Americans couldn’t stay away from. From the end of the eighteenth century until well past the middle of the nineteenth, whenever somebody made even passing mention of the alcoholic concoctions characteristic of the American people, *Sling* was sure to be one of the first words out of the inkwell. It didn’t hurt its notoriety that it was often partaken of in the morning, right upon arising.

Like the Toddy, if the Sling had a particular corner of America to call its own, it remains well hidden to the mixographer. Sure, Washington Irving in his *Knickerbocker’s History of New York* might try to pass it off on the Marylanders, and the abstemious *Newport (Rhode Island) Mercury* on the Virginians (while claiming that New Englanders stuck to tea, thank you very much). But at pretty much the same time—the first decade or so of the 1800s—a paper in Saratoga County, New York, only 150-odd miles away from both New York and Newport, could talk about seeing a man take two Slings “before breakfast” as if it were as common as brushing your teeth. OK, bad comparison, seeing as the first American patent for a toothbrush wasn’t registered until the 1850s; but you get the idea. In New York City, the Sling even passed as a health drink—as the *Evening Post*’s editorial department noted in 1825, “It is stated with unshaken confidence, as the result of actual and repeated experience, that half a tumbler of gin sling, well powdered with grated nutmeg, proves a speedy and an efficacious styptic in that dangerous and alarming complaint, a bleeding of the lungs.” Dr. Hamilton would have been pleased.

That “actual experience” was only to be repeated once ice made the transition from luxury to staple. By the 1830s, it had formed an indissoluble union with the Cold Sling; having tried Gin Sling with water and Gin Sling with ice, I can see why. By the end of the century, the rise of the Sling’s offspring—the Cocktail—rendered it a subject of nostalgia. But for a good while there, it sufficed—and, if made with a certain amount of care and consumed with a

certain amount of blended sympathy and archaeological curiosity, it still does. Don't forget the nutmeg.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 TEASPOONFUL OF POWDERED WHITE SUGAR

½ WINEGLASS [1 OZ] OF WATER

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

1 SMALL LUMP OF ICE

Stir with a spoon.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Gin, of course. Historically, it would've been Hollands. Jerry Thomas also lists whiskey, which is plenty good, although here it's the American ones that shine—the same sharp woodiness that makes them a bit scary in a hot drink rescues a cold one from insipidness. My personal preference is for rye, but bourbon slings up nicely as well. Beyond that, the historical record offers Mint Sling, identical with the [Julep](#); Madeira Sling (from 1804), which is more properly a Sangaree; and even the occasional Rum Sling or Brandy Sling (the only other one the Professor lists). The mention of Brandy Sling brings up a deeper issue. Good cognac is expensive these days, and if I'm going to mix it up in a drink, I'm afraid I want something a bit spicier than a plain old Brandy Sling. In fact, while Hot Toddy is an essential drink, I've always found its close cousin Cold Sling—dare I say it—rather uninspiring. It happens in the best of families, I guess.

Water and ice can be adjusted. Spirits tended to be stronger in the Professor's day and could take more dilution, so with the weak stuff we get today a quarter of a wineglass—½ ounce—of water should do. Before the ice machine, every bartender had to carve his own ice cubes, which means the Professor's "small lump" might very well be our "baseball." In any case, two or three regular-size cubes are enough. And the nutmeg has to be freshly grated, or don't bother.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: If you're using lump sugar, muddle it with the water before adding the spirits (see Chapter 7). Some preferred to shake their Slings, while old-timers would deploy the toddy stick.

JERSEY SUNSET

One of the last variations on the Sling before Prohibition rolled around used one of the oldest American spirits as its base. Nowadays, Monmouth County, New Jersey, is known more for Asbury Park and the Boss than its agricultural products, but a century ago things were different. Despite forming the southern shore of Lower New York Bay, and hence gazing out upon Staten Island and Brooklyn a dozen-odd miles away, it was a rural redoubt, populated—sparsely—by “apple knockers,” as the city slickers called anyone from the Garden State. Its chief claim to fame was the fine old applejack made there, most notably by the Laird family, distilled from the free-run juice of local apples, well aged and mellow.

“The Monmouth man drinks it straight,” stated the *Liquor Trade Review* in 1901, “and uses it in place of rye in mixtures such as cocktails, juleps, highballs, etc.” There was, however, one drink peculiar to the region. “He particularly delights in the Sunset or Jersey Sunset” the article continued, the local name for applejack mixed with sugar, water, and ice and topped with a few dashes of Angostura bitters. “The beautiful crimson shade of the bitters mingling with the golden liquor provides a feast for the eye which is only exceeded by the exhilaration caused by this king of drinks,” as a correspondent from Montclair, New Jersey, wrote in the *New York Sun* at the time. “Connoisseur” (as he signed the letter) might be pushing his argument a bit far, but his recipe (which follows) makes a pretty good case for it. Others certainly thought so at the time: The recipe made it into a few of the standard Cocktail guides and, for a time, enjoyed a more than regional popularity.

I’ve included the Jersey Sunset here among the Slings despite its use of Angostura, which should qualify it for Chapter 7, where bittered Slings receive their due. With the amount of water and ice in it, it works more like a Sling than a Cocktail (to give the bittered Sling its more common name) and the bitters, dashed on top as they are, are as much a garnish as an integral part of the drink. Either way, it’s a fine drink.

In a thin julep glass use one lump of sugar with enough water to dissolve [$\frac{1}{2}$ oz], a twist of lemon peel and a liberal drink [2 oz] of old Monmouth county Jersey applejack, cracked ice and water to fill glass. Add three dashes of imported Angostura bitters, which after floating for a few seconds on top will gradually filter of its own weight through the drink, imparting to it the sunset hues that probably suggest its name.

SOURCE: *NEW YORK SUN*, 1902.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: You want Laird's Old Apple Brandy here—if not the twelve-year-old, at least the seven-and-a-half-year-old. Failing that, the bonded applejack will work fine. But really, any mellow old apple brandy will do just fine here. A standard sugar cube will do for the Jerseyman's lump. I like a couple of extra dashes of bitters in this.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Use an 8-ounce tumbler or juice glass or (as another adept suggested at the time) a Champagne flute, muddle the sugar in the water before deploying the Jersey lightning, and remember the *Liquor Trade Review's* warning: “in drinking it the use of a straw is considered profanation.”

III. JULEPS AND SMASHES

Somebody somewhere was kidding. A “julep,” you see, was medicine, pure and simple, and it always had been. It was medicine when Rhazes put it in his *Kitab al-Mansuri* in 900 (his Juleps had no offense in them, being merely violets macerated with water and sugar); it was medicine in the fifteenth-century Latin translation of his book; it was medicine in 1583, when Philip Barrough noted in his *Methode of Physicke* that “a iulep doeth not much differ from a syrupe, but that it is lesse boyled . . . and because also it is made without the permixtion of anie other decoction with it”; it was medicine in 1619, when a character in John Fletcher’s *Humorous Lieutenant* predicted a battle-wearied enemy would “no doubt fall to his jewlips”; it was medicine in 1698, when Samuel Lee pontificated on the inability of “life-exhausting blood-lets” and “cold, mortal Juleps” to stave off death and judgment (“O vain man!”); it was medicine in 1765 when William Alexander treated some poor bastard for his ills with “camphorated julep” and “musk julep”; it was medicine in 1770 when Peter Thomson, a surgeon, was prescribing juleps compounded with things like egg yolks, “Chymical Oil of Cinnamon,” and “Salt of Wormwood.”



MINT JULEP.

The Mint Julep (from *The Bon Vivant's Companion*, 1862; author's collection).

Yet in Virginia that same year it was not medicine—not when Colonel Robert Munford of that colony included a “Mr. Julip” among the boozy characters in *The Candidates*, his farce on the colony’s rum-soaked elections. Neither was it medicine in 1784, when John Ferdinand Smyth, a Briton traveling in Virginia, remarked that upon arising the man of the lower or middling class “drinks a julap, made of rum, water, and sugar, but very strong”; now to call this, mixologically nothing more than a Sling, a “julep” is like calling a morning bong-hit “glaucoma medicine.” (This was the same kind of winking sophistry that allowed American drinkers to dub a morning Cocktail “taking your bitters.”)

The joke may have started with the English novelist Henry Fielding, who signposted the American Julep back in 1749 in his great and wildly popular novel *Tom Jones*, when he humorously described a bottle of wine the hoggish Squire Western calls for as his habitual “medicinal julap” for anything that “either pleased or vexed him.” In America, we made his joke into the custom of the land. Munford’s play strongly suggests that this had already happened before the Revolution. It was certainly a reality in July 1793 when the Reverend Harry Toulmin, a Lancashire minister, was passing through Norfolk and found that the local breakfast began with “julep . . . of rum and water, well sweetened, with a slip of mint in it.” It was the mint that somehow turned the joke into a drink; that extracted the humor from it. It didn’t hurt that popular opinion held that the “oil of the mint” was “extremely wholesome,” as an 1810 article in the *Alexandria (Virginia) Gazette* noted in 1810, and that “nothing but spirit can extract” it. Of course, that was just more cover: True, medicinal Juleps often combined alcohol with their medicinal plants, and had done so since the 1600s, but those plants were rarely so pleasant tasting as mint, and besides, the nasty-tasting things were taken under a doctor’s orders, for specific complaints, not as a morning, noon, or night just-in-case (as in, “just in case I feel sober”).

No matter—in America, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the consciousness that *julep* was being used as a joke, metaphor, or evasion, and indeed its whole former meaning, was pounded into oblivion by a thousand thousand matutinal muddlings of mint.* To say the word was to expect the drink. But in a sense the Mint Julep was a true julep—a julep against 98°F afternoons; against pork and hominy, hominy and pork; against insolent answers and bumbling service; against broken roads and smoky, crowded steamboats and bedbugs and dust and flies and the constant spitting spitting spitting; against a raw and awkward and very, very young country.

The minting of the Sling may have started in Virginia, but by 1800 it had

spread inland as far as the pale of settlement extended, down the coast through Georgia and up as far as lower Massachusetts (it faced stiff resistance in deeper New England from the region's conservative, rum-and-molasses drinkers, who considered the Julep a symbol, and cause, of Southern slackness). The Mint Julep was the first true American drink. Its hegemony was only solidified in the 1810s when it acquired another ingredient, one that did for it what the mariachi horns did for "Ring of Fire": ice. With the development of the American ice industry, iced Julep became not only possible but expected.

A close study of the Julepian art in its early heyday, which stretched from the 1810s to the Civil War, reveals that—in Yankeeland and the Sweet Sunny South alike—the spirit of choice from which to concoct this most American of drinks was neither whiskey, rum, nor gin but rather imported French cognac, either on its own or mingled with the finest wines and liquors money could buy—aged peach brandy, rich Madeira, old port or sherry, like that. Thus the Julep appears in the accounts of the many foreign travelers who came to squint at our pink-fleshed and rambunctious young democracy, and thus it appears in Jerry Thomas's two books. Not that Thomas ignored the marriage of whiskey and mint—if you wanted to attempt that, though, you had to call it a Whiskey Julep; Mint Julep was reserved for the brandy version. You get the sense that the whiskey version was strictly an act of necessity. (About the Hollands-based Gin Juleps that pepper A. B. Lindsley's popular 1809 comedy, *Love and Friendship, or Yankee Notions*, all I can say is that they were unusual but not unknown—and that they were, judging by modern re-creations, utterly delicious.)

But the world is change and, as the philosopher says, all things flow. Open *The American BarTender, or the Art and Mystery of Mixing Drinks*, from 1874, and turn to the page devoted to the Mint Julep, and you'll find it calling for whiskey. And when in 1888 the orator Robert "Bob" Ingersoll conjured up a Mississippi River whose banks were "loaf sugar, and all the flats covered with mint," the liquor with which it flowed was not brandy, but "pure whiskey." At first, not everyone accepted this change; commenting on Ingersoll's vision, the *Chicago Herald* sniffed that he "should know that the proper mint julep is built of brandy, not whiskey." But whether it was due to improvements in American whiskeymaking, the decline of French brandymaking due to phylloxera, or the forced reliance on domestic spirits due to the blockade-driven privations of the Civil War, the idea of the Julep had changed, and changed for good. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner," as it says in Psalm 118. Henceforth, whiskey and the Mint Julep would be joined in an

indissoluble and joyous union. For another generation or so, the whiskey-fueled Julep comfortably wore the mantle the Brandy Julep had earned. It was the king of summer drinks.

It really wasn't until the early twentieth century that the Julep's star began to fade. Sure, people had complained of its decline before then—the 1887 edition of Thomas's book reprints an article to that effect—but people always complain of such things (in 1902, the *New York Sun* went so far as to assert that not even Jerry Thomas had known the secret of concocting a proper Julep).

Unfortunately, Julep recipes from its heyday are surprisingly scarce: It was an age of doing, not one of writing. Here, at least, are two Baroque-era formulas that were plucked from the air, plus the Professor's rather more restrained version.

JOE REDDING'S JULEP

If, in 1840, you interrupted your progress up or down the Mississippi at Natchez and went up the hill to the Mansion House—the finest hotel in that seething, brawling town—and if you were the sort whose heart could be gladdened by the prospect of oil of mint extracted in sugar and heightened with a shade of iced liquor, you would have approached the hotel's bar with barely controlled anticipation. The bartender there, a twenty-five-year-old German immigrant by the name of John George Vennigerholz, enjoyed a reputation as the Julep King of the Mississippi. Here, according to the local paper, is what earned him the title:

It was in a massive cut goblet, with the green forest of mint which crowned it frosted over with sugar snow, and the whole mass underlaid with delicate slices of lemon piled in the pyramid of ice. As for the liquor, it was so skillfully compounded that no one could detect its several parts. Ladies drank of it and supposed that some huge grape from the south side of the Island of Madeira had burst open on a sunny day and been crushed in the goblet.

I will yield to no man or woman alive in my love of good bourbon whiskey, but no straight, unmixed liquor can produce a giddy sense of wonder like that in a cynical newsman. Alas, Vennigerholz took the secret of his compounding to his (no doubt mint-covered) grave.

Fortunately, the same issue of that paper, as if to make amends for denying us Vennigerholz's secrets, contained a Julep recipe from Joe Redding, who kept the Pearl Street House, at Pearl (now Third Street) and Main in Louisville. He, too, was a mixer of reputation, and his drink is a thing of beauty, the Baroque-era Julep caught in full flower.

Take a large and deep cut glass tumbler, fill it with sufficient sugar [2 barspoons + 2 barspoons water, stirred together] and ice to the brim—half of the ice shaved and the rest in lumps of a moderate size. Lay on the top of it three fresh leaves of mint without any of the stems attached. Pour on just half a glass [1 oz] of fine unimpeachable cognac brandy, then just half a glass [1 oz] of fine old Jamaica rum; then add half a glass [1 oz] of old ripe port wine. Then pour the mass rapidly for some time, back and forth in two tumblers; the longer this action continues the better. Then plant a small bunch of mint on one side of the tumbler by putting the stems down into the ice, and having the leaves up about as high as the nose of the drinker should come. On the other side of the tumbler, where the mouth should come, rub the edge with half a fresh lemon.

SOURCE: MISSISSIPPI FREE TRADER AND NATCHEZ GAZETTE, 1840.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Do what the man says.



THE PRESCRIPTION.

The Prescription Julep (from *Harper's Magazine*, 1857; author's collection).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Redding writes with a precision that is as admirable as it is unusual (his suggestion regarding the ice is a most useful one). The only tricky part here is the pouring, which in the hands of a master like Redding would develop into a spectacular rainbow display, with arcs of liquid flashing through the air. You don't have to do that, although if you start with the glasses close together and draw out the pour a bit it will look better than keeping them in close contact. Alternatively, you can say to hell with it and shake it. Just make sure to do it lightly so that the mint doesn't shred. Note the absence of a straw, a useful implement that would soon become an indispensable part of the Julep's presentation.

PRESCRIPTION JULEP

This little piece of medical humor comes from "A Winter in the South," a

serial *Harper's Monthly* ran in 1857. It also happens to be the tastiest Mint Julep recipe I know, and quite a bit simpler than Redding's. Cognac and rye whiskey are a marriage made in heaven, the cognac mellowing the rye and the rye adding spice to the cognac.

THE DOCTOR ACCORDINGLY WROTE OUT A PRESCRIPTION FOR THE CASE, AS FOLLOWS:

SACCHA ALB. ȝ IJ: WHITE SUGAR, 2 OZ [½ OZ]

CUM AQUA FONTANA, QUANT. SUFF: WITH SPRING WATER, AS MUCH AS NECESSARY [½ OZ]

COGNAC FORT. ȝ ISS: STRONG COGNAC, 1½ OZ

SPIR. SECALICUS, ȝ SS: SPIRITS OF RYE, ½ OZ

FOL. MENTHAE VIRIDIS, AD LIB: MINT LEAVES, AS DESIRED

FIAT INFUSUM ET ADD: INFUSE [the sugar, water, and spirits with the mint], THEN ADD AS MUCH POWDERED ICE AS NECESSARY AND MIX IT ALL UP.

GLACIES PULV. QUANT. SUFF.

OMNIA MISCE

Repeat dose three or four times a day until cold weather.

“Quackenboss, M.D.”

SOURCE: *HARPER'S MONTHLY*, 1857.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The cognac, which should be as old and rich as you can afford, can be bumped up to 2 ounces without danger. The rye can be a bit rougher—even a youngish microdistilled version works here. The ice should be shaved or pounded with a mallet in a Lewis bag until it's snow. A float of rum—Smith & Cross or the like—works spectacularly well here. If you'd like to garnish with a raspberry or blackberry or two if they're in season, you won't find discouragement here.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Properly made, the Prescription Julep requires fifteen discrete operations. Fortunately, they are all simple and intuitive, as you can see: (1) Put the sugar in a Collins glass. (2) Add the water. (3) Stir. (4) Add 5 to 6 mint leaves, trimmed of their stems. (5) Press lightly with a muddler. (6) Fill the glass with fine ice (if making these in quantity I find a small ice-scoop sized to fit in the glass beyond helpful). (7) Add the cognac. (8) Add the rye. (9) Stir briefly. (10) Add more ice (the level will have dropped). (11) Add 3 to 4 sprigs of mint, pushing the stems down into the ice. (12) Pour the rum in over the back of a spoon held at the meniscus of the drink. (13) Tuck the berries in among the

mint. (14) Insert a straw. (15) Smile.

This drink is better if allowed to sit for a few minutes, particularly in a hot and humid environment, which will cause the glass to pick up a thick coating of frost.

MINT JULEP

This, Jerry Thomas's version, is a harbinger of the Classic Era: simple, direct, and balanced. It would remain more or less the bartender's standard for the rest of the century. (Note the absence of fancy silver cups, icicles of frost, and all the other labor-intensive bells and whistles with which the drink became endowed once it passed from the bartender's repertoire into the householder's.) The variations Thomas records include the Hollands-based Gin Julep; the Brandy Julep, which is a Mint Julep without all the fancy trimmings, among which some even include mint (in which case, as the *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* sagely observed, "It is like the play of Hamlet, with the prince left out"); the (rather vulgar) Whiskey Julep; and the Georgia Julep, which was made with a blend of grape and peach brandies (look to the microdistillers for the latter).

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLE-SPOONFUL OF WHITE PULVERIZED SUGAR

2½ TABLE-SPOONFULS OF WATER, MIX WELL WITH A SPOON

Take three or four sprigs of fresh mint, and press them well in the sugar and water, until the flavor of the mint is extracted; add one and a half wine-glass of brandy [3 oz], and fill the glass with fine shaved ice, then draw out the sprigs of mint and insert them in the ice with the stems downward, so that the leaves will be above, in the shape of a bouquet; arrange berries, and small pieces of sliced orange on top in a tasty manner, dash with Jamaica rum, and sprinkle white sugar on top. Place a straw as represented in the cut, and you have a julep that is fit

for an emperor.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the Brandy Julep, the Gin Julep, and the Whiskey Julep, omit the fruits and dashes of rum. For a Julep “scientific style,” with “the latest New Orleans touch,” as tantalizingly described in a memorable passage in Thomas Mayne Reid’s 1856 novel, *The Quadroon*, add a slice of orange and one of lemon; this version effectively splits the difference between Thomas’s Julep and Redding’s.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Pressing the mint renders it rather bedraggled; I prefer to discard it and use a couple of fresh sprigs at the end, rather than reinserting the pressed ones. The “scientific julep” is shaken back and forth between two glasses, mint, “ice, brandy, lemons, and all,” and then the rim of the glass it rests in is wiped with “a thin slice of pineapple . . . cut freshly from the fruit.” This has the double effect of clearing any undissolved sugar or bits of mint from the rim of the glass and leaving the fruit’s “fragrant juice to mingle its aroma with the beverage.” You can of course use a Boston shaker here, serving the drink out of the mixing glass.

PINEAPPLE JULEP

Properly, this is not a Julep at all—but as we’ve seen, neither is a Julep, strictly speaking. Whatever it is (I’d call it a Cup), it’s delightful.

(FOR A PARTY OF FIVE.)

Peel, slice and cut up a ripe pineapple into a glass bowl, add the juice of two oranges, a gill [4 oz] of raspberry syrup, a gill [4 oz] of maraschino, a gill [4 oz] of old gin, a bottle of sparkling Moselle, and about a pound of pure ice in shaves; mix, ornament with berries in season, and serve in flat glasses.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The old gin would be a Hollands (there's a barrel-aged Bols on the market that works wonders here). I prefer the lighter Maraska maraschino here to the pungent Luxardo. For sparkling Moselle, should that prove elusive, substitute something sweetish and sparkling; I like a rosé Champagne in this.

BRANDY, GIN, OR WHISKEY SMASH

In 1862, Jerry Thomas prefaced his section on the Smash with the simple declaration that “this beverage is simply a julep on a small plan.” This is true, as far as it goes: The Smash, also known as the Smasher and the Smash-Up (it gets its name from the way the mint was smashed up in the shaking), bears the same relation to the Julep that the Fix does to the individual Punch. It's a quick bracer, rather than a slow sipper; you don't hear of Smashes coming with straws.



The Fancy Brandy Smash—the serving glass is on the left and the mixing glass on the right (from Harry Johnson's *New and Improved Illustrated Bartender's Manual*, 1888; courtesy Ted Haigh).

But Thomas's cursory assessment of the drink leaves one with an insufficient appreciation of its importance. From its first appearance in the mid-1830s until after the Civil War, the Smash was just about the most popular thing going. In the 1850s, at the height of the Smash's popularity, all the "pert young men," the Broadway dandies, San Francisco swells, and junior New Orleans grandissimes, seemed to spend the warm months of the year with a Smash glued to one hand and a "segar" to the other. In fact, the Smash became rather an icon of dissipation, as in the bit in *Harper's Monthly* from 1859 about one young son of privilege's experience in college, "where he acquired the proper proficiency in Greek, Latin, Mathematics, slang, billiards and brandy smashes." Eventually, it was pulled back into the orbit of its parent, the Julep, and one ceased to hear much about it.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

½ TABLE-SPOONFUL [1 TSP] OF WHITE SUGAR

1 TABLE-SPOONFUL [2 TSP] OF WATER

1 WINE-GLASS [2 OZ] OF BRANDY

Fill two-thirds full of shaved ice, use two sprigs of mint, the same as in the recipe for mint julep. Lay two small pieces of orange on top, and ornament with berries in season.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The sugar should be superfine. As for spirits: The Brandy Smash was by far the most popular, followed in later years by the Whiskey Smash (bourbon or rye). The Gin Smash also appears from time to time. As with the Gin Julep, Hollands is indicated.

The orange-and-berry ornamentation (which goes on at the end) is not strictly necessary, and in fact Thomas's Whiskey Smash omits it.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Dissolve the sugar in the water first (or, of course, use 1 teaspoonful or so of gum), then shake. This, however, yields a drink that is less than pleasing visually, so some mixologists of the drink's heyday preferred to stir it. I still like to shake mine, but I'll strain it over fresh ice (cracked) and insert a new sprig of mint at the end.

IV. SANGAREE

Sangaree—the name comes from the Spanish *sangria*, which pretty much gives us the origins of the drink—is a concoction of strong wine (usually port, but also sherry and Madeira), sugar, water, and nutmeg that was drunk in Britain by gentlemen and sea captains and in America by infants, invalids, and Indians. Now, it's possible that I'm exaggerating a bit. When it came to infants and children, I have to concede that there were those who considered giving them Sangaree an “unreasonable and dangerous practice.” But the very fact that this condemnation, published in the *Journal of Health* in 1830, was deemed necessary speaks volumes. For invalids, at least, it was just fine—even for ones being treated for alcoholism, if *Harper's Monthly* is to be believed (see the February 1864 issue). And for Indians, well, supplying them with the drink was positively doing them a kindness, if we can judge by the visit a delegation of important “red men of the woods” made to a cannon-foundry near Washington in 1824. After the tour, refreshments were served, “cautiously prepared in the form of sangaree, lemonade, etc.” The Indians might perhaps have preferred whiskey, the *National Journal* opined, but “this weaker sort of drink is better for [them].”

Examined chronologically, this “mild and gentlemanly foreigner,” as one Jackson-era newspaper dubbed it, might as well have been a native. While it first appeared in the English-speaking world in London in 1736, when the *Gentleman's Magazine* noted “a new Punch made of strong Madeira wine and called Sangre,” just seven years later we find our old friend Dr. Hamilton dispatching a bowl of it—the Spanish “sangre” already corrupted to “sangaree”—in suburban Baltimore. That's an unusually quick transatlantic crossing for a drink—unless, as is entirely possible, it was already over on this side of the pond; unless Mr. Gordon got his “Sangre” from the Caribbean, where Spaniards and Englishmen mixed with great frequency. Early evidence is lacking, but by the first years of the 1800s Sangaree (usually based on Madeira) is a constant feature in travelers' tales of the Caribbean. Wherever it was born, Sangaree was an American before there were Americans. But it never quite settled in here; never took out citizenship papers, cleared itself a patch of woods, and set about putting in rows of corn. It's indicative that there's no Whiskey Sangaree in Jerry Thomas's book. Brandy and gin, yes. But whiskey, no.

By the Civil War, Sangaree was getting a little long in the tooth. Not that it disappeared entirely, mind you; it just sort of went into a pleasant retirement. As longtime New England bartender Jere Sullivan recalled in 1930, “In the Author’s experience it was found principally the order of the elderly business man, after the counters were closed in the late afternoon.” But not every drink has to play the classic American go-getter, all youth and drive and swagger. The Sangaree maintains a certain old-world courtliness that has its appeal.

PORT WINE SANGAREE

In Jerry Thomas’s day, this was by far the most common version.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1½ WINE-GLASS [4 OZ] OF PORT WINE

1 TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR

Fill tumbler two-thirds with ice.

Shake well and grate nutmeg on top.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTE ON INGREDIENTS: This is not the time to break out that crusted vintage port. Plain old ruby port of a decent quality is what you want here. Thomas also suggests a Sherry Sangaree, made exactly the same way. Should you give the variation a spin, adjust the amount of sugar you use according to your sherry: more for a fino or an amontillado, less for a cream or a Pedro Ximénez. Likewise, if you want to get all eighteenth century with a Madeira Sangaree, the dry Sercials and Verdelhos will require a bit more sugar than the sweeter Buals and Malmseys. Whatever wine you use, the *Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual* suggests 4 ounces of it rather than Thomas’s 3; a sound suggestion that should not be ignored.

One variation that had enough currency for Jerry Thomas to deem it worth mention involves replacing the imported Iberian wines with rather the more quotidian tipples, porter, or ale. The venerable Porter Sangaree, alias “Porteree,”

was a “good and very wholesome Beverage” (as the *Boston Intelligencer* dubbed it in 1819) of English origin—wholesome enough for the *Journal of Health* to approve its administration to children. After the Civil War, one sees little of the Porteree outside of plagiaristic bartender’s guides. As late as 1906, though, its sibling the Ale Sangaree had enough charm for one nostalgic toper to remember it as “the finest summer preparation that ever went down a man’s throat.” He recommended that the “divine, amber-colored fluid” be made with Scotch ale, noted for its mild creaminess (in other words, avoid the heavily hopped American microbrews). The thing of it is, he wasn’t entirely wrong. While I might deny the Ale Sangaree the superlative finest, it’s at least worthy of the comparative finer—it’s a surprisingly delightful testament to the transformative power of sugar and nutmeg and there’s many a younger, sportier summer drink that could learn a thing or two from it.

As for Brandy Sangaree and Gin Sangaree, which Thomas also mentioned but pretty much nobody else did (again, discounting his plagiarists). Just make the requisite Sling, omit the nutmeg, and “dash about a teaspoonful of port wine, so that it will float on top” (there are some—and I’m one of them—who consider it a kindness to float a little port on an Ale Sangaree as well). The brandy one is particularly tasty—score one for the Professor—although it is improved by using more port and squeezing in a dollop of orange juice.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Dissolve the sugar in a splash of water before proceeding (if using Demerara, as I like to, you’ll have to muddle). For a Porteree or Ale Sangaree, use a pint glass and omit the ice. Nutmeg all around.

V. THREE YANKEE FAVORITES

To round out this gathering of old-timers, here's a trey of the native drinks of Jerry Thomas's people; musty, slightly eccentric concoctions that savor of white clapboard houses, short summers, closed mouths, and dark woods. I've listed them in rough order of palatability.

HOT SPICED (OR BUTTERED) RUM

The addition of butter to hot drinks goes back at least to the days of Henry VIII, when we find one Andrew Boorde recommending buttered beer or ale as a remedy for hoarseness. By Samuel Pepys's day, buttered ale, with sugar and cinnamon, had made the transition from medicinal drink to recreational one. History is silent as to where and when the spirits came into the picture, but eighteenth-century New England would have to rank high on any list of suspects. By the time Jerry Thomas got around to committing his knowledge to paper, Hot (Spiced) Rum had largely been displaced by Hot Scotch as America's winter warmer of first resort, but there were still a few who swore by it. Unlike those who continued to stick by the [Black Strap](#), these loyalists weren't entirely wrong.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR

1 WINE-GLASS [2 OZ] OF JAMAICA RUM

1 TEASPOONFUL OF SPICES (ALLSPICE AND CLOVES)

1 PIECE OF BUTTER AS LARGE AS HALF OF A CHESTNUT

Fill tumbler with [3–4 oz] hot water

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: In its heyday, this drink's devotees preferred old

Jamaica to the somewhat lighter Santa Cruz and anything to the rougher stuff from New England. In any case, you'll want a pot-stilled rum such as Smith & Cross, if you're rugged, or Appleton, if you're elegant; otherwise, any dark, Demerara-style rum will do (El Dorado is cheap and effective). There are those who prefer cider to water; it's not necessary.

For a simple Hot Rum, omit the butter and the mixed spices, although Thomas suggests you still grate nutmeg on top. A perfectly acceptable drink, but frankly this is a case where more is definitely more.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Proceed as for a standard Hot Toddy, adding the spirits, butter, and spices in with the liquor before topping off with boiling water. If you want to make these the fun way—the way, as it were, I learned at my mother's knee—simply put everything into a mug, including water (not heated), and plunge a red-hot poker into it. This is not recommended after the second round.

STONE FENCE

Roused from bed by the yelling and the shooting, the officer stood his ground, pants in hand. "I demand you surrender this fort," shouted the saber-waving giant before him. "In whose name, sir, do you demand this?" "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"

And so (as Allen told it in his autobiography) fell Fort Ticonderoga, thus securing the Colonies' back against a British thrust from Canada, which would have most likely proved fatal to their hopes of independence. And we owe it all to the Stone Fence. It was over large noggins of this rustic and potent beverage that, according to legend and a good deal of historical fact, Ethan Allen—the giant with the cutlery—and his Green Mountain Boys planned their early morning assault. Had they been sober, the idea of a relative handful of lightly armed backwoodsmen taking on a professional garrison armed with cannons might not have seemed like such a winning proposition. But they drank, and dared, and won. (OK, so it turned out the garrison was completely unsuspecting and they waltzed right in—but they didn't know that when they started out, did they?)

By the time the Civil War rolled around, the Stone Fence was a ghost of its former self. When Ethan Allen and his crew asked for it, they were asking for a savage mixture of hard cider and New England rum. Four generations later, if the testimony of Jerry Thomas in the matter is to be believed, the Stone Fence was bourbon whiskey diluted with sweet—that is, nonalcoholic—cider. Suave and smooth, but comparatively feeble; if Colonel Allen and his crew had been drinking it this way, their meeting at the Catamount Tavern might have given rise merely to a polite but firm letter to the fort’s commander, rather than a personal visit.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

1 WINE-GLASS [2 OZ] OF WHISKEY (BOURBON)

2 OR 3 SMALL LUMPS OF ICE

Fill up the glass with sweet cider.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: In 1775, of course, there was no bourbon. To make a Revolutionarily correct Stone Fence, you’ll need rum of the usual old-school kind and hard cider, the funkier the better—as in, ferment your own. As late as 1869, the *Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual* observed that a tart and full-flavored (and alcoholic) crab apple cider was “frequently used in preference to ordinary cider,” but for the Professor’s version, your standard health-food store sweet cider will do. And this isn’t the place to trot out your fanciest bourbon.

BLACK STRAP (ALIAS THE BLACK STRIPE)

New Englanders have somehow acquired a reputation for being a bit on the effete side compared to other Americans. All it takes is one taste of this to understand how deeply wrong that is. Mind you, it’s not that the drink is violently harsh, or even particularly strong. It’s just . . . crude. Like a three-legged stool or succotash. Anyone who could call “’Lasses and rum, with a leetle [*sic*] dash of water”—the formula in question—“the sweetest drink

that ever streaked down a common-sized gullet” is by definition no milquetoast. Now granted, that quote’s from an 1833 humor piece—a lying contest between a down-east Nutmeg and a Georgia Cracker—but in this case fiction is merely truth with a slightly more colorful turn of speech. The Nutmegs so loved their Black Strap that, according to the memoirs of Henry Soulé, a New England parson, bowls of it were even circulated at weddings. One shudders. At any rate, it’s inconceivable that any family tree that was irrigated with the stuff could ever devolve to the point of effeteness, even after ten generations.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 WINE GLASS [2 OZ] OF SANTA CRUZ RUM

1 TABLE-SPOONFUL OF MOLASSES

This drink can either be made in summer or winter; if in the former season, mix in one table spoonful of water, and cool with shaved ice; if in the latter, fill up the tumbler with boiling water. Grate a little nutmeg on top.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Again, for full authenticity you’ll need a rum that you could stand a fork up in; real pirate juice. The molasses should be Caribbean—like a nice Barbados blackstrap—and the water should be from an outdoor pump (OK, that’s not strictly necessary). For a hot Black Strap, use about 2 ounces of water, for cold—a drink I shudder to recall—1 ounce and plenty of cracked ice.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Whether hot or cold, stir the molasses and the water together before adding the spirits.

THE COCKTAIL, PROPERLY CONSIDERED

Anyone who has spent any time pondering the origins of the Cocktail—be it for the months or years it takes to write a book or the minutes or seconds it takes to internalize a Dry Martini—will agree that it’s a quintessentially American contraption. How could it be anything but? It’s quick, direct, and vigorous. It’s flashy and a little bit vulgar. It induces an unreflective overconfidence. It’s democratic, forcing the finest liquors to rub elbows with ingredients of far more humble stamp. It’s profligate with natural resources (think of all the electricity generated to make ice that gets used for ten seconds and discarded). In short, it rocks.

But if the Cocktail is American, it’s American in the same way as the hot dog (that is, the Frankfurter), the hamburger (the Hamburger steak), and the ice-cream cone (with its rolled gaufrette). As a nation, we have a knack for taking underperforming elements of other peoples’ cultures, streamlining them, supercharging them, and letting ’em rip—from nobody to superstar, with a trail of sparks and a hell of a noise along the way. That’s how the Cocktail did it, anyway.

DR. STOUGHTON'S ELIXIR MAGNUM

You could say, I suppose, that the Cocktail has been around since antiquity; that it was already old when Scribonius Largus, one of the emperor Claudius's physicians, suggested that a stomachache would be soothed by dissolving black myrtle berries and pills made up of dates, dill, saffron, nigella seeds, hazelwort, and juniper in sweet wine and chugging it down. Before you turn the page, muttering, "I know Cocktails, and that's no Cocktail," hear me out. Nowadays, *Cocktail* means anything from "whatever is served in a conical, stemmed glass" to "a mixed drink containing alcohol" (as in, "Cocktails are \$7 for our Economy customers," where the term indicates a plastic cup full of ice and soda and a tiny bottle of booze on the side). But that lexical flexibility wasn't always the case. In the nineteenth century, when the word first became joined to a drink, it denoted something far more specific: spirits or wine, sweetened with sugar, diluted (if necessary) with water, and spiced up with a few dashes of bitters—that is, a medicinal infusion of bitter roots, herbs, barks, and spices. Under that definition, Scribonius's potion, with its bitter hazelwort, has a lot more right to the title than most of the things you'll find on the average modern Cocktail menu (such as the Chocolate Martini).

But this book is about the American Cocktail, not the *Gallicauda Romana*, so we'll leave the nostrums of antiquity to find their own historian and fast-forward some 1,600 years to Restoration-era London, where the more immediate roots of our national beverage lie. At first glance, those roots appear to be well buried. There's no end of drinking going on, to be sure. Ale (unhopped and traditional) and beer (hopped and controversial) were consumed morning, noon, and night by all classes, supplemented whenever economic circumstance allowed by copious draughts of wine, the stronger the better. But distilled spirits, if consumed at all, were taken neat in drams, or—in fast company—mixed up in bowls of Punch. There was nary a Cocktail to be seen.

That said, consider the drink known as "Purl." Now, Purl has come down to us as a Dickensian mixture of hot ale, gin, sugar, and eggs, with nutmeg on top. But in the seventeenth century, it was something rather different: A sharply bitter ale infused with wormwood and other botanicals and drunk in the morning to settle the stomach, if settling was needed. It was popular enough for Samuel Pepys to mention it in his diary (then again, there's pretty much nothing

alcoholic he doesn't mention).

The humble Purl had a city cousin, Purl-Royal. This was pretty much the same drink, except instead of ale or beer it was based on Sack—a relatively sweet sherry that was fortified with brandy. If you were to taste Purl-Royal today, you'd have no trouble at all classifying it: vermouth. (In fact, *vermouth* is derived from *vermut*, the German word for “wormwood,” which the modern beverage originally contained in some quantity.) As “Wormwood-wine,” Purl-Royal was another thing Pepys drank. He also drank gin; had he but thought to mix them, the Age of Reason might have been rather different (imagine Voltaire on Martinis!). Interestingly enough, Pepys drank vermouth and gin in the same year, 1663, with the same person, Sir William Batten; one might wish to speak with Sir William.

But Royal or not, Purl would be nothing but a byway in the history of drink if not for Richard Stoughton, who kept an apothecary's shop at the Sign of the Unicorn in the London borough of Southwark. One of the novel features of the age was a lively trade in proprietary medicines, premixed, one-size-fits-all concoctions that you could buy in stores, rather than having to go to a doctor and stand around while he customized something for you (these were essentially the first branded goods). In 1690, Stoughton decided to get in on the action. His entry, the “Elixir Magnum Stomachicum,” alias “Stoughton's Great Cordial Elixir,” was an alcoholic infusion of twenty-two botanicals, the chief among them apparently being gentian. It turned out he was onto something: At a shilling apiece, the characteristic long-necked, globular little bottles of dark yellow liquid (or was it red?—accounts differ) sold briskly enough that, eight years later, he was able to put himself through medical school at Cambridge. In 1712, Stoughton applied for and received a Royal Patent for his creation—only the second to be granted to a medicine.

Like most patent medicines, Dr. Stoughton's was originally marketed with a certain latitude regarding its applications—after all, why limit your business? Pretty much whatever you had, it was for it—particularly if your distemper had anything whatsoever to do with the stomach, which the elixir would “rectify” from all its “Indispositions,” or the blood, which it would cleanse from its “Impurities, [such] as Scurvies.” Over the years, however, users seem to have discovered that it was good for one set of symptoms in particular. In 1710, Stoughton's advertising, which had previously hinted at this somewhat less exalted indication, came right out and said it: The Elixir is “Drank by most Gentlemen . . . to recover and restore a weaken'd Stomach or lost Appetite . . .

occasioned by hard Drinking or Sickness, &c.” and “[carry] off the effects of bad Wine, which too many die of.” In other words, a hangover cure—and, considering that this was the Age of Punch, no doubt a necessary one.

But whatever its therapeutic qualities, or lack thereof (one is entitled to a certain skepticism), Stoughton’s Elixir had something else going for it: It tasted good. Not straight, of course—the stuff was quite concentrated. But you could mix it in with your water or tea, yielding what Stoughton called “the Bitter draught.” Where’s the fun in that, though? Much better to pour a little into your hair-of-the-dog, thus yielding “the best Purl in Ale, and Purl Royal in Sack, [being] very pleasant and wholesome, [and] giving each of them a fragrant smell and taste, far exceeding Purl made of Wormwood.” What’s more, with the Elixir, you could make your Purl “in a Minute”—no more assembling bunches of herbs or weeks of steeping. Just tip a little into your drink, give it a stir, and you’re done.

I don’t want to make too much of this; a glass of Purl-Royal with a teaspoon or less (the recommended dose) of Stoughton’s “bitters,” as they soon came to be known, is not the same thing as a Cocktail. For one thing, it’s got no charisma. Royal or not, drinking Purl was more a health-maintaining duty, like taking your vitamins, than a wicked sport, like playing out a string of Sidecars and Widow’s Kisses. Plus, it’s got no booze in it. Of course, neither does the Champagne Cocktail, and nineteenth-century mixographers—including Jerry Thomas—had no problem including that in their Cocktail sections. But when Dr. Stoughton suggests his bitters be taken in “a dram of Brandy,” then we’ve got to pull up our reins. Of the four ingredients of the American Cocktail, here are the two most important, already consorting together in a glass, almost a full century before the drink surfaces in America. Just to make things more interesting, before too long we have evidence that people were already adding a third.

When Scotland rose in rebellion in 1745, the Scots clan leader Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, lent himself warily to the Jacobite cause. In April of the next year, when Scotland’s hopes and a large number of Frasers were shot to bits on the bleak moor of Culloden, he made sure to be nowhere near the battlefield (“None but a mad fool would have fought that day,” he is reported to have said). But he was nonetheless captured by the British, imprisoned, and condemned to have his head chopped off in the Tower of London. This was his right as a Peer of the Realm; had he been less exalted in rank, he would’ve been hung. Anyway, on the eve of his execution in March 1747, the eighty-year-old Lord Lovat was, understandably, somewhat troubled in mind.

“But pray,” he asked one of his attendants (according to a pamphlet published at the time), “have you got any Wine for me in the Morning; and some Bitters, if I should want to carry any to the Scaffold?” There were no bitters left in the bottle, so he sent somebody out with a shilling for a bottle of “Stoughton’s Elixir”—still the leading kind of bitters, although not without competition (Stoughton himself had died in 1720, but his squabbling heirs carried the business on without him). In the meanwhile, though, the warder came up with a bottle of “burnt brandy and bitters” that had been lying around since the Lord’s trial.

Now, to make Burnt Brandy, you set brandy on fire (often with a live cinder or coal, leading to its alternate name, “Coal Brandy”) and melt sugar over the resulting flame; when the flame gets low, you stir the sugar in and drink it. Originally, this was a medicine: From the mid-1600s to the mid-1800s, it was what any respectable physician would prescribe for congestion or stomach disorders. But even with much of the alcohol burned off it was still taken recreationally (Pepys drank it that way; why are we not surprised?). So, brandy and sugar, mixed up with bitters and kept in a bottle. This is awfully like the bottled Brandy Cocktail of Jerry Thomas’s day, only that used water to reduce the proof and this used fire.

In any case, the next morning, as Lord Lovat discussed the disposal of his clothing, tested the sharpness of the ax, and reviewed the arrangements for handling his head (he “desir’d that . . . when taken off, [it] might be receiv’d in a Cloth”), he had recourse to that bottle. If ever there was a time . . .

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

After Lord Lovat's decapitation, the proto-cocktail still loitered around, chiefly in the form of "gin and bitters," a tippie that was fairly common in mid-eighteenth-century London without ever becoming iconic. Was the actual Cocktail—spirits, bitters, sugar, and water combined—born in Britain? It's more than possible: Indeed, mixologically we're basically there, and there's even a passing reference to a drink called "cauld [that's Scots for 'cold'] cock" in William Creech's 1791 essay collection, *Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces*, for us to puzzle on. Even better, a truly startling "cocktail, vulgarly called ginger" appears in a 1798 satirical article from the *London Morning Post & Gazetteer* purporting to be a tavern-slate from one of the pubs near Downing Street, with different drinks assigned to various political figures (the cocktail belonged to William Pitt the Younger, the prime minister). This item, discovered a couple of years back by the indefatigable and tenacious researchers Jared Brown and Anistatia Miller, offers both less and more than meets the eye. Less, in that the cocktail here cannot be our Cocktail: The article supplies prices for each drink, and at three-quarters of a penny it's far cheaper than any of the identifiable spirituous drinks on the list—indeed, if a dose of spirits, bitters, sugar, and water could be an eighth the price of brandy and water, a quarter the price of Jamaica rum, and cheaper even than gin and bitters, as the "cocktail" is here, one must ask what the devil they put in there.

Yet this cocktail is also more than meets the eye because it provides an essential clue for settling the vexed, century-old debate on the etymology of the drink's name. There have been many, many theories advanced regarding the origins of *cocktail*. This one has the advantage of not only making sense but also being supported by actual evidence. That "vulgarly called ginger" is the key. Any association of ginger and cocking tails brings Captain Grose immediately to mind, author of *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*. To be precise, it recalls his oft-quoted entry on the practice of "feaguing" (alias "figging"), part of the stock-in-trade of the English horse dealer. When selling a beast not in its first blush of age, it was standard practice to put a clove of ginger up the poor, tired creature's "fundament" before showing it. This was done "to make him lively and carry his tail [up]." Thus, according to the Captain, "Feague is used, figuratively, for encouraging or spiring" a person. Based on this, we may take

the name *cocktail* to be what linguists call an “exocentric noun-verb compound,” like *breakwater*, *scarecrow*, and *pickpocket*. A cocktail is something that cocks up your tail—in the case of the *Morning Post* citation, that something being a glass of ginger beer or ginger extract mixed with ale.^{[*](#)} In America, the tails took a little extra cocking.

AMERICAN ROOTS

The American Colonies had long been supplied with all the necessary components of the Cocktail, including thirst. Spirits were everywhere, sugar was cheap, and water was plentiful and clean (not always the case in the mother country). You could even get genuine Stoughton's Elixir. Well, more or less—patent or no patent, its near-universal popularity ensured that the concoction was imported, but also that it was widely counterfeited and imitated.

In fact, a whole lot of bitters were being consumed in America, and outside the major cities, it's doubtful if any of it generated so much as a farthing in royalties. In the Colonies, do-it-yourself was the mode of the day. The forests abounded in medicinal roots, barks, and herbs; the alcohol to infuse with them was cheap and plentiful as long as you weren't too particular about what it was made from; and if you needed a recipe, there was one right there in John Wesley's *Primitive Physic* (since this John Wesley and the one who founded Methodism were one and the same, the book had wide distribution).

Judging by the extant published recipes (admittedly from a generation or two later), Americans liked more booze and less bitter in their mix. By the Revolution, in America at least, the Southwark apothecary's bitter drops had undergone a transformation from product to genre, from Xerox to xerox, Kleenex to kleenex. And once the Colonies rose up in revolt, the homemade stuff had the field to itself since imports stopped entirely—at least to the rebels; there are records of Stoughton's Elixir being shipped to the king's troops by the caseload.

Wars make history, but they also obscure it. Among all the bold and desperate events, it's easy for little things to get lost. One of those little things involved bitters. At some point between Lexington and Concord and Yorktown, it became acceptable for Americans to swallow a full dram of these high-proof domestic bitters as a morning eye-opener. When Americans take to something, they don't hold back. If a dash of bitters in a glass of wine is good in the morning, then a full 2 ounces of the stuff will be better. After all, it's medicine, right? And medicine is good for you—particularly if it makes you feel good. (Some facets of American life never change.)

The early years of the Republic were drinking times, and intemperate or not, eye-openers and humor-qualifiers were the order of the day, with Bitters and

Slings (whether minted or not) leading the pack by a few comfortable lengths. At some point during those years, somebody somewhere thought to pour some of the former into the unminted version of the latter. Whether this seminal moment was inspired by the example of Purl-Royal or Burnt Brandy and Bitters or if it was entirely a manifestation of native genius is immaterial; what is important is that Americans recognized the delightfulness and versatility of this formula, that we nurtured it and cherished it and allowed it to thrive.

It didn't hurt that, well, it didn't hurt; that by diluting what was already diluted and sweetening it up, one turned a medicinal drink that didn't taste good into one that tasted great and still kept a therapeutic cover without actually being good for you (that is, assuming that a glass of bitters was in some way good for you; see the oil of mint, earlier). As one Victorian mixographer sagely observed, "It is a cosmopolitan practice to pamper the appetite under pretence of preserving the health." The morning Bitters-and-Sling man could pretend, not least to himself, that he wasn't a morning dram drinker (which would be bad) and that he was only following the path of wisdom by taking a little preventative medicine. In fact, people were calling the morning Cocktail "a glass of bitters" well into the next century, even though it had merely a shade of bitters in it.

THE WHERE AND THE WHEN

When did this transformational act occur, who effected it and where did it happen? This is some of the most wrangled-over territory in American cultural history and some of the least documented. But rather than rehearse what has already been hashed to death, I'll try to simply lay forth the known facts—the earliest testimonies to an American drink called Cocktail—and let them dictate the conclusions. As a kind of control, let's begin with the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which in 1788 published a fairly comprehensive list of the spirit-based recreational drinks of America. In it we find mention of, among others, Toddy, Grog, Sling, Bitters, and Stinkibus, whatever that might be, but no Cocktail as of yet.

Fifteen years later, on April 28, 1803, the *Farmer's Cabinet*, a newspaper out of Amherst, New Hampshire, printed a little humor item purporting to be a page from the diary of a "lounger"—basically, an affluent young ne'er-do-well. In it, the author (probably Joseph Cushing, the paper's editor) has this character waking up lateish after an "Assembly" the night before and feeling "queer." At nine, he has a cup of coffee, which doesn't help. Let's give the highlights of the rest of the morning as the diarist himself wrote it:

10. Lounged to the Doctor's—found Peter—talked of the girls—smoked half a cigar—felt rather squally: Van Hogan came in—quiz'd me for looking dull—great bore.—11. Drank a glass of cocktail—excellent for the head . . . Went to the Squire's—girls just done breakfast. Mem. Girls not so bright after dancing. . . . Went to the Col's . . . drank a glass of wine—talk'd about Indians—call'd Miss———a Squaw—all laugh'd—damn'd good one—. . . jugg'd off. Call'd at the Doct's . . . —drank another glass of cocktail.*

Discounting later reminiscences that recalled Cocktails being drunk during the Revolution and right after, that “glass of cocktail” at 11 a.m. is the very first on record—provided, of course, that it is indeed a real Cocktail. The *Farmer's Cabinet* doesn't tell us what went into it, and for a while there in the very early part of the century that name appears here and there attached to drinks that in later years any self-respecting saloon denizen would have looked at with slantindicular gaze had it been proffered to him as a Cocktail—things such as “rum and honey,” which may be a fine drink but ain't no Cocktail. But I find it strongly suggestive that the two things we can deduce about the *Cabinet's* “glass of cocktail”—that it's therapeutic in the morning and that it's favored by a loungy, sporty, dissolute set—were precisely those that defined the Cocktail for most of the ensuing century.

If the Cocktail was well-enough known by 1803 for the *Cabinet* to include it without explanation, not everybody was in on the secret, as Harry Croswell discovered in 1806. On May 6, Croswell, the controversial editor and writer of the *Hudson (New York) Balance and Columbian Repository*, a political paper of the Federalist/anti-Democratic persuasion, printed a snarky little item at the expense of the (Democratic) loser of a local election, in the form of an expense-profit ledger. Under “Gain,” it simply reads “Nothing”; under loss, besides the election, there's a categorized list of drinks (candidates used to buy drinks for prospective voters—a custom I for one wouldn't mind seeing return to fashion), including “411 glasses bitters” and, more important, “25 [glasses] cocktail.” Now, I have no idea whether the list of drinks was a real one, but it was at least a realistic one. Nothing else on it (it also included rum and brandy Groggs and Gin Slings) was in any way obscure or controversial.

Those glasses of Cocktail, though, were unfamiliar enough to snare one reader, who wrote in about it in a letter Croswell printed the next week, on May 13:

I have heard of a jorum, of phlegm-cutter and fog driver,* of wetting the whistle, or moistening the clay, of a fillip, a spur in the head, quenching the spark in the head, of flip, etc., but never in my life, though I have lived a good many years, did I hear of cocktail before. Is it peculiar to this part of the country? Or is it a late invention? Is the name expressive of the effect which the drink has on a particular part of the body? Or does it signify that the democrats who take the potion are turned topsyturvy, and have their heads where their tails should be?

All good questions, except the last—which was of course the one that Croswell’s answer chiefly focused on:

Cock tail, then, is a stimulating liquor, composed of spirits of any kind, sugar, water, and bitters—it is vulgarly called bittered sling, and is supposed to be an excellent electioneering potion, inasmuch as it renders the heart stout and bold, at the same time that it fuddles the head. It is said also, to be of great use to a democratic candidate: because, a person having swallowed a glass of it, is ready to swallow anything else.

Would that Croswell had answered the correspondent’s other questions in like detail; this chapter would be much shorter. Nevertheless, it’s still one of the most famous and oft-repeated quotations in the history of American tippling. There are, however, a few things left to tease out of it. Setting aside the blogospheric political hyperbole and even the definition itself, which would with one or two minor adjustments describe what people thought of when they thought of a Cocktail for the next four generations, let’s focus on that “bittered sling.” As we’ve seen, bitters were one thing and Sling was another; so “bittered sling” was rather like “Jägered Kamikaze” or “Vodka and Red Bull”: two drinks, mixed together and consumed not by frat boys but by the 1806 equivalent, Democrats, who were proverbial for the woo-hooness of their brand of populism.

The next reference came eleven days later, when the *Sun*, a Democratic paper from Pittsfield, Massachusetts (some thirty miles west of Hudson), printed a letter taking Croswell to task for various political crimes and, along the way, getting in a swipe at him for “publishing grog stories” and strictures on “cock tail.” Clearly, a known—even slightly notorious—drink, or else the insult would be meaningless. After that, seven years of silence, unless you count the early

morning glass of “whiskey and bitters” John Melish was offered in central Pennsylvania in 1811 (this appears to have been a local specialty: Eight years later Adlard Welby found the same people, more or less, drinking the same thing). The oft-cited 1809 date for the word’s appearance in Washington Irving’s *Knickerbocker’s History of New York* is wrong.* Finally, in 1813, Cocktail popped up again, this time in the metropolis: The “News for [read *from*] New York” page of the *Tickler*, a Philadelphia humor rag, contained a comic account of a dispute between a couple of mooks “about the superior virtues of gin-sling and cocktail.”

Something about the drink must’ve struck New Yorkers as amusing, because its next appearance was in a bit of philosophico-medical doubletalk printed in the *New-York Courier* in 1816, in which the author claims to prove the “duality of souls” by his not being able to remember what he does at night, after a daily routine that began with “a cocktail or two every morning before breakfast” and ended with, “just before going to bed, two or three brandy tots.” There were plenty of other potables in between, not neglecting “a cocktail or two . . . before dinner.” But the drink was popular in Massachusetts, too, judging by its appearance (as “bitter sling”) in an 1818 ad for a Natick merchant (the ad, in verse, was considered amusing enough to be widely reprinted) and in an 1820 issue of the *Worcester National Aegis*. Whatever the precise circumstances of its birth, it’s clear that the Cocktail enjoyed its first fame in the rough triangle between Boston, Albany, and New York, and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary we must consider that its homeland.

THE COCKTAIL IN NEW YORK AND POINTS SOUTH AND WEST

The Cocktail made the jump from journalism to literature in 1821, when James Fenimore Cooper wrote it into his Revolutionary War novel *The Spy* as “that beverage which is so well known, at the present hour, to all the patriots who make a winter’s march between the commercial and political capitals of this great state [that is, New York and Albany] and which is distinguished by the name of ‘cocktail.’” At the very end of the same year, Dr. Samuel Mitchill (another polymath physician who, like Benjamin Rush, deserves a chapter of his own) included it in a widely reported satirical lecture he gave in New York against “Anti-fogmatics,” or morning drinks. Ironically, as diarist Philip Hone noted upon Mitchill’s death in 1831, “for several years past he was a confirmed drunkard.”

Once the Cocktail found its way to the metropolis, it made itself right at

home. Thus in 1824 we find a porter eulogizing a dead friend as “the kindest soul that ever poted a gin cocktail.” In 1827, it’s one Captain Morgan, or someone the *New-York Chronicle* thought looked a lot like him, following up an evening at the theater by eating a “mince treat” and “toss[ing] off four brandy cocktails”—quite a performance for somebody whose body half the country was looking for (the supposed murder of William Morgan by Masons was the O. J. Simpson case of the late 1820s). The next year, the *Chronicle* was making knowing references to the “cocktail snooze.” The year after that, the *Manhattan Courier* fixed the Cocktail in its social milieu when it lamented how the city’s old ale houses, where the “venerable burgher” could while away his thoughts with “the smooth pipe and the bright pewter mug,” had fallen to the hotel bar, where it was all

Segars of bright Havana, lit from a taper at the bar, and smoked by a youngster, who having dispatched his cocktail, mint julap, or gin sling . . . thrusts both hands into his breeches pockets, takes his strides up and down the bar room, and rolls the volume of grey smoke from the corner of his mellow mouth.

The Cocktail might have gotten a foot out of the morning-drink ghetto, but it was still unfit for polite company. As Robert Montgomery Bird had one of his characters say in his 1836 novel, *Sheppard Lee*, “None but vulgarians drink strong liquors; slings, cocktails, and even julaps are fit only for bullies. Gentlemen never drink any thing but wine.”

But by then, it seems, America was a nation of bullies and vulgarians. Outside of a few square blocks in New York, Boston, and a couple of other cities where society attempted to maintain a European *bon ton*, and the occasional knot of temperance men here and there, Juleps and Slings were in universal use—and so, it appears, was the Cocktail. If travelers are to be trusted, in the 1820s, while history was looking elsewhere, the Cocktail stole out of New York and followed the rivers, canals, wagon tracks, and foot trails that were binding the new nation together and pitched its tent wherever it found its people, ending up in places as far-flung as West Point, where the young Jefferson Davis, as an early biographer tells us, “earned the warm regards of his fellow students by the skill with which he compounded gin cocktails, and the able-bodied manner in which he consumed them” and Portland, Maine; Niagara Falls and La Balize, Louisiana, a godforsaken patch of mud and reeds and wooden shacks at the spot where the

Mississippi meets the Gulf. That's where Captain J. E. Alexander of the Royal Army, traveling from Havana to New York via the Mississippi, was greeted with these friendly words: "Halloo, man! are you here? Which are you for, cocktail or gin-sling? Here is the Bar, you must liquorise"—said bar being a shack equally as unprepossessing as the rest. That was in 1831, by which point the Cocktail was everywhere, even Canada (it first turns up there in the mid-1820s).

THE COCKTAIL GROWS UP

In the thirty years between Captain Alexander's book and Jerry Thomas's, some things about the Cocktail remained constant. By way of introduction to the Cocktail section of his book, Thomas notes,

The "Cocktail" is a modern invention, and is generally used on fishing and other sporting parties, although some patients insist that it is good in the morning as a tonic.

However threadbare, that old cloak of medicinal respectability still hung from its shoulders, and when it wasn't ministering to suffering humanity it still traveled with the same sporty crowd. (Those "other sporting parties" no doubt included the notorious ones—with which Thomas must have been intimately acquainted—formed by the "fancy" to travel to illegal boxing matches. The Cocktails would have been bottled; the merriment, not.)

During those decades, though, the actual drink itself changed in several small ways and one very big one—that one being, of course, the permanent and indissoluble incorporation of ice into its fabric. It's difficult to pinpoint precisely when this happened. The conventional wisdom is that it was in the 1830s, when everything else got iced. However, a close examination of recipes and descriptions of Cocktails from the Antebellum era suggests that it was actually a generation later that ice was fully integrated—in fact, out of the dozens of references to Cocktails and their consumption I've been able to find from the 1830s and 1840s, only four suggest that the drink was ever served iced: one from an 1840 slice of dialect humor set in New York's Astor House, where Sorney Sapstalk, the protagonist, is feeling overheated and thus orders "a brandy cocktail, with a lump of ice in 'em," two from the same city in 1843 (one of which has it served with "a few nobbs [sic] of ice as pure as crystal," the other throwing in a sporty splash of absinthe to boot), and one from the frontier a couple of years later.

In fact, not only were Cocktails generally served un-iced, they were occasionally even served—perish the thought—hot. With boiling water. Since a Cocktail is nothing more than a spiced Sling, and I consider a hot Sling or Toddy to be a sanctified thing, I don't know why this makes me shudder. It must be years of Pavlovian conditioning; of associating the word *Cocktail* with the thrilling rattle of ice. But when I read Charles Fenno Hoffman's description in his 1835 *A Winter in the West* of the "smoking 'cocktail'" he was handed in a country tavern near Kalamazoo, I quail inside. In any case, this perversion was not a common one and had disappeared by 1857. At least that's when a New York bartender was recorded replying to an order for a Hot Brandy Cocktail with, "Hot what, sir?" and, "No, sir, they are never made hot."

Even as late as 1855, when the Julep and the Cobbler had made American iced drinks famous throughout the world, the stuff's presence in the Cocktail is still not a given. Consider, for instance, the handful of dog-Latin prescriptions for mixed drinks the *Spirit of the Times*, the popular sporting paper, published as a joke in 1855 (you got your doctor to sign them, you see, and took them to the nearest drugstore and handed it . . . well, it seemed amusing at the time). There's the Mint Julep, which calls for ice. But the Brandy Cocktail and Gin Cocktail merely call for "aqua frigida"—cold water. Add John Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms*, from 1860, which defines the drink as "A stimulating beverage, made with brandy or gin, mixed with sugar and a very little water," a few similar references from the time, and you have legitimate grounds for doubt.

But the 1850s were a go-ahead decade, and that drive to the future extended to perpendicular drinking. In 1852, the *Southern Literary Messenger* already saw the writing on the wall when it noted, not without regret, that:

Virginia, at one time, may have possessed a better head than most, for strong potations; but that day is long since gone by. Once, the mint julep was proverbial, but western invention has long since won far superior trophies in the cocktail, the sherry cobbler, and snake and tiger.*

This is perhaps true more in the metaphorical sense than the literal one—it's hard to make a case for the Cobbler as a Western drink, and the "snake and tiger" is unknown outside the orbit of the *Southern Literary Messenger*—but it's true nonetheless. The Gold Rush may not have changed every aspect of American life, but it sure galvanized the Sporting Fraternity. As Bayard Taylor observed when he toured the diggings in 1849, in the easy-come-easy-go

atmosphere of California, “[w]eather-beaten tars, wiry, delving Irishmen, and stalwart foresters from the wilds of Missouri became a race of sybarites and epicureans.” This was manifested most characteristically in their sudden and surprising “fondness for champagne and all kinds of cordials and choice liquors.” One of the places this expressed itself was in the Cocktail, a luxury that at a bit or two a pop even a busted-flush gambler or empty-pan prospector could afford.

That taste for the finest extended to ice: John Borthwick, a Scot who spent much of the early 1850s in California, later recalled of the mining town of Sonora that “Snow was packed in on mules thirty or forty miles from the Sierra Nevada, and no one took even a cocktail without its being iced.” In any case, by the end of the decade an iced Cocktail was no longer an item of wonder, not just in California but in the rest of the country as well (though there were exceptions). The advent of ice brought in a few other changes: Since granulated sugar doesn’t dissolve well in cold liquor, “mixologists,” as they could now be called (the word, you’ll recall, was coined in 1856), learned to replace it with syrup—and why stop with plain sugar syrup? Why not throw in a little raspberry or almond syrup, if you’ve got it, or even a few dashes of some fancy imported cordial? And once you’ve predissolved the sugar, you won’t need that toddy stick to break up the lumps anymore; you can stir the drink with a simple teaspoon or, more theatrically, pour it back and forth between two glasses, or a glass and one of those new tin “shakers.” And because the Cocktail is a short drink, meant to go down the hatch before it has time to warm up, you won’t need to leave the ice in it and can spare its devotees the shock of that ice bumping up against their teeth by straining it into another glass.

This is where Jerry Thomas steps in. *How to Mix Drinks* is the first book to contain a section of recipes devoted to the Cocktail. There are a grand total of thirteen of ’em, all but one iced, and that one’s bottled for traveling. Nowadays, of course, you can get more Cocktails out of an airport bartender, and there are books floating around with titles like *1,001 New Vodka Cocktails*. But thirteen is actually a lot: If Thomas had set pen to paper ten or fifteen years earlier, he would’ve been hard-pressed to offer four or five—a Brandy Cocktail, a Gin Cocktail, perhaps a Champagne Cocktail, and maybe even a Whiskey Cocktail, although that one was still not quite ready for polite society. But writing when he did, he could offer that bottled Cocktail, three plain old Cocktails, a couple of “fancy” Cocktails, a “Japanese” Cocktail (made without sake or anything else from the Land of the Rising Sun), some Cocktails that extend the basic formula

to include bases other than straight booze, and a few Crustas, which Thomas defines for us as “an improvement on the ‘Cocktail’”—the improvement lying chiefly in the addition of “a little lemon juice” and some fiddling around with lemon peel and sugar. In the 1876 edition, Thomas adds three so-called Improved Cocktails (this improvement, too, is a subtle one). Finally, the 1887 revision reflects the Cocktail’s displacement of Punch as the Monarch of Mixed Drinks by moving Punches to the back of the book and putting Cocktails in their rightful place at the front. What’s more, the later edition featured twenty-three Cocktail recipes, including five with the new wonder ingredient: vermouth, which would bring the Cocktail into the twentieth century, transforming it utterly in the process. In 1914, on the eve of Prohibition, Jacques Straub’s up-to-date *Drinks* would offer more than twelve times that many.

Rather than attempt to untangle all these chronologically, I’ve divided Thomas’s recipes into four loose families, from the plain old Cocktail and its immediate variations; to the Manhattan, the Martini, and the whole frisky tribe of vermouth Cocktails; to Evolved Cocktails, where the bones of that old Hudson River drink are buried deep; and finally to those Cocktails that bring the circle to a close by being essentially nothing more than Punches in a fancy stemmed glass. As elsewhere, I’ve fleshed out each category with a few other important recipes that the Professor didn’t include, either because he wouldn’t or he couldn’t. Had he lived out his threescore-and-ten (and maybe a little extra), I know he would’ve gotten around to them, so this is really just covering the rest of his shift.

PREQUEL: THE ORIGINAL COCKTAIL

When the peripatetic Captain Alexander got to New York, he proved that he wasn't too refined to pote the humble Cocktail. Of course, it didn't hurt that he had Willard himself to mix them for him. Fortunately for us, Alexander repaid the favor by recording four of the Great One's recipes for posterity, the Cocktail among them, and printing them in the book he got out of his trip. Vague as it is, his is the first true recipe for the Cocktail to see print. More important, it agrees with the drink's 1806 definition, showing that that was no fluke or historical outlier but a glimpse at the trunk of the drink's family tree.

You will note, of course, the absence of ice. To the Jackson-era tippler, the Cocktail occupied an entirely different compartment in the brain from its close cousin the Mint Julep: the Julep is a "cooling drink"; the Cocktail is a "tonic." Cooling drinks, meant to be sipped and savored, take ice. Tonics, on the other hand, are set into action with a flick of the wrist; they belong to medicine, not gastronomy. That said, I still like 'em better with ice. But if there's none to be found and I've got everything else, I have before me the example of antiquity to indicate that I need not panic.

For the receipt-book let the following be copied: . . . Cocktail is composed of water, with the addition of rum, gin, or brandy, as one chooses—a third of the spirit [2 oz] to two-thirds of the water [3 oz]; add [4–5 dashes] bitters, and enrich with sugar [$\frac{1}{2}$ oz] and nutmeg. . . . N. B. If there is no nutmeg convenient, a scrape or two of the mudler (wooden sugar-breaker) will answer the purpose.

SOURCE: J. E. ALEXANDER, *TRANSATLANTIC SKETCHES*, 1833.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: As with the Sling, Holland gin and brandy were by far the most popular spirits used for Cocktails. Thanks to the lower proof of today's brandies and genevers, you should cut the water back as indicated if you're using them. The whiskey version of the Cocktail ran a distant (and later-appearing: the earliest reference comes only from 1838) third; if you're not afraid of being considered vulgar, though, you can make your Cocktail with Anchor's Old Potrero whiskey, which is overproof even for the time, and authentic—and delicious.

For the bitters, you'll need Stoughton's, which even now you'll have to

make yourself (see [here](#)). If this seems like a long way to go for a Cocktail, Angostura or Peychaud's will work just fine, seeing as their formulas date to 1824 and sometime in the 1830s, respectively. While Captain Alexander is singularly unhelpful as to how much of them to use, Charles Frederick Briggs's 1839 novel, *The Adventures of Harry Franco*, is a little more forthcoming: When the naive and proper young Harry finally deigns to "liquorate" with a Cocktail, he watches the bartender point up the gin, sugar, and water with "a few drops of a red liquid, which he poured out of a little cruet like an ink bottle with a quill stuck in the cork." (Before too many years had passed, this improvised dasher top would be replaced by a manufactured one.)

Oh, and that business about the "mudler"? Pay it no never mind. He's kidding. I think.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Exactly as for the Sling, but with bitters.

I. PLAIN, FANCY, IMPROVED, AND OLD-FASHIONED

If you set out to order a Martini in, say, 1988, there would've been a little back-and-forth across the bar about which spirit you wanted, the presence or absence of ice in the glass, and the desired level of dryness, and it would've been done. Sure, there were options available if you'd been willing to go there—remember the Hennessy Martini? But odds are good the bartender wouldn't have been following you. Those options were restricted; there were as yet none of that sickly and dismal tribe of Chocolate Martinis, Mango Martinis, Saketinis, and Appletinis that have in recent years transformed the Martini from a recipe into a category. In 1862, that's what ordering a Cocktail was like, only the drinks that were lurking to usurp its name were far less grim.

Of Thomas's original thirteen recipes, six are for combinations of spirits, sugar, bitters, and (frozen) water; Cocktails more or less as Harry Crosswell would've understood them, give or take some lumps of ice. Unfortunately, when it comes to the mixological details, there's no consistency to be found among them—some are stirred, some are shaken; some are on the rocks, some are straight up; some are labeled “Fancy” and yet are no fancier in their ingredients or execution than others not so privileged. In short, a mess. If you factor in the three “Improved” Cocktails from the 1876 edition, I won't say it gets any more confusing, because it's already as confusing as can be, but it's certainly not less so. Rather than perpetuate this, I've knocked all their heads together, lined them up, and got them to behave, but it's probably true that Thomas's original chaos is a better representation of the actual state of Cocktailistics at the time (or any time); it's just not so useful when you're actually mixing drinks. To that end, I've reduced all of these first-state Cocktails to three templates: the (Plain) Cocktail, the Fancy Cocktail, and the Improved Cocktail (there's also the Old-Fashioned, but that's a reversion more than an evolution).

PLAIN BRANDY, GIN, OR WHISKEY

COCKTAIL

The default Cocktail formula from the Civil War until Prohibition, although one increasingly tainted by fanciness—in fact, Thomas himself fancied things up a bit by calling for “1 or 2 dashes of Curaçao” in his recipes for plain Brandy Cocktail and Gin Cocktail, but not, interestingly enough, in his Whiskey Cocktail. There were parts of the country where dashing orange curaçao into somebody’s drink without clearing it with him first would see you staring down the barrel of a Colt Navy Revolver quicker than you could say “cooked asparagus.” Bearing that in mind, I’ve reserved curaçao for the [Fancy Cocktail](#).

Not the least of the many things for which Thomas’s book is noteworthy is providing the first reference to the twist as a Cocktail garnish, without which the drink seems insipid and even, dare I say it, slightly tiresome. The precise process whereby this little strip of lemon peel, long so crucial to the proper concoction of Punch, came to replace the grating of nutmeg as the capstone of the Cocktail is obscure to history (lemon peel had long been a part of certain epicurean Juleps and Cobblers, but only shaken in with the rest of the ingredients, not squeezed on top), but if nothing else it can be read as evidence of antebellum America’s growing wealth and commercial development. A single nutmeg cost far more than a single lemon, true, but it would garnish dozens of Cocktails to that lemon’s six or eight, and it didn’t need to be delivered fresh every few days. But no matter. Early bar guides are just as silent on technical minutiae such as the proper way to cut the things. With some digging, we learn that it should be “small” and “thin”—in fact, it’s just the “yellow part of the rind” we want. Come to think of it, what more do we need?

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

3 OR 4 DASHES [1 TSP] OF GUM SYRUP

2 DASHES OF BITTERS (BOGART’S)

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

1 OR 2 DASHES [½ TSP] OF CURAÇOA

Squeeze lemon peel; fill one-third full of ice, and stir with a spoon.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Given the paucity of detailed early recipes, it’s difficult to say exactly when syrup replaced lump or powdered sugar in the Cocktail; Thomas, a working bartender who understood the need for speed, preferred

syrup. “Bogart’s” is Thomas’s (or his publisher’s) mistake for “Boker’s,” the leading aromatic bitters of the day, which had largely supplanted Stoughton’s for Cocktail use. Since they’re no longer available, Fee Brothers Aromatic Bitters make a pretty good approximation, though Angostura or Peychaud’s will work just fine, too. My slight preference is for Peychaud’s when using brandy, Fee’s when using gin, and Angostura when using whiskey. As for the myriad other bitters now on the market—well, cautious experimentation never hurt anyone. Don’t use the best hooch in the house, though.

For a Brandy Cocktail, a decent, not-too-expensive cognac is what Jerry Thomas would’ve used (although his bar’s cellar was well stocked with fine old cognacs), and so should you. Don’t try to go too cheap, or you won’t like the results.

For myself, I’m exceedingly partial to Hollands in this drink and in fact consider the Gin Cocktail so made to be one of the most seductive potations known to natural science. The way the bitters mask the juniper and let the gin’s maltiness come forth is particularly enticing. (Old Tom? Good, but better with vermouth.) On the other hand, a proper Whiskey Cocktail has its own charms, particularly if you’re making it, as Thomas would have, with a fine old rye (among the barrels of rye in his cellar were several of the highly esteemed Maryland Club and some nine-year-old Tom Moore from Kentucky, not to mention the eight-year-old stuff he and George bottled under their own name). But bourbon works just as well, and in fact many tipplers of the day preferred it. I should note that most other spirits, including some far beyond Thomas’s ken, respond well to the basic Cocktail treatment. You can even make a surprisingly pleasant plain Cocktail with vodka, and a palatable one with Chinese rose petal chiu.

The curaçao here is a sign of creeping gentrification and can and should be omitted (but see the Fancy Cocktail, which follows).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Going by his book, Thomas couldn’t make up his mind whether the Cocktail is shaken or stirred. His brandy Cocktail calls for the spoon, his gin and whiskey ones the shaker. Nor are his professional colleagues much help: While, for example, the author of the 1869 *Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual* makes it a flat rule that “A cocktail should never be shaken,” Americus V. Bevill in his 1871 *Barkeeper’s Ready Reference* instructs that his cocktails be shaken well. Judging by the numerous depictions of bartenders “tossing the foaming cocktail” back and forth in a huge arc, in the 1860s and 1870s consensus favored his method—or perhaps it was just the more picturesque one

and hence was noticed more often. In my experience, a stirred plain Cocktail has a transparent silkiness that a shaken one cannot achieve, and modern consensus has of course strongly favored that view, to the point of dogmatism.

Once the mixing is done, however it's done, it's straining time—unless it isn't. Here, again, Thomas differed with himself: His gin and whiskey Cocktails are strained off the ice, his brandy Cocktail is not (Wisconsinites take note). Not until the 1880s, when the unstrained version hardened into the Old-Fashioned, would this uncertainty be settled. As for the twist: It comes in at the end, though some preferred to mix it in with everything else.

FANCY BRANDY, GIN, OR WHISKEY

COCKTAIL

The difference between plain and fancy can be as small a thing as a thin cordon of hammer marks around the rim of a silver cup or as large a one as spinning chrome hubcaps, a cushion of ground-effect neon, and woofers the size of garbage cans. In his person, Jerry Thomas favored the latter aesthetic; in his drinks, the former, as one can see by his recipe for the Fancy Brandy Cocktail: “This drink is made the same as the brandy cocktail, except that it is strained in a fancy wineglass, and a piece of lemon peel thrown on top, and the edge of the glass moistened with lemon.” In 1862, there was no such thing as a dedicated Cocktail glass, plain or fancy, so a small wineglass had to do. (By 1876, that situation had been remedied with the adoption of the small, cup-bottomed coupe for Cocktail use.) Other than the glass, there's nothing here to separate the Fancy Cocktail from the plain one besides that genteel lemonging of the rim of the glass; not for Jerry Thomas was the decadent practice of serving a Cocktail “plentifully trimmed with orange, banana and things of that sort,” like the house special some wags at the famous Hancock's in Washington slipped in front of Marcus Aurelius Smith, a notoriously crusty Arizona politician, in 1890. “I don't drink slops or eat garbage,” Smith announced. “Gimme some of the

best whisky.” His reply was widely reported enough to enter the language: For at least two generations afterward, a fruit garnish on a Cocktail was known as “the garbage.” (For the record, that garbagey Cocktail was the creation of the great black bartender Richard Francis, who served it with a slice of lemon muddled up with some pulverized sugar, dashes of maraschino, Angostura, and raspberry cordial, and a shot of spirits, shaken well, strained and garnished with slices of banana and orange. Hardly disgusting.)

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

3 OR 4 DASHES [1 TSP] OF GUM SYRUP

2 DASHES OF BITTERS

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

1 OR 2 DASHES [½ TSP] OF CURAÇOA

Squeeze lemon peel; fill one-third full of ice, and stir with a spoon. Strain into a fancy wine glass, twist a piece of lemon peel over the top, moisten the rim of the glass with it and throw it in.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: As for the Cocktail (Plain), except for the dashes of curaçao. Few things in mixology are as variable as the precise measure of a dash, but in this case ¼ to ½ teaspoon of good-quality imported orange curaçao or Grand Marnier will do nicely.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: As for the Cocktail (Plain), Thomas eschewed the bit of decadence described in the *Continental Monthly* in 1864, whereby a Whiskey Cocktail is served in a glass “with the edge . . . previously lemoned and dipped in powdered sugar.” But then again, Thomas was conservative, and particularly (and rightly) when it came to Whiskey Cocktails.

If you’ve got a Fancy Brandy Cocktail all made up and just can’t resist the temptation to top it off with a splash of chilled brut Champagne, go ahead; at the old Waldorf-Astoria, they called that a Chicago Cocktail; elsewhere, it was a Saratoga Cocktail. Whatever it was called, it dates to the gaudy years immediately before Prohibition, when Chicago was run by those paragons of the Aldermanly virtues Bathhouse John Coughlin and Hinky-Dink Kenna, and Saratoga by the great gambler Richard Canfield.

IMPROVED BRANDY, GIN, OR WHISKEY

COCKTAIL

Among the drinks in that groundbreaking 1876 Appendix to Jerry Thomas's book were "Improved" versions of the three standard Cocktails, all sharing the same basic formula. In brief, curaçao was out, maraschino was in, "Bogart's" was corrected to "Boker's," and the option of Angostura was given.

More important, there was a new ingredient: absinthe. As faddish in the 1870s and 1880s as amari and weird-tasting gins are in the 2010s, absinthe was everywhere: When the *New York Tribune* asked "a man with a waxed moustache, a diamond pin and a white linen jacket, who was dispensing fluids behind the bar of a well-known up-town hotel" about it in 1883, while "deftly squeezing a bit of lemon peel into a cocktail as a finishing touch" the bartender—almost certainly, judging by his turns of phrase, Jerry Thomas himself, at the Central Park Hotel—answered, "Much absynthy drunk? Well I should smile. Pretty near every drink I mix has a dash of the green stuff in it." For one thing, the dash of absinthe—first attested to way back in 1843, when the sporty *New York Sunday Mercury* defined the cocktail as "a beverage compounded of brandy, sugar, absynthe, bitters and ice," and included in the technical literature in 1869 in the *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual*—helped polish up the Cocktail's medicinal luster, although with a hot-rails-to-hell edge that bitters alone could never quite achieve. "Bad for the nerves? I guess not," continued the man uptown, almost defensively. "You jest get up of a mornin' feeling as if yer couldn't part yer hair straight an' see if a cocktail or John Collins dashed with absynthy don't make a new man of yer. Bad for the nerves! Why, you ain't been around much, I guess, young man. . . ."

It didn't hurt, of course, that not only did absinthe carry an aura of danger, but used sparingly it gave the drink an offbeat fragrance that many found mighty pleasing to the palate. In the last decades of the century, bartenders were dashing it into everything in sight, to the point that master

mixologist George J. Kappeler felt compelled to warn, “Never serve it in any kind of drink unless called for by the customer.”

(USE ORDINARY BAR-GLASS.)

2 DASHES BOKER’S (OR ANGOSTURA) BITTERS

3 DASHES [1 TSP] GUM SYRUP

2 DASHES [½ TSP] MARASCHINO

1 DASH [⅛ TSP] ABSINTHE

1 SMALL PIECE OF THE YELLOW RIND OF A LEMON, TWISTED TO EXPRESS THE OIL

1 SMALL WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF [SPIRITS]

Fill glass one-third full of shaved ice, shake well, and strain into a fancy cocktail glass. The flavor is improved by moistening the edge of the cocktail glass with a piece of lemon.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1876 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: In general, as for the Cocktail (Plain). This drink is particularly good with Holland gin—and, for that matter, cognac and rye. In fact, there’s really nothing wrong with it at all. For those who have ever had one, to contemplate it is to desire it. I think of the Holland gin version as New York’s answer to the Sazerac, particularly if the gin is good and rich and the maraschino is replaced with an old-school orange curaçao. It’s just as strong and every bit as seductive.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: As for the Cocktail (Fancy). If you’d rather be right and stir, be right and stir. Then smile.

SAZERAC COCKTAIL

In 1897, nobody outside of a small coterie of New Orleans lawyers, politicians, businessmen, and other solid—but not too solid—citizens knew the phrase *Sazerac Cocktail* and the intense anticipation it elicited once uttered. By 1903, you had the *Chicago Post* on record to the effect that “the

sazerac cocktail bears the same relation to other cocktails which the lion sustains to the sportive and innocent lamb”—or, if you prefer a more urban simile, “as Wonderful Washington is to a water-tank town on a desert plain” (thus the *Washington Herald* in 1907). By 1909 the *Atlanta Constitution* was pronouncing it the “all-conquering Sazerac.” Everybody was in agreement on its effects; they just weren’t sure what precisely caused them. In later years, that question was settled, more or less, only to raise a thornier one, or rather a series of questions: How did the Sazerac become the Sazerac, when did it happen and who made it so?

New Orleans’s own liquid lagniappe has a way of striking sophisticated tipplers from Basin Street to Bombay in just the exact right place they like to be struck. When William Sydney Porter, alias O. Henry—a man who knew all the cushions and angles when it came to drinks—rhapsodized in one of his stories about New Orleans and “[making] the acquaintance of drinks invented by the Creoles during the period of Louey Cans,” it was undoubtedly the Sazerac he had in mind. He often did, you see. In the years before his death in 1910, when he was living at the Caledonia Hotel on Twenty-Sixth Street in Manhattan, according to the keeper of the “quiet little bar” down the street, “Sazerac cocktail was his favorite drink.” As if to prove it, Porter made a daily practice of dropping in for them “more or less regularly” from ten in the morning until midnight. This may help explain his confusion regarding the chronology of Cocktails and Kings: The Sazerac, venerable as it may be, postdates the period of Louis Quinze by several generations. In fact, despite the drink’s hoary, Spanish moss-draped mythology, it’s a relative latecomer, dating more to the era of Chesters and Grovers than Louises, Napoleons, or indeed French monarchs of any stripe.

The first we hear of a specific Sazerac Cocktail is in 1899, when the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity’s journal mentions that at its convention the previous year, held in New Orleans, “A good deal was heard . . . about two mysterious articles: A ‘Sazerac Cocktail’ and an ‘Imperial Gin Fizz.’” You got that Imperial Gin Fizz at Carl Ramos’s Imperial Cabinet, of course. For the Sazerac, you had to go to the venerable (although oft-rebuilt) Sazerac House bar, at 116 Royal Street. By 1900, this establishment had become, along with Ramos’s bar and the Old Absinthe House, one of the stations of the drinking cross every thirsty tourist had to navigate once he, or she (hey, it’s New Orleans), hit town. It was owned by Thomas H. Handy & Co., who also dealt in liquors and made Handy’s Bitters from the formula they had

purchased from A. A. Peychaud. Handy, a charismatic Civil War veteran (CSA, naturally), had died back in 1893, but the bar was in the able hands of William H. “Billy” Wilkinson, a native New Orleanian who had been behind the stick there since 1878 and was something of a local celebrity.

If, however, you preferred to experience the Sazerac in more familiar surroundings, you could just go to your local liquor store and pick up a bottle: In 1900, Handy & Co. began selling a line of premixed cocktails. Within a year, they had secured nationwide distribution. There were six kinds: Whiskey, Holland Gin, Tom Gin, Martini, Vermouth, and Sherry, to which they soon added a Manhattan. You’ll note the absence of a Sazerac Cocktail among them. That’s because it was there already. Six of the cocktails in the line were essentially irrelevant; the one that everyone wanted; that brought ’em into the bar and moved the bottles over the counter; the one that solaced Mr. Porter’s existence; the one that ultimately assumed the name “Sazerac Cocktail,” was the Whiskey Cocktail.

In 1885, the *New Orleans Times-Democrat* interviewed a bartender who pronounced “brandy drinking in New Orleans . . . a thing of the past.” “All the old scientific drinkers wanted brandy,” he explained (understandable in a town so heavily French inflected), but now “whisky [has] displaced it.” That, too, was understandable: In the decades after the Civil War, the old Creole city became much more Americanized, and Americans had at long last fully embraced their native tippie. Before the war, New Orleans was a Brandy Julep town. Now, everyone was drinking whiskey, whether in straight Whiskey Cocktails or in the new Manhattan, which found great favor in the city (Ramos had yet to interject his Fizz into things). By reputation, the best Whiskey Cocktail in town was to be had at the Sazerac, where they had a special way with the drink.

We know what that way was because Christopher O’Reilly wrote the recipe down. O’Reilly, a local boy, started at the Handy company in 1904 as secretary and treasurer and became its president in 1906, tuberculosis having carried off Wilkinson in 1904. He ran it, and the bar, until Prohibition, at which point he changed the name of the business to the Sazerac Company, scuffled along as best he could selling groceries—or perhaps “groceries”—until Repeal and then brought it back into the drinks business, where it still is today, and very comfortably. At some point before Prohibition, he—or at least someone associated with Thomas H. Handy & Co.—carefully wrote out the formulas for a few of the company’s bottled

cocktails, including one labeled “Sazerac.”

This document survives and is now in the hands of O’Reilly’s grand-nephew Stephen Joseph, who has been kind enough to share it. The recipe for the Sazerac has two surprises, settles one old debate and rekindles another. The debate it settles is the vexed question of whether the Sazerac should have Peychaud’s and Angostura bitters or just Peychaud’s. O’Reilly’s recipe has both. The one it opens is that about Maryland rye, which the recipe calls for. For that, see Chapter 2.

The first surprise is the omission of any mention of absinthe. Perhaps it’s left out because for a true Sazerac you have to rinse the glass with the stuff, not mix it in. Or perhaps it’s as Chris McMillian, master New Orleans bartender and cocktail historian, suggests: The recipe dates to the period between the banning of absinthe in 1912 and Prohibition. In any case, the absinthe was in the recipe for mixing a Sazerac the Handy company gave to William T. “Cocktail Bill” Boothby, who printed it in the 1910s. What wasn’t there was the Angostura (understandable: Handy was, after all, in the business of selling bitters). Boothby’s recipe also makes no mention of something else in O’Reilly’s version, nor does any other hitherto-authoritative recipe for the drink. The secret ingredient? A couple of dashes of maraschino. Which means that, if you restore the absinthe, the mighty Sazerac Cocktail is originally nothing more than Jerry Thomas’s Improved Whiskey Cocktail, with a little juggling in the bitters.



The two giants of the Sazerac: Billy Wilkinson (left) and Vincent Miret (right) (author's collection).

How the Handy company managed to take what was essentially the same whiskey cocktail everyone in America had been drinking and make it famous is the real mystery of the Sazerac. The answer, I suppose, is two pronged. In part it has to do with changing tastes. By 1900, the Cocktail of Jerry Thomas's day, a simple drink with fancy touches, had evolved along two lines: On one side there were the lighter, more complex Vermouth Cocktails (see Chapter 8) and Evolved Cocktails (see Chapter 9), and on the other the rock-ribbed, reactionary Old-Fashioned. The Sazerac, a throwback to the Whiskey Cocktails of twenty-five years before, neatly split the difference between them; it was as smooth and seductive as a Manhattan but as potent as an Old-Fashioned. Add the bit of stage business with the absinthe rinse and you've got an old and whiskeyish drink that hits with the shock of the new—indeed, it still stuns those who first encounter it.

But mixing the drink is one thing. Selling it is another. This is where Handy & Co. were exceptionally fortunate to have Wilkinson, whom the *Times-Picayune* hailed in 1902 as “the creator of that most soothing and invigorating decoction, the Sazerac” (this attribution was confirmed ten years later by Fred Roses, head bartender at the Sazerac, who had worked under Wilkinson for years) and Vincent Miret, his Barcelona-born partner behind the bar from 1882 until his untimely death in 1899, whom the *Item* had hailed in 1895 for his reputation as “the best mixer of whisky cocktails in the City of New Orleans.” Both were large men—“the two giants of the Sazerac,” the *Item* called them—and both were sporting men and clubmen and deeply engaged in the business and social life of the city. Whichever one of them it was who perfected the Sazerac's version of the Improved Cocktail, they both sold it with energy and charisma.

I don't want to give the impression with any of this that I'm trying to debunk the Sazerac. First of all, there is no bunk in a Sazerac. And if Miret and Wilkinson didn't invent the drink the way Hiram Maxim invented the machine gun, it's also true that the Sazerac wasn't just *an* Improved Whiskey Cocktail, it was *the* Improved Whiskey Cocktail. The two giants of the Sazerac took what for the rest of the country was a quick station stop on the Cocktail's hurtling progress from that watery thing they were making in the Hudson Valley to the icy, streamlined Dry Martini, understood it, perfected it, and learned its secret name. When the rest of us went whoring

after vermouth and orange juice and other adulterants, or locked our tastes down to Highballs and Old-Fashioneds, they stuck with what they knew was good—as did their fellow citizens of the Crescent City. Ten years ago, it was the only city in America where you could get a Whiskey Cocktail straight out of the 1880s, and it’s still the only one you can do it without visiting a terribly serious young specialist, and the only one where you can walk down the street sipping one out of a go cup.

From the recipe of the late Tom Handy, ex-manager of the world-renowned Sazerac Bar.

Frappé an old-fashioned flat bar-glass; then take a mixing glass and muddle half a cube [$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp] of sugar with a little water; add some ice, a jigger [2 oz] of good whiskey, two dashes of Peychaud bitters, and a piece of twisted lemon peel; stir well until cold, then throw the ice out of the bar-glass, dash several drops of Absinthe into the same, and rinse well with the Absinthe. Now strain the Cocktail into the frozen glass, and serve with ice water on the side.

SOURCE: WILLIAM “COCKTAIL” BOOTHBY, “SOME NEW UP-TO-NOW SEDUCTIVE AMERICAN COCKTAILS,” UNDATED SUPPLEMENT TO *THE WORLD’S DRINKS AND HOW TO MIX THEM*, 1908.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The sugar cube is traditional (use a whole standard cube). I’ve always found, though, that this drink responds exceptionally well to a scant teaspoon of real gum syrup (that is, with the gum Arabic in it; see Chapter 10) instead. As for the Maryland rye. The real stuff is at present irrecoverable, but you never know. But the six-year-old rye the Sazerac Company is selling at the time of this writing does a fine job, as does the Bonded Rittenhouse Rye. In New Orleans, most people use plain old Old Overholt, which makes a perfectly acceptable drink, although not without room for improvement. If you want to follow Wilkinson and add the Angostura, as many New Orleans bartenders still do, go with a dash plus two dashes of Peychaud’s, but note that some of the best Sazerac-makers in New Orleans prefer straight Peychaud’s here, and a lot of it (say, 5 to 6 dashes) to the mix of Peychaud’s and Angostura. I tend to go with them. There’s no excuse for using an absinthe substitute here; go for the Vieux Pontarlier or, naturally, the Nouvelle-Orléans.

If you want to make O’Reilly’s precise version, here are the proportions to make a quart (the original is for a gallon): Dissolve 3 ounces sugar in 8 ounces water. Add 1 ounce Peychaud’s bitters, $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce Angostura bitters, $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce Maraschino Luxardo, and 21½ ounces rye (I like Rittenhouse here for its

strength). If you want to go ahead and add the absinthe, use ½ ounce. This is delightful when kept in the freezer and drunk unmixed. Mixed with ice in the traditional way, I find it a bit watery compared to a handmade Sazerac.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: To “frappé” a glass is to fill it with shaved or finely cracked ice. The Sazerac House’s technique of stirring this drink in one small bar glass and straining it into another has become enshrined in tradition, and it’s still often made that way—even though the small bar glass fell out of use as a mixing vessel with Prohibition (if you can find an antique, scallop-shell Julep strainer, it makes things easier as it’s sized to fit the small glass). Which glass you mix it in, small or standard, affects the taste of the drink not a whit, so stir where you like. But whichever you use, give it a good, long stir. How long is enough? In a mixing glass with plenty of cracked ice, twenty seconds will do; in a small bar glass with less ice, you may need more. Handy’s formula deploys the twist before mixing, but if ever there was a drink that cries out for the terminal spray of lemon oil, it’s this. Years ago, Paul Gustings, the best present-day New Orleans Sazerac maker, showed me a neat little thing where he puts some absinthe in the bottom of the chilled glass and then gives it a little toss in the air, with enough English on it for the liquid to spin up the sides of the glass and coat it. If you can master that . . .

OLD-FASHIONED WHISKEY, BRANDY, OR HOLLAND GIN COCKTAIL

Everything new always turfs up a few people who liked the old way better. So no one should be surprised that when the plain Cocktail began gathering unto its bosom troubling dashes of curaçao and absinthe and truly alarming splashes of vermouth, fruit juice, and orgeat syrup, there were those who cried bloody murder. Editor and theater critic Leander Richardson, for one.

In the regular line of drinks coming under this name [that is, Cocktail] every

bartender seems to have established his own private brand, so that people who are in the habit of whetting their appetites by the friendly cocktail never know beforehand what they are going to take into their stomachs as they pass from bar to bar.

In these days, when an order for a simple Manhattan is so often greeted with this weirdly infused, overbittered and barrel-fatigued *thing*, my unconsidered sympathies tend to lie with Richardson. For the drinker who resisted change, the 1870s and 1880s (Richardson's ode to the Old-Fashioned dates from 1886) must've been trying times. At some point, this resistance coalesced into a catchphrase. Just as the modern-day fogey has learned that the phrase "gin Martini, straight up, not too dry" when uttered to a bartender will secure an approximation of a real Martini, his or her Gilded Age counterpart learned that saying "old-fashioned Whiskey [or Gin, or Brandy] Cocktail" would bring forth a drink made with a slug of good (they hoped) booze, lump sugar instead of syrup, ice in the glass, and none of that vulgar shaking and straining and garnishing, and "no absinthe, no chartreuse and no other flavoring extract injected into it," as Richardson put it.

It should come as no surprise that Chicago, that most broad-shouldered of cities, seems to have been one of the main centers of resistance. In fact, discounting an ambiguous newspaper squib from 1869, the earliest clear references to the "Old-Fashioned" way of making cocktails come from the pages of the *Chicago Tribune*. The first is from 1880, when Samuel Tilden, the Al Gore of his age, decided not to run for president again, prompting goal-oriented Democrats to toast his withdrawal with "Hot-whiskies . . . sour mashers and old-fashioned cocktails." (Note that this busts the myth that the drink was invented at the Pendennis Club in Louisville; the club wasn't founded until 1881 and Martin Cuneo, the man they cite as its inventor, didn't start working there until 1912 or 1913.) Two years later, when the *Trib* quizzes a prominent local bartender about what the gents are drinking, he replies, "The old-fashioned cocktails [are] still in vogue; cocktails made of loaf-sugar and whisky . . . Rye whiskey [is] called for more than Bourbon." It was another Chicago bartender, Theodore Proulx of Chapin & Gore (the city's most famous saloon), who would include the Old-Fashioned in a bar guide for the first time, in 1888.

It wasn't just a Chicago thing, though: Richardson, for example, may

have been a Chicagoan, but he had long been in New York when he spoke his piece. And the Old-Fashioned also appears in Lafcadio Hearn's seminal 1885 New Orleans cookbook, *La Cuisine Creole*, albeit under the name "spoon cocktail" (the drink was generally served with a smaller version of the barspoon in it, for the customer to stir in any undissolved sugar). By 1895, the old-fashioned way was sufficiently popular for both Chris Lawlor, of the Burnet House hotel in Cincinnati, and George Kappeler, of New York's Holland House, to include it in their books. Both recipes are nearly identical, describing an agriculturally simple drink, just spirits stirred up with sugar, bitters, and a little ice, with a bit of lemon peel for accent—in other words, a Cocktail straight out of the 1850s.

In fact, some people had been drinking them that way all along, if you can trust whoever it was who compiled the *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual* back in 1869, where it states under the Whiskey Cocktail—stirred up from whiskey, gum syrup, bitters and "one small lump of ice"—that "it is a matter of preference with many to drink the cocktail from the glass in which it is made." In these things there is always a small band of holdouts waiting on the beach, drink in hand, to greet those authenticity seekers who have traveled back across the treacherous seas of time.

In 1895, you can see why that might appeal; why people in the age of the automobile and the electric light might like a liquid look back to the days when the railroad was the latest thing; when Choctaw and Chippewa still paddled the Mississippi; when the best restaurants served roast bear and the passenger pigeon was a popular game bird; when barrooms were alive with "the merry raps of the toddy stick." The Old-Fashioned was a drinker's plea for a saner, quieter, slower life, one in which a gent could take a drink or two without fear that it would impair his ability to dodge a speeding streetcar or operate a rotary press.

But Americans are a restless people and seldom willing to let well enough alone. In the fullness of time, even the Old-Fashioned, whose very essence was its monolithic plainness, started getting the treatment. In New York, that treatment varied from having both lemon and orange peel slathered onto it and a chunk of pineapple heaved in to boot, as in Times Square bartender Hugo Ensslin's 1916 recipe for an Old-Fashioned Gin Cocktail, to the same plus orange curaao, to an all-out assault combining rye, Dubonnet, curaao, absinthe, and so forth—yea unto the very slice of orange that would characterize, or contaminate if you prefer, the drink for

much of the twentieth century. Ensslin called that one an “Old-Fashioned Appetizer”; others might have disagreed on both counts.*

Don Marquis, for one. In a series of essays the *New York Sun* writer—and creator of the immortal archy and mehitabel—published in the early days of Prohibition, he has his alter ego, the “Old Soak,” utter what amounts to the Old-Fashioned drinker’s manifesto: “In the old days when there was barrooms you would go into one . . . and say Ed, mix me one of the old-fashioned whiskey cocktails and don’t put too much orange and that kind of damned garbage into it, I want the kick.” What he would’ve made of the version you get today, whether it’s the one with the muddled orange slice and maraschino cherry and the ocean of seltzer, or the one with the six kinds of bitters, the polymeric slick of simple syrup and the hefty charge of Fernet, baijiu, bacanora, or whatever the hooch-du-jour is, one shudders to think.

Dissolve a small lump [$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp] of sugar with a little [1 tsp] water in a whiskey-glass; add two dashes Angostura bitters, a small piece ice, a piece lemon-peel, one jigger [2 oz] whiskey. Mix with a small barspoon and serve, leaving spoon in the glass.

SOURCE: GEORGE J. KAPPELER, *MODERN AMERICAN DRINKS*, 1895.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Kappeler gives recipes for versions with whiskey, brandy, Holland gin, and Old Tom gin. Indeed, anything beyond these has little legitimate claim to the title Old-Fashioned (for example, Ensslin’s version, which calls for dry gin—a spirit that wasn’t introduced until the 1890s). I prefer lemon peel when using rye, and orange peel when using bourbon.

For Albert Barnes’s 1884 *American Farmer*, an early variant on the Old-Fashioned, muddle the sugar cube with water and 3 pieces of dried bitter orange peel, add a barspoon of Smith & Cross, ice, and a good slug of Laird’s bonded applejack, however you define *good slug*. Barnes was the head bartender of the Metropolitan Hotel in New York, the Professor’s old job, but he was from Philadelphia and many of the drinks in his *Complete Bartender* have Philly and South Jersey roots, as I suspect this one does.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Use a muddler to crush the sugar. I like to add the liquor before the ice and give it a quick stir; this leaves less sugar at the bottom of the glass. Some people, though, like that deposit. As for that ice. According to the *Chicago Chronicle*, the customary size of the pieces used was “about as big as a

toy rubber ball”—the kind, I assume, you play jacks with. Also according to that same 1899 article, some mixologically ambitious saloons preferred to refrigerate their Old-Fashioned with ice cut into “perfect cubes about two inches on a side”—the idea being, the bigger the ice, the less it would melt and the stronger the Cocktail. There were even some who went so far as to have the ice “frozen to order in balls which fit nicely into the glass.” Or, as John Applegreen (a veteran of both Chicago and New York bars) advised in his 1899 *Barkeeper’s Guide*, “Have lump ice . . . cut square or diamond-shape.” (This American art, lost at home, lived on in Japan, where the best Tokyo bartenders were long expert at hand-carving ice balls to fit the glass. Now those masters have helped it repollinate Cocktail bars across the United States, where it may be observed and imitated. Molds are also available for he who wieldeth not the Samurai ice pick.) If all that seems like a whole lot of damned bother to you, you’ve caught the spirit of the drink. Three or four regular home ice cubes will do just fine. I like to crack two of ’em for a little quick dilution and leave two whole for the long haul.

ENTER VERMOUTH

Until 1880 or so, all Cocktails, be they basic, Fancy, Improved, Evolved, or Crusta, shared a core philosophy. Unlike Punches, which always sought to be a blend of flavors without one dominating, Cocktails were built to point up or accent the flavor of their base liquor without disguising it. With rare exception (such as the Japanese Cocktail), the other ingredients were measured in dashes or spoonfuls, not ounces or glassfuls—as Chicago bartender Theodore Proulx wrote in 1888, commenting on the bartenders who “take hold of the bitter bottle and squirt and squirt” and then “do as much with the other ingredients,” a Cocktail “needs to be flavored only, not substitute the ingredients for the liquors.” The resulting drinks were pungent, boozy, and strong. They were also delicious, but they demanded a consumer who was acclimatized to the taste of liquor and knew how to stow it away.

As the Gilded Age unfolded, cutting-edge Cocktail drinkers began to look for something lighter and more urbane than a shot of bittered booze; something more refined and epicurean and with less savor of riverboat bars and tobacco chaws, bare-knuckle bouts and faro dens. One result was the birth of the Cocktail Punch (and no surprise that it was born in Creole New Orleans; see Chapter 9). When that was still in its infancy, though, another path suddenly suggested itself. In 1871, *Bonfort’s Wine and Liquor Circular* was already on it:

If we must have an appetizer before dinner, Absinthe or Vermouth deserve the preference over the antiquated and fiery cocktail; and of the two we consider the Vermouth the more desirable beverage. If it is of good Italian origin and properly cooled . . . it is a decidedly good thing.

Vermouth had been known in America for some time. Its Italian and French makers had made several attempts to penetrate the bibulous American market. The precursor to Martini & Rossi may have tried as early as 1836, and Noilly Prat was shipping its dry vermouth to New Orleans in 1851 and San Francisco in

1853; for the rest of the decade, it turns up in liquor ads in gold-country newspapers, so somebody up in the hills must've been drinking it (there were lots of French miners and whores up in there).

In any case, as the passage from *Bonfort's* suggests, it was the Italian stuff—the red, sweet kind—that was getting the traction. By the 1860s, anyway, it was pretty well established in New York and had even reached places like Galveston, Texas, and Dubuque, Iowa. If not exactly a sensation, this “vino vermouth,” as it was known, enjoyed enough of a reputation for Delmonico's and the Metropolitan Hotel to carry it on their wine lists, the latter selling it for a respectable \$3 a quart (its best cognac was only \$8). It wasn't until the 1880s, though, that it took off, first with the help of the Manhattan, then, in the 1890s, with the Martini, and then, as the new century opened, with, well, just about everything.

I. THE ORIGINALS: VERMOUTH, MANHATTAN, AND MARTINI COCKTAILS

VERMOUTH COCKTAIL

Once people noticed vermouth and began poking at it, it was inevitable that sooner or later somebody was going to try to make a Cocktail out of it. After all, this was America, and Cocktails were what we drank. We don't know who served as guinea pig or where the experiment was conducted or, for that matter, who conducted it, but its protocol was recorded in 1869, in the invaluable *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual*. While not a world beater, for a number of years after that the Vermouth Cocktail maintained its place in the pharmacopoeia. In the field, it was most commonly prescribed as—what else?—a hangover cure. But its use wasn't limited to that; there were plenty who appreciated its gentle touch. As an 1885 newspaper squib noted, “James R. Keene [robber baron and horseman extraordinaire] cheers himself to vermouth cocktails because ‘they don't break you up.’” If, by the turn of the century, it was getting pretty old-fashioned, the anonymous author of *The Banquet Book* (1902) could still note that “This cocktail is liked by not a few and generally secures constant advocates.” After that, while we still hear of the Vermouth Cocktail here and there until Prohibition, it's rarely spoken of with much affection and one gets the impression that the people who ordered it secretly in their hearts of hearts lusted after something with just a little more, well, alcohol in it.

The first recipe for a “Vermuth [*sic*] Cocktail” is a simple affair, but then again, it's not a drink that needs a lot of looking after.

One wine glass [2 oz] of vermouth; one very small piece of ice; one small piece of lemon peel. Serve in a thin stemmed glass with curved lip.

SOURCE: STEWARD & BARKEEPER'S MANUAL, 1869.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: This drink will work just fine with the standard red Martini & Rossi or Cinzano. If, however, you can find the Carpano Formula Antica, all of a sudden you've got a real drink on your hands. The tiny piece of ice is to avoid dilution; if you keep the vermouth refrigerated, you'll be able to use more ice, and you should. Some later recipes specify bitters; depending on the vermouth you use, this may or may not be an enhancement. With the heavily aromatized Carpano, they're superfluous. In 1884, O. H. Byron printed a version of the Vermouth Cocktail made with 1½ ounces of French vermouth, 3 dashes of Angostura bitters, and ½ teaspoon or so of gum syrup. This is a most pleasant tippie, particularly in summer. For a Fancy Vermouth Cocktail, as delineated in the 1887 edition of Thomas's book, use a couple dashes of Angostura and 1 teaspoon of maraschino and replace the twist with a quarter wheel of lemon, which can be perched on the rim or floated on top. What the hell.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: The 1887 edition of Thomas's book recommends that this drink be shaken and strained; again, overdilution is a concern here—which way to go depends on if you prefer a very cold drink or a concentrated one.

MANHATTAN COCKTAIL

The Vermouth Cocktail is no doubt a fine thing, offering as it does a bold presence on the palate while still being low in impact—perhaps too low. You go to all the trouble of hitching your foot up on the rail, engaging Ed in conversation, supervising his movements as he dashes and splashes and waltzes everything around with ice, and the straining, and the twisting, and the sliding, and the paying, and what do you get for your fifteen cents? Something with no more kick to it than the little glass of sherry your maiden aunt takes when the fantods have got her. But what if you put a stick in it? Rye, gin, brandy, it doesn't matter. Just a little something to make you feel like you've had a drink.

That's one possibility. On the other hand there's this one. The Whiskey—or Gin, or Brandy—Cocktail is no doubt a fine thing, offering as it does a smooth presence on the palate while still being high in impact—perhaps too

high. You go to all the trouble of hitching your foot up on the rail and all the rest, and what do you get for your fifteen cents? Drunk, that's what. The problem with these things is they go down so easy that you want to treat your throat to a couple or three just to show your appreciation for the fine job it's been doing you, but next thing you know it's next Thursday and you're in Oakland with what feels like three black eyes and an anchor tattooed on your arm. But what if you turned the damper down a little, took that new vermouth stuff—plenty flavorful but no John L. Sullivan—and replaced some of the booze with it? Maybe you could have a drink or two without all the vaudeville.

These, then, are the two mixological theories on the origin of the Manhattan and, by extension, the Martini. The earliest recipes provide support for both. However spirits and vermouth first came together, once joined they quickly demonstrated that drinks as complex and subtle in flavor as the most baroque Regency-era Punches could be turned out over the bar as quickly as Stone Fences or Black Straps. The author of the anonymous 1898 *Cocktails: How to Make Them* nailed it when he wrote, “The addition of Vermouth was the first move toward the blending of cocktails.” The Martini would ultimately be this new movement's standard-bearer, but it was the Manhattan that was the first out of the trenches.

The Manhattan Cocktail is a New York native. That much everybody agrees on. Things begin to come apart a bit in the details, though—specifically, in the universally repeated story that it was invented for a banquet hosted by Jennie Jerome, Winston Churchill's mother, at New York's Manhattan Club to celebrate Samuel J. Tilden's election as governor. This story, one of the most widely propagated of all drink myths, could hold up, except for the fact that the inaugural celebrations happened to coincide with Lady Winston's delivery and christening of baby Winston—in Oxfordshire. And no, he wasn't christened with Manhattan Cocktails.

Having sloughed off Mr. Tilden and Ms. Jerome,* must we also slough off the Manhattan Club itself? According to William F. Mulhall, bartender at the Hoffman House from 1882 until it closed in 1915, we must: “The Manhattan cocktail was invented by a man named Black,” he recalled in 1922, “who kept a place ten doors below Houston Street on Broadway in the sixties.” There may be some truth in this: While the only Black city directories have running a saloon during the 1860s was one John Black, who kept a bar at 130th Street, if we look to the next decade they show three

Blacks running saloons, including—and here things start to get interesting—a George Black operating a saloon at 493 Broadway, below Houston, from 1874 until his death in 1881. Admittedly, 493 is more than two and a half blocks below Houston, not ten doors. Yet here's the kicker: The name of the place? The Manhattan Inn. So there's that.

But if George Black did have a hand in the Manhattan's creation nobody seems to have noted it at the time, while there's significant evidence for the Manhattan Club's ownership of the drink. For one thing, there's the Boston bartender who stated that "the Manhattan cocktail originated in the mind of the drink mixer at the Manhattan Club's rooms in New York." He was interviewed in 1889, thirty-three years before Mulhall's recollections saw print. Four years later, the *New York Sun* said the same thing in a long article devoted to the club, its members, and its bar. The *New York Times* concurred in 1902 when "Bobbie," who wrote the "With the Clubmen" column, tossed off as a passing remark that "legend" had it "the Manhattan Club . . . first gave birth to the Manhattan Cocktail." Finally, the club's 1915 official history states pure and simple that "The celebrated Manhattan cocktail was inaugurated at the club."

Unfortunately, none of these references to the Manhattan indicates what precise circumstances attended its inauguration. There is, however, the rumor Carol Truax printed in the April 1963 issue of *Gourmet*, to the effect that the drink was invented by "some anonymous genius" during August Belmont's presidency of the club, which ran from 1874 to 1879. Since her father had been president of the club himself, in the 1890s, this may have some weight. But it may have even predated Belmont's presidency. Consider this little item from the *New York Sun*:

The New York Club has a peculiar cocktail. It is made of the best brandy and several different kinds of bitters, and they always want it shaken in ice, not stirred. The Amaranth Club has a cocktail made with seltzer, and the Manhattan Club has invented another.

That was published in August 1873. Now, there's no guarantee that this Manhattan Club invention is the drink we all know and love, but there's nothing here to say it isn't. If so, it's extraordinarily early for a Cocktail mixed with vermouth; it would be almost a decade before such things reached general acceptance, although they may have been bubbling under

for a while before erupting into print. That, at least, is what a small 1876 item from the *Eureka (California) Sentinel* suggests when it describes a seedy, “sad and careworn” tramp sidling up to the bar and ordering “a nice whiskey cocktail with a little wine in it.” Could that wine be “vino vermouth”?

By the mid-1880s, anyway, the Manhattan was common property. Some indications of its progress: On September 5, 1882, the Manhattan made its first appearance in print, in the pages of the *Olean (New York) Democrat*: “It is but a short time ago that a mixture of whiskey, vermouth and bitters came into vogue,” notes the paper’s “New York Letter.” “It went under various names—Manhattan cocktail, Turf Club cocktail, and Jockey Club cocktail. Bartenders at first were sorely puzzled what was wanted when it was demanded. But now they are fully cognizant of its various aliases and no difficulty is encountered.”* By 1884, the Manhattan had made its way into the bartender’s guides. In 1885, the *New Orleans Times-Democrat* pronounced it “a juicy and delicious compound” while the *Brooklyn Eagle* had a “solitary, discontented and rocky specimen” of the New York bachelor walking into a swank Broadway restaurant at breakfast time and addressing the waiter with considerable irritation: “Stand still, can’t you? You make a man’s head swim bobbing around so. What I want is a Manhattan cocktail with absinthe, frozen [that is, with shaved ice in the glass].” The Ranch saloon in Albuquerque was proudly offering it to all and sundry in 1886, with a splash of Mumm’s Champagne to boot. The first recipe for a Dry Manhattan turned up in 1891, in the second edition of O. H. Byron’s *Modern Bartender’s Guide*. The *Cleveland Leader* dubbed it the “seductive and unconquerable Manhattan Cocktail” in 1892. In the 1894 obituary of General Jubal Early, the most unreconstructed of Confederate generals, it was noted that in recent years “his headquarters for ordinary friends were at the Norvall-Arlington saloon at Lynchburg [Virginia], where his favorite tippie was a Manhattan Cocktail.” Since that’s like Pat Robertson listening to Boy George, it’s a good place to leave things.

Rather than provide a single recipe, I’ve provided three, each illustrating a different school of Manhattanistics.

FORMULA #1 (OLD STANDARD)

These proportions, the same used at the Manhattan Club, were by far the most popular for the first twenty years or so of the drink's existence. They yield what is essentially a Whiskey Cocktail lightened with vermouth.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

TWO OR THREE DASHES OF PERUVIAN BITTERS

ONE TO TWO DASHES [$\frac{1}{2}$ TSP] OF GUM SYRUP

ONE-HALF WINE GLASS [$1\frac{1}{2}$ OZ] OF WHISKEY

ONE-HALF WINE GLASS [$1\frac{1}{2}$ OZ] OF VERMOUTH

Fill glass three-quarters full of fine shaved ice, mix well with a spoon, strain in fancy cocktail glass and serve.

SOURCE: *HOW TO MIX DRINKS: BAR KEEPER'S HANDBOOK*, 1884.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Peruvian bitters were an advertiser in the little bar manual put out by New York's G. Winter Brewing Co., from which this recipe hails, and must be evaluated as such. Angostura bitters, Abbott's bitters, and Peychaud's bitters appear in other early Manhattan recipes, though according to its official history the Manhattan Club made them with orange bitters, which are a nice touch (and endorsed by Harry Johnson, whose opinion is not to be taken lightly). The gum can be dispensed with without affecting the drink's allure in any way. If you wish to add a dash of absinthe—and I do mean a dash, from one of those little Japanese bitters bottles—to this or one of the other Manhattan formulas, g'ahead. Many did, and it makes for a lovely drink, despite what people like Chicago's Theodore Proulx say (he was of the opinion that "absinthe should never be used in a drink where there was vermouth").

The Manhattan has been enshrined in tradition as a rye drink, but this recipe isn't alone in calling for plain whiskey, which could mean rye but also bourbon or even a blended whiskey. Out of twenty-odd pre-Prohibition recipes consulted, only four specified which kind of whiskey should be used, and two of those went with bourbon. In the northeast, anyway, that generic whiskey would generally be taken as rye, but not always. As much of a rye partisan as I am, I've nonetheless found that the choice of rye or bourbon is less important than the choice of 80- or 100-proof whiskey. All things being equal, a 100-proof rye will make the best Manhattan, but a 100-proof bourbon will make a more incisive and balanced drink than an 80-proof rye. This holds particularly true when mixing them fifty-fifty, like this version calls for.

The earliest recipes mention no garnish for this drink—no cherry, no twist.

Before long, both found their way in there. Personally, I prefer the twist.

FORMULA #2 (REVERSE)

The one-to-two “reverse” ratio here—essentially, a Vermouth Cocktail with a stick—makes for a light and aromatic drink, if somewhat deficient in Manhattanness (to coin a word). In any case, it was copied a few times by plagiaristic mixographers but had no legs in the marketplace.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

TAKE 2 DASHES [1 TSP] OF CURAÇOA OR MARASCHINO

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF RYE WHISKEY

1 WINE-GLASS [2 OZ] OF VERMOUTH

3 DASHES OF BOKER’S BITTERS

2 SMALL LUMPS OF ICE

Shake up well, and strain into a claret glass. Put a quarter of a slice of lemon in the glass and serve. If the customer prefers it very sweet use also two dashes [1 tsp] of gum syrup.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS’S BARTENDER’S GUIDE, 1887.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The maraschino—the liqueur, of course, not the polymer in which “cherries” are suspended, as far too many bartenders still use in their Manhattans—makes for a more interesting drink. This is the earliest Manhattan recipe to specify rye, which should again be 100-proof. In place of Boker’s, Fee’s Whiskey Barrel–Aged Bitters work well in this one. The small amount of ice here is a holdover from the Vermouth Cocktail, and indicates a desire to avoid overdilution. A century and a quarter of experience with vermouth in Cocktails has taught us that this need not be a concern, so feel free to ice con brio.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Some mixologists are just shaker happy, and the guy who revised Jerry Thomas’s book is one of them. Stir. The claret glass is specified because at 3 ounces before shaking, this drink is bigger than the standard

Cocktail glass of the day would safely accommodate; our Cocktail glasses are bigger, so use one. For what to do with the lemon, see the [Fancy Vermouth Cocktail](#).

FORMULA #3 (NEW STANDARD)

By adjusting the whiskey so that it outweighs the vermouth, this version turns a pleasant, avuncular drink into an incisive, modern one. Kudos to the Only William.

HALF A TUMBLERFUL OF CRACKED ICE

2 DASHES [$\frac{1}{2}$ TSP] OF GUM

2 DASHES OF BITTERS

1 DASH OF ABSINTHE

$\frac{2}{3}$ DRINK [2 OZ] OF WHISKEY

$\frac{1}{3}$ DRINK [1 OZ] OF VINO VERMOUTH

(A LITTLE [$\frac{1}{4}$ TSP] MARASCHINO MAY BE ADDED.)

Stir this well, strain and serve.

SOURCE: WILLIAM "THE ONLY WILLIAM" SCHMIDT, *THE FLOWING BOWL*, 1892.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Be sure to use the right whiskey, as specified above. The gum is eminently dispensable. As for the bitters: Angostura is the modern choice and has always worked fabulously well in this drink. In the Manhattan's youth, many of its communicants liked the dash of absinthe in theirs, and it does make for a fragrant drink. In fact, if you follow the skilled, creative, and popular bartender William Schmidt's formula to a tee, maraschino and all, you've got a drink that is a perfect metaphor for the 1890s, a decade of top hats and electric lights, automobiles and buggy whips. A final twist of lemon peel will do the drink, or you, no harm.

MARTINI COCKTAIL

Whiskey and vermouth having proved itself to be a successful combination, it didn't take long for the bartenders to fall back on standard procedure and try the red stuff out with brandy (see the [Metropole](#)) and gin—indeed, one or both of these combinations may even have come first. It really doesn't matter—the way mixology was practiced in the Gilded Age, to try one combination was to try them all. The whiskey version was merely the most successful—at first, anyway: While the brandy one never amounted to much with the general tippling public, the gin one, after some tinkering to be sure, would eventually eclipse them all.

The origin of the Martini is one of those topics that would require a monograph devoted to it, if anyone cared enough to write one. When I was working on the first edition of this book, it was a question that raised passions. The Martini was still the one classic Cocktail you could hope to get made properly in the general run of bars; indeed, it was a sort of ark for the whole idea of the classic Cocktail. Nowadays, after almost a decade of full-on Cocktail revolution, the old Dry Gin Martini has seemingly fallen by the wayside, ceding much of its cachet to the Manhattan and the Old-Fashioned and their ilk. In any case, despite the century it stood at the head of the tribe of the Cocktail, its precise origins have never been determined, and all the stories that have sprung up to fill that historical gap suffer from such evidential problems that they're not even worth refuting—the famous Martinez story, which claims it was invented in that California town, rests on the testimony of one old man who was an infant at the time the event supposedly occurred, and not a single detail in his account, from the presence of gold miners in California in the 1860s, to the saloonkeeper who invented it, to the very price of a bottle of whiskey, checks out against contemporary sources. The others, such as the one bruited about in 1900 that had maverick financier Joe Leiter inventing the drink, even though he was but sixteen when it first appeared—are worse. Consequently, I'll confine my remarks to matters mixological.



Copyrighted, 1888.

The Martine, Martinez, Martini, or Turf Club, as mixed (left) and served (right) (from Harry Johnson's *New and Improved Illustrated Bartender's Manual*, 1888; courtesy Gary Regan).

Suffice it to say that the Martini appears close on the heels of the Manhattan, in the same precincts. The early recipes for the Martini (or Martinez, or Martine, or Martina, or Martena, or Martineau, or Martigny—all versions of the name appear; in an oral culture, what you hear is what you hear) or Turf Club, as it was also known, all called for sweet vermouth and Old Tom gin, which was lighter and more mixable than the old-school Hollands that worked so well in the Gin Cocktail.* As with the Manhattan, I've given three recipes, a Turf Club from 1884, to show the drink in its infancy; a Martinez from 1887, to show the reverse option; and a Fourth Degree, from the old Waldorf-Astoria's bar book (ca. 1915), to show it in its maturity. ("Origin somewhat mixed," says the Waldorf-Astoria's chronicler about the last, "but traceable to patrons of the bar who belonged to some secret society or other.") I can vouch for the extraordinary palatability of all three.

FORMULA #1 (TURF CLUB)

The Turf Club was a high-class gambling joint on New York's Madison Square, infested by high-class crooks. It didn't last long—eventually the chumps got wise—but you know while it did they had a good bar.

TWO OR THREE DASHES OF PERUVIAN BITTERS

ONE-HALF WINE GLASS [1½ OZ] OF TOM GIN

ONE-HALF WINE GLASS [1½ OZ] OF ITALIAN VERMOUTH

Fill glass three quarters full of fine ice, stir well with spoon and strain in fancy cocktail glass, then serve.

SOURCE: *HOW TO MIX DRINKS: BAR KEEPER'S HANDBOOK*, 1884.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the bitters, see [Manhattan Formula #1](#); although for something a bit more integrated in flavor, use Angostura. For the Tom gin, use an Old Tom (the fact that I can write that is proof of a true revolution; when the first edition of this book came out, there was no Old Tom). Some considered the Turf Club a Hollands drink; also good. If you want maximum authenticity, add a dash—say, ¼ teaspoon—of gum. As with the early Manhattan recipes, this one specifies no garnish. A twist of lemon peel is always welcome, though. Most early recipes for the Martini/Martinez include a couple of dashes of gum on top of the (sweet) Tom gin and the (sweet) Vermouth. For the modern palate, this is entirely unnecessary—and not just the modern palate: As “Cocktail” Boothby noted in 1891, “The Old Tom Cordial gin and Italian vermouth of which the [Martini] are composed are both sweet enough.”

FORMULA #2 (MARTINEZ COCKTAIL)

The monicker *Martinez* appears in a couple of influential early bar books, but almost nowhere else.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

TAKE 1 DASH OF BOKER'S BITTERS

2 DASHES [1 TSP] OF MARASCHINO

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF OLD TOM GIN

1 WINE-GLASS [2 OZ] OF VERMOUTH

2 SMALL LUMPS OF ICE

Shake up thoroughly, and strain into a large cocktail glass. Put a quarter of a slice of lemon in the glass, and serve. If the guest prefers it very sweet, add two dashes [$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp] of gum syrup.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS'S BARTENDER'S GUIDE, 1887.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the bitters and gin, see [Formula #1](#). Maraschino and gin have a particular affinity for each other, and even though the gin is the junior partner in this reverse-proportion Martini, the pairing shines through. For the ice, see [Manhattan Formula #2](#).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Don't shake, stir!

FORMULA #3 (FOURTH DEGREE)

The standard pre-Prohibition proportions for the drink. This version is more austere than most, stripped as it is of any bitters, curaçao, gum syrup, or what-have-you.

ONE-THIRD [1 OZ] ITALIAN VERMOUTH

TWO-THIRDS [2 OZ] PLYMOUTH GIN

DASH OF ABSINTHE

SOURCE: ALBERT STEVENS CROCKETT, OLD WALDORF BAR DAYS, 1931.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Self-explanatory. A very simple drink. For an old-school drink, use $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of gin to $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce of vermouth. For a more modern one, go with what's suggested. As always with a vermouth drink, lemon peel is nice.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir with plenty of cracked ice and strain.

DRY MARTINI COCKTAIL

The Martini, when it hit its stride in the late 1880s, brought a new interest to gin drinks. At the same time, there were new gins coming into the market. Dry, unsweetened gins. In fact, the whole tenor of the age was dry (ironically, since in a few years it would be Dry)—dry Champagne, dry gin, dry Cocktails. When, in 1897, the *New York Herald* asked “the proprietor of a fashionable drinking place” about this, he gave vent to the following:

When a customer comes in and orders a sweet drink, . . . I know at once that he’s from the country. In all my acquaintance with city men, I know not more than half a dozen who can stand drinking sweet things. It is only the young fellows from the farm, with their rosy cheeks and sound stomachs, who can stand a course of sugary drinks. The reason for this is obvious. The more sugar a man takes into his stomach the less he can stand of liquors. A year ago I used a quart a day of ‘gum,’ which is the general term applied to all the syrups used to sweeten whiskies and mixtures. Today I use barely a whisky glass of gum, and my business has increased, too. People are beginning to realize that their stomachs are not of cast iron. They want everything dry, the drier the better.

We don’t know who poured the very first true Dry Martini—that is, Plymouth or London dry gin mixed with French vermouth and no syrup—but clearly it was in the air; the earliest reference comes from 1890, albeit with an asterisk (it is in a diary published in 1930, with the author’s admission that he had made edits and alterations). By 1896, anyway, it was widespread. The *Herald* piece gives three separate versions of the drink, under different names. Here’s the one from the Hoffman House; head bartender Charley Mahoney called it the “Mahoney Cocktail,” but it’s really just a standard, turn-of-the-last-century Dry Martini.

That is nothing to be sneezed at. Mixed like this, with half gin and half vermouth and a dash of orange bitters, the Martini is an entirely different drink from the late twentieth-century Dry Martini and, as many believe, a

superior one. For those who have learned the Dry Martini as a fiery chalice of unmixed tanglefoot, it will come as a revelation. A gentleman among Cocktails.

Use mixing glass full of shaved ice.

Add one-half jigger [1½ oz] of Nicholson gin, one-half jigger [1½ oz] French Vermouth and dash orange bitters; shake well. Pour into cocktail glass and squeeze orange peel on top.

SOURCE: CHARLES S. MAHONEY, *HOFFMAN HOUSE BARTENDER'S GUIDE*, 1905.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the vanished Nicholson, use Tanqueray or Beefeater. The gin must be strong and aromatic if it's to stand up to this much vermouth (which should be Noilly Prat). The orange bitters are essential, but lemon peel will work as well as orange peel here. By 1900, an order like the one in Lilian Bell's novel, *The Expatriates*, for "Dry Martini . . . with an olive in it" would be understood at any fancy bar in the country.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Probably better to stir this one, if you want that thick, silky Martini texture.

GIBSON COCKTAIL

If the paternity of the Martinez rests on shaky ground, California's contribution to the art and evolution of the Dry Martini is far more firmly anchored. "The Gibson," wrote the *Oakland Tribune* in 1915, "is a blend peculiar to San Francisco. Since its introduction along the cocktail route in this town, it has become known over the two great divides, across the rivers and valleys and in the cavernous canyons of a metropolis just beyond Jersey City." If, as San Francisco's own Bill Boothby asserted, it was named after (and presumably championed by) Charles Dana Gibson, that couldn't have hurt its distribution—Gibson was just about the most popular artist in America. On the other hand, it may very well have been named after San Francisco financier and fellow Bohemian Club member Walter D. K.

Gibson, whose family maintains that the club's bartender made the drink under his instructions in 1898 or thereabouts. Whichever Gibson it was (there is evidence for both), the drink was nationwide by 1904.

None of the early mentions of the Gibson include the now-iconic pickled onion. I suspect that it was added in later years as an attribute by which to distinguish the Gibson from the Dry Martini, once the latter had sloughed off the dashes of bitters that had been the distinguishing mark between them.

À LA CHARLES DANA GIBSON, BOHEMIAN CLUB, SAN FRANCISCO

Equal parts [1½ oz each] of French Vermouth and Coates Plymouth Gin, thoroughly chilled, is called a Gibson Cocktail. No decorations, bitters or citron fruit rind permissible in this famous appetizer.

SOURCE: WILLIAM "COCKTAIL" BOOTHBY, "SOME NEW UP-TO-NOW SEDUCTIVE AMERICAN COCKTAILS," UNDATED SUPPLEMENT TO *THE WORLD'S DRINKS AND HOW TO MIX THEM*, 1908.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The *Tribune* indicated that the drink was made with one particular brand of gin and one particular brand of vermouth, but coyly refused to name either. It did, however, give the proportions as "60-40" dry gin to vermouth. If made thus, I find Plymouth works swimmingly; if mixed fifty-fifty, I prefer the more assertive Tanqueray. Noilly Prat for the vermouth, as usual. As for garnish. In the exceedingly rare *Rawling's Book of Mixed Drinks*, from 1914, San Francisco mixologist Ernest P. Rawling, who knew his onions, noted that "a hazelnut [presumably pickled] is generally added." Beyond that, the early recipes are unadorned.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir with plenty of cracked ice.

II. OTHER VERMOUTH COCKTAILS

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, vermouth Cocktails multiplied like *Listeria* in warm egg salad. The bar book of the Old Waldorf-Astoria, just for example, had 174 of them. I shall restrain myself and offer only another 8 percent or so of that number (you're not necessarily missing much—something like two-thirds of those 174 recipes were for variations on the gin-and-vermouth Martini).

METROPOLE COCKTAIL

If there's a Cocktail with whiskey and vermouth and one with gin and vermouth, could one with brandy and vermouth be far behind? The question is of course rhetorical. In 1884, the *London Telegraph* was already talking about American bartenders considering "a vermouth cocktail with a dash of brandy in it" to be "de rigueur, just before lunch." And indeed, that same year O. H. Byron included a brandy-and-vermouth Metropolitan Cocktail in his *Modern Bartender's Guide*. Unfortunately, he neglects to indicate precisely which Metropolitan it hailed from. At the time, there were various Metropolitan Clubs, Metropolitan Saloons, and Metropolitan Hotels scattered throughout the country, from the largest cities to the wildest mining camps.

Nor is there anything to be deduced from the author's biography: Byron, alas, is a man of mystery. Extensive digging through newspaper archives, city directories, and Census records has failed to reveal exactly who the hell he was. I don't even know what city he worked in, let alone what establishment, if any: For all I know, "O. H. Byron" may be the Excelsior Publishing House of New York's nom de plume for some lawyer's clerk hired to scrape together a ream of drink recipes. But whoever collected them, the recipes—at least, the few that weren't directly poached from Jerry Thomas—are well chosen. What's more, considered closely they

display an insider's knowledge of what the boys were drinking in New York. The book provides, for instance, a recipe for the Amaranth Cocktail that tallies with the Cocktail attributed to the Amaranth Club (a Gotham theatrical club) in the *New York Sun* in 1873 (see the [Manhattan](#)) and, more important, recipes for the Manhattan itself (tied for the first in print) and the Martinez (the first). All this is by way of lengthy preamble to suggesting that the most likely culprit for the Metropolitan Cocktail was probably Jerry Thomas's old stand, the bar at the Metropolitan Hotel.

The Metropolitan Hotel closed in 1895, only a few years after the Considine brothers opened up the Metropole Hotel, at the quiet corner of Forty-Second Street and Broadway. The Metropolitan had been favored by actors and politicians. The Metropole drew actors and politicians, too—though where the Metropolitan's were touring thespians and congressmen, the Metropole's were burlesque stars and ward heelers. And there were a lot of pugilists, cardsharps, workers of the short con, organized gamblers, chorus girls, you name it. Small wonder: George Considine was a bookmaker, John R. was an ex-theatrical manager, and James P., who ran the café, was an amateur painter on the lam from an armed robbery rap in Ohio. O. Henry hung out there, of course, until he pissed off Jimmy by telling him he didn't know how to paint cows (he was, after all, a Texan, and some things cannot pass unremarked).

The Metropole's house Cocktail is to the Metropolitan's as the one hotel was to the other: more or less the same ingredients, but stronger, spicier, and definitely flashier, yet not without style.

Two dashes gum-syrup [$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp], two dashes Peychaud [*sic*] bitters, one dash orange bitters, half a jigger [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] brandy, half a jigger [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] French vermouth, a mixing-glass half-full fine ice. Mix, strain into cocktail-glass, add a maraschino cherry.

SOURCE: GEORGE J. KAPPELER, *MODERN AMERICAN DRINKS*, 1895.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Kappeler loved his Peychaud's bitters, but here they're a particularly good choice, as they blend beautifully with brandy—which, to be true to the old Metropole, should be a nice cognac, VSOP or better. Paul E. Lowe, "whose locks have been whitened by the shaved ice and powdered sugar of many a sweltering summer," as he boasted in his 1904 *Drinks as They Are Mixed*, suggests using two parts brandy to one vermouth. This is a fine

suggestion, and it should be: Lowe may have been at one point head bartender at the Hoffman House. For a Metropolitan, replace both bitters with 3 dashes of Angostura, cut the cognac by half and add 1 barspoon of gum. It's worth noting that Kappeler finished his Metropolitan with the more elegant twist of lemon peel rather than the cherry, but what chorus girl would want to nibble on that?

NOTES ON EXECUTION: *Mix* means “stir.”

ROB ROY COCKTAIL

In 1897, the *New York Herald* noted that “the Fifth-Avenue hotel has two new drinks this winter, the Star cocktail and the Rob Roy cocktail. . . .” We’ll get to the Star in a moment. As for the Rob Roy, which was already a couple of years old when the Fifth Avenue got to it, the Reginald De Koven musical after which it was most likely named having opened in 1894 (the drink was being mentioned in newspapers by the end of 1895): “Of course, the Rob Roy is made of Scotch whisky. It is completed by vermouth and orange bitters.”

At the turn of the last century, Scotch whisky was all the rage. With the introduction of golf into America in the 1890s, there was a new interest in things Scottish. The whisky salesmen, real pioneers in the black arts of marketing, did not let this slip by them, and before you knew it Tommy Dewar and his ilk were sluicing the American provinces with liberal amounts of their aggressively branded blends. Result: By 1900, the Scotch Highball was the most fashionable drink in America. The Rob Roy may just be another result of this energetic marketing, at least according to Fred Orphal, an old-timer who wrote in to the *New York Sun*’s pioneering “Along the Wine Trail” column in 1941.

In 1895, as Orphal’s story goes, his brother August, “a barkeeper of fifty years’ experience,” then at the beginning of his career, was working at the popular Duke’s House in Hoboken, New Jersey, just across the street from the Manhattan ferry. One evening, a salesman making the rounds for Usher’s whisky came in. The drummer got to talking with some gents there,

and they wanted to include him in the next round of Manhattans they ordered. “It’s not ethical for me to drink anything that does not contain Usher’s Scotch whisky,” quoth the salesman. A compromise was rapidly reached: The same drink, but with Scotch instead of rye. Everyone liked it. One of the boys came up with the name. August sent the recipe in to the *Police Gazette* and won \$10 for it. That’s the story, anyway. It may be true—it helps that August is listed as a bartender in the Hoboken directories of the day and that Fred, not a drinking man, was writing to see if the Rob Roy was a drink that anyone had ever heard of.

They had. Of the hundreds of Cocktails in Jacques Straub’s *Drinks* and Hugo Ensslin’s *Recipes for Mixed Drinks*—the two most comprehensive Cocktail books of the age—only a scantling thirteen use Scotch, and the only one of them to gain any traction was the Rob Roy, which was the first of them all and is still going strong.

The fact is, Scotch is just plain tricky to mix with, and Italian vermouth happens to be one of the very few things with which it does get along. The Rob Roy was the result of sheer luck, of plugging Scotch into a now-standard formula and seeing what happened, but there’s nothing wrong with being lucky.

2 DASHES ORANGE BITTERS

½ JIGGER [1½ OZ] SCOTCH WHISKY

½ JIGGER ITALIAN VERMOUTH

LEMON PEEL

ICE

Stir and strain into cocktail glass.

SOURCE: JOHN APPLGREEN, *APPLEGREEN’S BARKEEPER’S GUIDE*, 1899.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Although the early recipes all agree that the Rob Roy contains Scotch and vermouth, after that they’re about as harmonious as a Glasgow pub at last call on a Saturday night. Proportions, brand of bitters, garnish, and kind of vermouth are all very much in play. Personally, I find French vermouth and Scotch to be a nasty combination, so I chose a recipe that agrees with me (it also has the advantage of being the very earliest printed for this drink). If the proportions began at fifty-fifty, as was usual with vermouth drinks, before long they had gravitated to two-to-one. With an 80-proof blend, I prefer the latter; with a 90-proof one, the former. Of the various bitters

suggested, I find orange bitters—and particularly Regans’ Orange Bitters No. 6, with its complex bite—to work the best, although Peychaud’s is also pretty good. And while you’re at it, a twist of orange peel is rather nicer than lemon peel here. Dash of absinthe? As long as you’re asking . . .

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir. Strain. Twist.

STAR COCKTAIL

The Manhattan Club had more than one arrow in its mixological quiver. Besides the Manhattan, it was credited with the Sam Ward—you scoop the pulp out of a half lemon, turn it inside out and fill the resulting cup with cracked ice and yellow Chartreuse; it was popular, for some reason—and a whole list of other liquid delights. Indeed, in 1893, the *New York Sun* claimed that “more famous drinks have been invented at the Manhattan than at any other place in the country” and listed a good dozen. What’s more, we know who was in charge of things behind the club’s Mexican onyx bar by then. John F. Irish, a sporty and athletic young man from upstate Saratoga, New York, was the club’s head bartender from at least 1887 until 1897, when he moved over to the new Democratic Club (along with a considerable portion of the club’s membership—there are principles in this world, to be sure, but a good bartender is a good bartender). During the tenure of this “deft mingler,” as the *New York World* dubbed him, the Manhattan’s bar rivaled any in the city. In a city that could boast of the Hoffman House; the Waldorf-Astoria; and such knights of the bar as Harry Johnson, George J. Kappeler, and William “The Only William” Schmidt, that was saying something.

A further variation on the theme of brown liquor plus vermouth, the Star Cocktail enjoyed rather a vogue in the last years before Prohibition. It first appears in the *Sun*’s 1893 list, was all around town by 1894, and gets printed by George Kappeler, of the Holland House hotel, in 1895. Why was it called the Star? I don’t know. It is nonetheless an entirely palatable tippie.

Fill a mixing-glass half-full fine ice, add two dashes [$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp] gum-syrup, three dashes Peychaud [*sic*] or Angostura bitters, one-half jigger [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] apple brandy, one-half jigger [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] Italian vermouth. Mix, strain into cocktail-glass, twist small piece lemon-peel on top.

SOURCE: GEORGE J. KAPPELER, *MODERN AMERICAN DRINKS*, 1895.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The gum is strictly optional. I prefer Angostura in this, but Peychaud's bitters will work fine, too. (It's worth noting that the Fifth Avenue Hotel, noted for the quality of its bar, preferred orange bitters.) For the applejack, see the [Jersey Sunset](#). Harry Johnson suggested adding a dash of curaçao, which is also a nice touch.

According to the *Sun*, the Manhattan Club's version, on the other hand, supplemented the applejack-vermouth base with yellow Chartreuse and "cherry bounce," by which a cherry-flavored brandy like Heering was no doubt meant. The *Sun*'s description furnishes no proportions, but I find a barspoon of Heering and half that of the Chartreuse makes for a lovely drink. Don't forget the bitters.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: *Mix* means "stir."

RACQUET (CLUB) COCKTAIL

Another of Irish's creations, and a good one, is the Racquet, a simple variation on the Martini. The Racquet gets excellent mileage out of a surprise ingredient—indeed, so unexpected was the ingredient and so subtle in its effects that when George Kappeler included the drink in his 1895 book, as the "Racquet Club Cocktail," he missed it entirely.

The Racquet Cocktail consist[s] of [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] Plymouth gin, [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] vermouth, [2 dashes] orange bitters, and [1 barspoon] crème de cacao.

SOURCE: *NEW YORK SUN*, 1893.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Use an Italian vermouth and an imported crème de cacao (the ingredient Kappeler overlooked); it doesn't matter if it's brown or white as long as it's good (the Tempus Fugit one is particularly good here).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir with cracked ice, strain, twist orange peel on top.

SARATOGA COCKTAIL

This isn't the place for a history of Saratoga Springs, nineteenth-century New York's northern equivalent of the Hamptons, only with gambling. How pleasant it must have been to catch the morning steamboat and spend the day sipping cooling drinks from the bar and enjoying the breeze as the still largely agricultural Hudson Valley unspooled its vistas before you. A night on the water, and next morning you were there. Somehow, eighteen hours on a steamboat seems infinitely preferable to four hours on the Long Island Expressway.

Once there, the sport ran pretty high, especially later in the century. High-stakes table games courtesy of Jerry Thomas's pal John Morrissey along with Richard Canfield, two of the greatest gamblers America has ever known; horse racing on a first-class track; beautiful women; roguish men; mediocre dinners (you can't have everything); ice cream; and potato chips—which were invented there. And, for them what wanted, there were Cocktails. As early as 1839, people were remarking on the “keen blades” who slept in in the mornings, antifogmatized immediately with a snort of cognac, smoked and lounged, lounged and smoked, emptied tumblers, and popped corks. “At 6, four bottles of wine. Supper at 9. At 10, mint-julaps . . . At 11, cards and cocktails till 1.” Then things got ugly.

By the 1880s, the Cocktail class had more or less taken over the resort. As if to acknowledge this, there were two different Saratoga Cocktails in general circulation. One was basically a Fancy Brandy Cocktail with a squirt of Champagne (alias a Chicago Cocktail). Then there's this one, which splits the difference between a Manhattan and a Metropolitan. The fact that it could hold its own against the other—a Fancy Brandy Cocktail with a squirt of Champagne being one of the most irresistible drinks going—is really saying something.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

TAKE 2 DASHES ANGOSTURA BITTERS

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF BRANDY

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF WHISKEY

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF VERMOUTH

Shake up well with two small lumps of ice; strain into a claret glass, and serve with a quarter of a slice of lemon.

SOURCE: *JERRY THOMAS'S BARTENDER'S GUIDE*, 1887.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The whiskey should be rye and the vermouth red. And definitely use more ice.

Replace the vermouth with absinthe and you have what the Hoffman House called a “Morning Cocktail.” If that’s what you need to get going in the a.m., God help you.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: This one is better stirred. For the glass, see the [Vermouth Cocktail](#).

BIJOU COCKTAIL

I never know what to do with Harry Johnson. Author of one of the great bar books, self-described master barkeeper, and champion drinks mixer, he has always seemed to me to be one of those people who is so consumed with resentment over his lack of due recognition that he enmeshes himself in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Case in point, in 1910, after a fifty-year career behind the bar and a number of notable successes, he returned to New York, where he had enjoyed his greatest success and recognition (such as it was), from a few years spent in his native Germany. A reporter from the *New York Herald* got him talking, and, well: “Brandy, gin and Jamaica rum were the drinks of the day when I opened the ‘Little Jumbo’ back in the latter seventies,” he began.

It was here that I first made the gin sour, the mint julep and the cocktails.

Mixed drinks were unknown in New York back then. It was in the little saloon there that “Boss” Tweed drank his first mint julep, and Horace Greeley sipped his first cocktail.

Why do people do things like that to themselves? As the *Washington Times* wrote, after pointing out that there was many a Cocktail and Julep before Harry, “he overflows the cup, so to speak, when he tells us that he served some of his famous cocktails to Horace Greeley . . . for the record stands that he was a teetotaller.” It’s also inconceivable, for that matter, that William Marcy Tweed waited until he was on his deathbed to take his first Mint Julep (he died in 1878). If Johnson had simply stuck to telling tales about the Little Jumbo, the well-regarded bar he ran on the Bowery until 1889, he would have got off scot-free. But he had a pattern of both real achievements and exaggerated claims for them that worked to undermine his claims—the claim, for example, that “there was published by me, in San Francisco, the first Bartender’s Manual ever issued in the United States” and that “ten thousand (10,000) copies of the work were sold . . . within the brief period of six weeks.” Indeed, as he elaborated elsewhere, “the book got scattered all over the country and the newspapers wrote many stories about the book and me.”

I don’t doubt that he wrote an early Cocktail book. But if he did, he didn’t put his name on it, and it was far short of the complete manual on bartending he implied that he had written, and if the newspapers wrote about it and him, it must have been in German. I’ve done a good deal of research on the man and Anistatia Miller and Jared Brown have done a good deal more, and with all that has been turned up (mostly, I’ll readily admit, by them), nary a reference to a bar book from the 1850s or 1860s by Mr. Johnson has been found, or any book answering his description of it.*

But anyway. Rather than entangle ourselves in the stew of half-truths, exaggerations, and accomplishments that is Johnson’s legacy, let’s agree that his 1882 *Bartenders’ Manual*, especially in its 1888 and 1900 revisions, is a detailed and thoroughly professional work. Blowhard he might have been, but at least he knew how to mix drinks; indeed, I’ve readily and gratefully admitted a number of his recipes into this volume. His version of the Bijou stands as full and sufficient proof (another version, published by Cincinnati bartender Chris Lawlor in 1895, uses the newly introduced Grand Marnier rather than Chartreuse; nice, but not nearly so interesting).

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

½ GLASS FILLED WITH FINE SHAVED ICE

⅓ WINE GLASS [1 OZ] CHARTREUSE (GREEN)

⅓ WINE GLASS [1 OZ] VERMOUTH (ITALIAN)

⅓ WINE GLASS [1 OZ] OF PLYMOUTH GIN

1 DASH OF ORANGE BITTERS

Mix well with a spoon, strain into a cocktail glass; add a cherry or medium-size olive, squeeze a piece of lemon peel on top and serve.

SOURCE: HARRY JOHNSON, *BARTENDER'S MANUAL*, 1900.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: I strongly suggest you use the cherry and not the olive.

WEEPER'S JOY

William Schmidt. The Only William. In later years, Julian Street—then one of America's leading culinary authorities, but once a cub reporter in New York—would recall his encounter with greatness:

The newspapers were published downtown, so of course there were many downtown restaurants and bars that catered to newspapermen. A favorite bar was that of "The Only William," off lower Broadway, and it was a great moment in the life of the young reporter when a bearded elder of the craft escorted him to William's pleasant place, bought him a Weeper's Joy . . . and over it introduced him to the celebrity behind the bar, a short round-headed man with an amiable eye and an immense mustache.

Street's turn came in 1899, and I envy him for it. William Schmidt was an unlikely candidate to succeed Jerry Thomas as America's official Number One Mixer of Drinks, but succeed him he did. He was everything

that Thomas was not—fussy, precise, vain, pedantic, even faintly ridiculous—but he was also a wildly creative and talented mixologist (for a few years there he had a policy of inventing and serving a new drink every day). As proof, I offer that selfsame Weeper’s Joy, a drink that looks like a train wreck on the page but tastes like an angel’s tears. For at least a decade before his death in 1905 (of senile dementia, according to the papers, although he had been mixing drinks almost to the last), he was the newspapers’ go-to guy for mixology, and this drink proves that it wasn’t just because he was right around the corner.

A GOBLET $\frac{2}{3}$ FULL OF FINE ICE

3 DASHES [$\frac{1}{2}$ TSP] OF GUM

$\frac{1}{2}$ PONY [1 OZ] OF ABSINTHE

$\frac{1}{2}$ PONY [1 OZ] OF VINO VERMOUTH

$\frac{1}{2}$ PONY [1 OZ] OF KÜMMEL

1 DASH [2 DASHES] OF CURAÇAO

Stir very well, and strain into a cocktail glass.

SOURCE: WILLIAM SCHMIDT, *THE FLOWING BOWL*, 1892.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: This one’s pretty straightforward. If you want to eliminate the gum, go ahead; the drink’s sufficiently sweet without it. But I’d think twice: The extra sweetness gives the drink a thick mouthfeel and helps round that final edge off of the absinthe.

BAMBOO COCKTAIL

In 1890, a group of American naval officers stationed in Yokohama assumed part interest in the newly expanded Grand Hotel, which offered the best accommodations in town. Soon after, the hotel reached across the Pacific and hired a West Coast saloonman by the name of Louis Eppinger. A German-born contemporary of Jerry Thomas’s, Eppinger had run bars in San Francisco and perhaps New Orleans, hotels in Portland, and God knows

what else. “Fussy little Louis” was a wise choice. Under his stewardship, the massive five-acre pile of a hotel became “a far-famed rendezvous for round-the-world travelers,” one of those cardinal outposts of Western culture around which the amorphous, cosmopolitan mass of steamship-borne moneyed vagabonds bent their endless paths. For almost two decades, Eppinger greeted guests, “haunt[ed] the markets for delicacies,” planned menus (the Grand was known for its cuisine, and even served a couple of Japanese dishes every day), arranged entertainments, and bustled around the premises until, “grown grey and almost blind in the service of catering to the public” and so rheumatic that he needed a couple of boys to carry him up and down the stairs, he finally retired. That was in 1907; before the year was out, he’d be dead and buried. His remains still lie in the Jewish section of the Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery.

Although Eppinger, in his old age, was particularly concerned with the Grand Hotel’s kitchen, he didn’t neglect the bar; it was widely known as a congenial place to “play billiards and drink Japanese Martini cocktails,” as one visitor noted, and through its doors passed many a celebrity, including Rudyard Kipling and the humorist George Ade. Eppinger also specialized in another drink, a simple, light, and peerlessly dry aperitif known as the Bamboo Cocktail. If he was also the drink’s creator, that important act of generation must have occurred in the early 1880s, when he was salooning it in the tiny, yet very popular place he kept on Halleck Street in San Francisco. By 1886, the Bamboo Cocktail had made it as far east as St. Paul, where the mixture of “three parts sherry and one part vermouth,” as it was then constituted, turns up in a local newspaper. By 1893, the drink was being poured in the “uptown Broadway hotels and cafes” in New York with the monicker Boston Bamboo. How Boston got roped into things is difficult to divine, unless it’s due to New York drinkers’ conviction that any drink so genteel and mild could only have been birthed in the Puritan City.

In any case, by the turn of the century, the Bamboo was a staple wherever fine cocktails were stirred and was widely available in bottled form. It is still a fine, even indispensable cocktail, just the thing to deploy when you’re in a cocktail bar and don’t want another high-test concoction with overproof rum, mezcal, cloudberry cordial, and Amaro Sibilla. The Bamboo (along with its close relative, the Adonis; see below) looks like a cocktail, tastes like a cocktail, and punches like a six-year-old.

Originated and named by Mr. Louis Eppinger, Yokohama, Japan. Into a mixing-glass of cracked ice place half a jiggerful [1½ oz] of French vermouth, half a jiggerful [1½ oz] of sherry, two dashes of Orange bitters and two drops of Angostura bitters; stir thoroughly and strain into a stem cocktail glass; squeeze and twist a piece of lemon peel over the top and serve with a pimola or an olive.

SOURCE: WILLIAM T. "COCKTAIL" BOOTHBY'S *WORLD DRINKS AND HOW TO MIX THEM*, 1908.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the sherry, use a fino or an amontillado, but not a particularly expensive one. The two drops of Angostura can be generated by lightly tipping the bottle over the glass without actually dashing it. A pimola is simply a pimienta-stuffed olive, which makes a nice touch. On the other hand, if there's a Japanese specialty foods store in your area, it might be worthwhile to pop in and see if anything suggests itself as an alternate garnish.

If you make this with Italian vermouth instead of French, omitting the drops of Angostura, not only will you have a plusher, if less elegant, drink, you'll have an Adonis, named after what has been called the first Broadway musical. *Adonis*, starring Henry E. Dixey, opened in 1884 at the Bijou—in Jerry Thomas's old space at 1239 Broadway—and ran for more than 600 performances. According to the *New Haven Register*, the drink was invented by Joe McKone of the Hoffman House, New York; whoever invented it, it was before 1887, when it turns up in print. Many skipped the name and called this version a Bamboo as well.

PRINCETON COCKTAIL

As mixing spirits with fortified, aromatized wines went from novelty to orthodoxy, mixologists began experimenting with things beyond vermouth, leading to drinks like the Zaza, which combined equal parts of dry gin and Dubonnet, and the Calisaya Cocktail, which mixed a Spanish aromatized wine with whiskey. The deep thinkers behind the bar soon realized that the fortified wine didn't have to be aromatized to make a fine Cocktail. Case in point, the Bamboo, of course, or the Tuxedo, which combined gin, dry

sherry, and orange bitters to excellent effect (proportions: two to one with a dash). Or the Princeton. This is another of George Kappeler's; his book also offered the Harvard and the Yale, which gives you some indication of the sort of folks who propped up the bar at the old Holland House. All three are fine drinks, but for some reason this one's the most artistic. Interestingly enough, a simplified version of this—as Top and Bottom—became a staple of Harlem rent-parties during the 1920s. Go figure.

A mixing-glass half-full fine ice, three dashes orange bitters, one and a half pony [2 oz] Tom gin. Mix, strain into cocktail-glass; add half a pony [$\frac{3}{4}$ oz] port wine carefully and let it settle in the bottom of the cocktail before serving.

SOURCE: GEORGE J. KAPPELER, *MODERN AMERICAN DRINKS*, 1895.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Charley Mahoney of the Hoffman House suggests a lemon twist on this one; I prefer orange, but whichever you use, don't drop it in the drink or you'll mess up the visuals.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: To get the top-and-bottom effect, the port has to be slowly slid down the side of the glass. The drink will taste better if the port has been chilled in advance.

BROOKLYN COCKTAIL

Manhattan had one, the Bronx had one, so Brooklyn had to have one, too. (Queens and Staten Island were too sunk in rural slumber at the time to require anything so citified as a Cocktail.) The shakers set to shaking and the stirrers to stirring, but nobody in the classic era ever succeeded in truly making one stick, nor have they done so to date. By far the closest shot was one of the very first, by Jacob “Jack” Grohusko, head bartender at Baracca's Restaurant, another Wall Street haunt. While not in the first rank of Cocktails, it's a solid citizen of the second tier. Grohusko's original, with its Italian vermouth, is far better than the version that has come down to us,

which uses French vermouth, something that experts at the time felt mixed poorly with whiskey. They were right. Of course, with the Italian vermouth, the Brooklyn is nothing more than an oddly accented Manhattan, something that fits the Brooklyn of 2015 much better than the one of 1915. Still, a tasty drink.

1 DASH [½ BARSPOON] AMER. [SIC] PICON BITTERS

1 DASH [½ BARSPOON] MARASCHINO

50% RYE WHISKEY

50% ITALIAN VERMOUTH

Fill glass with ice.

Stir and strain. Serve.

SOURCE: JACK GROHUSKO, *JACK'S MANUAL*, 1908.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Amer Picon is a tough one—it's not sold in the United States anymore, and even if it were the modern version is a low-proof shadow of the original French bitter. Your best bet is to use a good, orangey Italian Amaro, such as CioCiaro, and a dash of Regans' Orange Bitters. A lemon twist is appropriate here.

BLUE MOON COCKTAIL

Watch the herky-jerky, black-and-white films from the period or listen to the tinny, scratchy pop records and you'd think the first couple of decades of the twentieth century were peopled by colorless stiffs who dressed in chintz sofa-covers and had the sex appeal of oatmeal; that corniness prevailed and fun was strictly of the Parcheesi variety.

Consider, as a counter argument, Joel's. From 1900 until 1925, if you nipped around the corner from Times Square to the place on Forty-First Street with the large, glowing, green snake on its sign, you would find yourself in a world that was anything but dowdy. Joel's Green Room, it

started out as, then Joel's Great Bohemian Resort, Joel's Bohemia, Joel's Café, and finally, by 1912 or so, just plain Joel's. And what, pray tell, was Joel's? "Joel's is the Home of New York's true Bohemians—Actors, Artists and Newspaper folk—the most lovable people on earth." That, at least, is what one of the establishment's postcards claimed. Joel's claimed a lot of things, though—it was to New York "what Maxim's is to Paris," its cuisine was "unexcelled," with no lard in the cooking and "no canned goods"; its beers were "the talk of New York," its cabaret floor show featured twenty singers and the whole place seated "1000 diners," including "500 show folks always at Joel's after [the] show." Oh, and as if that weren't enough, should your curiosity extend to matters intellectual, your waiter would be happy to sell you a book penned by Joel himself on the "polygeneric theory of life," disproving the theory of evolution.

Joel Rinaldo, the Joel in question, was admittedly something of a crank. The fine food at his place was chili con carne, tamales, and chicken. The beer was indeed good, but it was beer. The "500 show folks" were not necessarily all footlight favorites. And though the tall, immaculately dressed Rinaldo posed as an exotic Latin of aristocratic blood, he was in fact nothing of the sort, being born in New York of Russian Jewish stock. Whatever his act, it worked for him. Perhaps even too well: In 1915 one Miss Millie Gardner sued the very much married Rinaldo for breach of promise and support for the infant son he had fathered with her; when he claimed, as he did in another of his books, to have been "a student of sex problems," he wasn't kidding.

Nor was he kidding about many of his other claims. As the prolific New York journalist Benjamin De Casseres wrote in 1932, Joel's was "the most colorful, the most romantic, the most vibrating place in all New York." From the ground-floor bar to the massive, blockwide second-floor "music room" to the upstairs clubrooms, it was indeed packed with the unconventional, the revolutionary (Joel even kept a table marked "Reserved for Literature and Revolution") and the just plain fun. Sooner or later, everyone stopped by, from O. Henry and Sinclair Lewis to Emma Goldman and Leon Trotsky (guess where those two sat). There was the night that Enrico Caruso, forbidden by contract from singing anywhere but the opera, nonetheless stood up and, beating time with a fork full of spaghetti, let loose with "O Sole Mio" while Charlie Chaplin hurried up from another table, grabbed a violin from the house band and accompanied him.

“Nothing was too absurd, too amusing, too nearly inconceivable” to be spawned at Joel’s, as De Casseres maintained. That would have to include the house cocktail, the Blue Moon. It was slightly sweet, fragrant, “high powered in action” (as Broadway columnist O. O. McIntyre described it) and, startlingly, a color variously described as anywhere from “Prussian blue” to a purple so deep that it left a persistent stain on anything it splashed on. Alas, because Rinaldo did not include an official formula anywhere in his published works or recorded utterances, it is difficult to establish which of the half dozen very different formulas for the drink that were circulating in the 1910s and 1920s is the authentic one. But with a more than usual amount of test-drives and the expert assistance of the column veteran barman Patrick Murphy devoted to the drink’s mysteries back in 1940, I think I’ve come up with something pretty damn close; something that two of would get Caruso waving that fork.

$\frac{2}{3}$ [1½ OZ] GIN

$\frac{1}{3}$ [½ OZ] FRENCH VERMOUTH

1 DASH ORANGE BITTERS

1 DASH [½ OZ] CRÈME YVETTE

Stir well in a mixing glass with cracked ice, strain off and top with Claret.

SOURCE: HUGO R. ENSSLIN, *RECIPES FOR MIXED DRINKS*, 1916.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The descriptions of this drink from habitués of Joel’s are vague and contradictory, which should come as no surprise, but they all agree that it was some kind of blue and rather strong. Ensslin (for whom see the [Aviation](#)) gives a recipe that is conspicuously tasty but not even close to the right color. There were those who suggested that the drink was simply a mix of gin and Crème Yvette (a luridly purple-blue violet-and-berry liqueur christened after popular darling Yvette Gilbert; it was long extinct but has recently been revived), with or without a dash of egg white. That’s not good: either too sweet or too strong. Ensslin’s vermouth spackles over the seam between the gin and the cordial, but you have to be careful to use one that is as clear and white as you

can get (Dolin dry works well) or the color will not appeal (some old-timers replaced the vermouth with lemon juice, to similar effect). I like to split the Crème Yvette, which must be fresh (its color isn't all that stable) with crème de violette, just to get the color right (and if I can't get the Yvette, the violette alone will work fine). The claret float is a snappy idea and tasty but it does change the visuals—some would say, for the better.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir, unless using an egg white.

SAN MARTÍN COCKTAIL

José Francisco de San Martín was the liberator of much of southern South America, which was in turn largely named after him. Towns, streets, squares, bridges, hotels, van lines, laundry soaps, digestive biscuits, what have you, all named San Martín. It was thus inevitable that when the loud hosannas for the Martini that American drinkers were emitting finally echoed down to the tip of that long and fascinating continent the name would be heard somewhat differently, “Martini” becoming “Martín,” and if you’ve got a Martín a “San” must surely be lurking in the vicinity.

At the turn of the last century, Argentina and Uruguay were booming, lands of hope and wonder and foreign investment. Buenos Aires and Rosario in Argentina and Montevideo in Uruguay formed a tight triangle of rapidly growing, modern urban oases in a continent where such things were rare. In Buenos Aires, for example (as John Stanley wrote in *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* in 1890), the bars were “thronged at the breakfast and dinner hours, for appetizers.” At that point, the San Martín had not yet put in its appearance, and the locals drank, in the European style, “vermouth or absinthe, or an aromatic, powerful drink called ‘bitters,’” while the Cocktail was confined to the English speakers. By 1900 or so, thanks to the San Martín, the locals had come around to the Cocktail point of view. Indeed, the Cocktail bars of Buenos Aires, in particular, were thoroughly up-to-date places where the art of perpendicular drinking was practiced according to the latest tenets, and—as travelers almost universally remarked—the San

Martín was made with skill and exactitude. It just wasn't the *same* skill and exactitude: Judging by the early accounts and recipes, every mixer made his own San Martín. All agreed on English gin and Italian vermouth, to be sure, but the dashes and splashes were another matter: orange bitters, Angostura bitters, some other damn bitters, curaçao, maraschino, cherry brandy, yellow Chartreuse. . . . I suppose one should regard the drink more as an idea than a recipe; as a wet Martini with bitters (usually) and a splash of liqueur (always), and you take it from there. In any case, here's the recipe from the oldest Argentine Cocktail book, and it's a good one (OK, they all are, but still).

(EN UN VASO DE REFRESCO COLÓQUESE TROZOS DE HIELO CRISTALINO.) ADJUNTESE:

3 GOTAS LICOR CHERRI BRANDI.

2 GOTAS LICOR MARASCHINO DE ZARA.

2 GOTAS ORANGE BITTER.

½ VASITO OLD TOM GIN SUMNER.

½ VASITO VERMOUTH CINZANO.

Muévase suavemente y sírvase con fruta de estación.

(PUT CRACKED ICE IN A TALL TUMBLER.) ADD:

3 DROPS [1 TSP] CHERRY BRANDY.

2 DROPS [½ TSP] MARASCHINO DE ZARA.

2 DROPS [1 DASH] ORANGE BITTERS.

½ GLASS [1½ OZ] OLD TOM GIN SUMNER.

½ GLASS [1½ OZ] VERMOUTH CINZANO.

Stir smoothly and serve with fruit in season.

SOURCE: B. IGLESIAS, *EL ARTE DEL COCKTELERO*, 1911.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Cherry Heering works fine; for the maraschino, use Luxardo, formerly of Zara. For the Old Tom, you've got choices. You'll want a clear one here for authenticity, but they'll all make a fine drink.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: This recipe is unusual in serving it in the glass it's mixed in. Better, and more orthodox, to stir it in a mixing glass and strain it into a Cocktail glass. The fruit in season was soon superseded by the fruit that knows no season, the maraschino cherry.

PRESIDENTE COCKTAIL

In the Havana of the 1910s and 1920s a great number of Daiquiris were shaken up and poured out, the vast majority of them for American tourists, particularly once Prohibition unfurled its sooty wings over the United States and brought them in by their hundreds and thousands to a city that had the snap snap snap of the old Great White Way; a city that was all city, where the Cocktail route had more stops than Bach's organ, the chorus girls knew all the latest board games, and the ponies were born naturally competitive. Yet the Cubans themselves preferred another drink, one that wasn't invented by Yanquis; one that knew their taste and touched it just right. That was the Presidente, one of the best examples of what fertile foreign soil can do for familiar American drinks.

American bartenders had been mixing rum and vermouth at least since the 1890s, never to spectacular effect. Then, sometime in the mid-1910s, Constante put his mind to it. Constante, alias Constantino Ribalaigua, was the head bartender at a little café just off the Parque Central in Havana. While all the Yanqui tourists flocked to Sloppy Joe's and the fancy hotel bars that popped up in the city once American Prohibition bit down, when they got there they either drank Daiquiris or American drinks from before the drought. The Cubans drank differently. As the improbably named Basil Woon noted in 1928, Constante's bar was "the most famous bar for the sweet mixed drinks so popular with the Cubans."

Ribalaigua's Cubanized answer to the Manhattan was simplicity itself: Bacardi rum, vermouth, a spoonful of curaçao. But as always with this subtle mixologist, perhaps the greatest of the twentieth century, there was a twist: For the vermouth he used neither the sweet red kind nor the dry white kind. Instead, he used "vermouth de Chambéry," an old style from the French Alps that splits the difference: It's white and lightly aromatic, yet it's also a little sweet, and it enhances the light-bodied rum without overpowering it, as Italian vermouth does, or clashing with it, as the dry French kind does.

Now, this drink is generally credited to Edwin "Eddie" Woelke, a

veteran Broadway bartender who moved to the Sevilla-Biltmore in Havana once the Great White Way went dry. But there was already a garbled version of it in print before Woelke even got to Havana, and a 1919 article from the *New York Evening Telegram* that cites it as a “favorite drink of the Cubans,” not the tourists Woelke catered to. Besides, he makes no claim of ownership for it in his excellent 1936 book, *Barman’s Mentor* (indeed, he includes two recipes, one right and one wrong; unlikely if he had created the drink).

Constante’s claim is found in a 1937 article by Jack Cuddy, who interviewed him while he was in Havana covering spring training. Everything else in the article checks out and the circumstantial evidence supports the claim. Besides, Ribalaigua was never a self-promoter and was not known to lie about his accomplishments, and yet he was fine with reprinting that article and its claim in his bar book. More importantly, when properly made, the drink bears Constante’s characteristic touches: elegance, smoothness, harmony, an unusual deliciousness.

The earliest recipe for the Presidente comes from an impossibly rare little volume published in Havana in 1915 (by which time Ribalaigua had been behind the bar, according to his account, for eleven years) by one John B. Escalante. It is thanks to the intrepid and persistent French Cocktail historian Fernando Castellon, who found the book in Cuba’s Biblioteca Nacional, that I am able to offer it here. Escalante’s Presidente has bitters, which most others do not, and a little more vermouth than what would become the standard formula, but it is otherwise very much the classic Presidente and very close indeed to the version Ribalaigua was pouring in the 1930s.

(USE UN VASO DDE LOS DE REFRESCO.)

ECHESE LA NECESARIA CANTIDAD DE HIELO GORDO PARA MEDIAR EL VASO, Y AGRÉGUESE:

CURAÇAO: UNAS GOTAS.

ANGOSTURA BITTERS: UNAS GOTAS.

GRANADINA O SIROPE BLANCO: ½ CUCHARADA.

NARANJA: 1 CORTEZA.

VERMOUTH CHAMBERY: 2 PARTES.

RON BACARDI: 1 PARTE.

Mézclese todo con una cuchara, cuélese en una copa de las de cocktail, y sírvase con una cereza.

(USE A LONG-DRINK GLASS.)

PUT IN THE NECESSARY QUANTITY OF LARGE ICE TO FILL THE GLASS HALF WAY, AND ADD:

CURAÇAO: A FEW DROPS [1 BARSPOON].

ANGOSTURA BITTERS: A FEW DROPS.

GRENADINE OR SIMPLE SYRUP: ½ BARSPOON.

ORANGE: 1 TWIST OF PEEL.

CHAMBERY VERMOUTH: 2 PARTS [2 OZ].

BACARDI RUM: 1 PART [1 OZ].

Mix it all up with a spoon, strain it into a cocktail glass and serve it with a cherry.

SOURCE: JOHN B. ESCALANTE, *MANUEL DEL CANTINERO*, 1915.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Constante's version, which we may consider the classical one, used half vermouth and half rum (use 1½ oz of each) and omitted the bitters and the grenadine or syrup. On the other hand, other contemporary recipes, such as the one in the 1924 *Manuel del Cantinero* by León Pujol and Oscar Muñoz, call for grenadine, and indeed I find a half barspoon of the stuff adds a healthy color to the drink without unduly increasing its sweetness. For the rum, Havana Club three-year-old, if you can get it, or Banks 5 Island, if you can't. Basically, a funky, full-flavored white rum. For the vermouth, Dolin Blanc, the last survivor of the old Chambery style (not their Sec, which is a dry vermouth and not the thing at all here). Failing that, any sweet, white vermouth will do. For the splashes, I like a barspoon of Pierre Ferrand Dry Orange Curaçao and half that much of commercial-grade, non-artisanal grenadine (it's all about the color).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir with cracked ice. Strain. Smile.

EVOLVED COCKTAILS, OR WHAT HATH ORGEAT WROUGHT?

Judging by their elaborately printed list, the boys behind the bar at Mart Ackermann's Saloon in Toronto sure knew a mess of mixed drinks—107 of them, to be precise. All the old favorites, to be sure—the Mint Juleps, Sherry Cobblers, Tom & Jerries, and so on. But the boys didn't stop there; they went on beyond zebra with a vengeance. The list, which has the year 1856 written in by hand, is packed with things like the Canadian Favourite, the American Standard, the Silistrian Smash, the Esplanade Cobbler, and the supremely enigmatic Maelstrom Tost. The Cobblers number to thirteen, the Smashes to fifteen, the Punches to eighteen. There are even eight Fixes—and eight Cocktails. Gin, Brandy, Whiskey, as you would expect. Champagne, which is novel, but comprehensible. But then there's a Dublin Cocktail. An Ontario Cocktail. A Cocktail à la Mode. Even an Omar Pasha Cocktail. Now, the Dublin and the Ontario can be tentatively deciphered with the application of reason, Irish whiskey and Canadian whiskey being the likely X-factors. The Cocktail à la Mode? Probably a Fancy Cocktail, as in Jerry Thomas. But the story of the Crimean War hero Omar Pasha, who had recently attained celebrity among the peoples of the British Empire when his Turkish army defeated 40,000 Russians at the Battle of Eupatoria, offers few clues as to what might be in a Cocktail bearing his name.

It's a matter of chance that the list at hand, the most comprehensive such piece of ephemera I've come across, is from Toronto; contemporary lists from drink palaces in Boston, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, show much the same thing happening. Whatever went into it, and we have no earthly idea, the Omar Pasha Cocktail marks the beginning of the evolution of *Cocktail* from a term for the "Bittered Sling" and a few simple variations to a generic term for "any short, iced drink." Today, a Cocktail that doesn't telegraph its composition with its name is completely unremarkable; in 1856, it was a novelty (the Omar Pasha is in fact the first on record). It wouldn't remain so for long. As

the American bar evolved and mixing drinks became more and more demanding (and lucrative), bartenders began to treat the drinks they made as works of art. Art is no respecter of boundaries, and once the humble Cocktail became a work of art, it found itself harboring all kinds of ingredients that it had once rigorously excluded (citrus, eggs), and excluding ones that had once defined it (spirits, bitters). If the Immortal Willard had whipped up a mess of cognac, port, sugar, and egg and tried to palm it off on one of his clients as a Cocktail, that client would have assumed that the master's hand had lost its cunning and would have removed his business elsewhere. By the time the Civil War broke out, such things were possible.

Much of this artistic impulse was expended in vermouthing Cocktails or dashing them with absinthe and liqueurs; we've covered those. Here you'll find the miscellaneous ones, a somewhat motley collection of Cocktails that go beyond the Cocktail in their ingredients, their nomenclature, or both and also the ones that love where orthodoxy says they shouldn't love; that embrace the citrus juice whose very absence was supposed to be one of the major defining characteristics of the Cocktail.

I. EXOTIC BLOOMS

Four odd but rather delightful Cocktails.

JAPANESE COCKTAIL

Quoth the *Minneapolis Tribune* in early 1885: “The Japanese cocktail is [a] liquid attack of spinal meningitis. It is loaded with knock-kneed mental ceramics, and is apt to make a man throw stones at his grandfather.” It’s hard to think of a drink less worthy of such vitriol than the Japanese Cocktail. Perhaps, along with the Blue Blazer, the only drink in Jerry Thomas’s *How to Mix Drinks* actually invented by him, this suave and sweet social surfactant is many things, but a haven for “knock-kneed mental ceramics” isn’t one of them. Nor did it come from Japan. There’s nothing Japanese in it. In fact, as well as can be determined, the Japanese Cocktail is a fine example of yet another Cocktail-naming gambit, the commemorative Cocktail.

In June 1860, the first Japanese legation to the United States finished up their sensational tour with a few weeks in New York. A bunch of dignified, reserved, non-English-speaking Samurai, plus Tommy—well, Tateishi Onojiro Noriyuki, but nobody called him that. A young, frisky English speaker, Tommy was the legation’s legman—in both senses of the word: He had a decided interest in flirting with the ladies (and they with him).

If the American journalist who accompanied the legation on the long voyage home is to be believed, Tommy was interested in another American social custom as well, and in this his comrades joined him: “From breakfast to supper, they . . . [kept] the toddy-sticks going with much vivacity.” Their preferred poison? Cocktails. Small wonder: Their New York residence had been the Metropolitan Hotel, just a block away from Jerry Thomas’s “palace” bar at 622 Broadway. I can’t imagine that in their strolls around the neighborhood, they wouldn’t have stopped in to see the Professor for a

quick one. And if you were Jerry Thomas, wouldn't you come up with something special to mark the occasion?

The *Minneapolis Tribune* notwithstanding, the Japanese Cocktail remained in the current rotation, if not at the top of the list, until Prohibition, albeit often under the monickers Mikado Cocktail or Chinese Cocktail (let's not go there).

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 TABLE-SPOONFUL OF ORGEAT SYRUP

½ TEASPOONFUL OF BOGART'S BITTERS

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF BRANDY

1 OR 2 PIECES OF LEMON PEEL

Fill the tumbler one-third with ice, and stir well with a spoon.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Note the unusual amount of bitters, suggested no doubt to counteract the thick sweetness of the orgeat (which probably also explains the extra piece of lemon peel). If proceeding this way—and it's well worth trying, yielding a fragrant and delightful drink—you'll have to use Fee's Aromatic Bitters or your own homemade [Boker's](#); Angostura and Peychaud's are too concentrated to be used in this quantity. Otherwise follow the 1887 *BarTenders Guide* and go with 2 dashes of Angostura. Worthy of note is the *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual's* idiosyncratic suggestion that this can also be made with gin (Hollands, of course) and curaçao or maraschino instead of the orgeat.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: As for a regular Cocktail. By the time the *Minneapolis Tribune* had taken to calling it "liquid spinal meningitis," the Japanese Cocktail was no longer a rocks drink, but was strained into a Cocktail glass, like just about everything else. In this case, it's an improvement.

EAST INDIA COCKTAIL

A favorite of mine for its mellow richness, this one was, according to Harry

Johnson, also “a great favorite with the English living in the different parts of East India.” In its composition nothing more than a particularly fancy Brandy Cocktail, if the East India finds itself among the Evolved Cocktails chiefly by virtue of its name, the pineapple syrup does give it an undeniable, if subtle exoticism. And if the [Jersey Cocktail](#) illustrates one of the most common and productive strategies for drink nomenclature, which is to simply name it after whence its most prominent ingredient hails (compare the White Russian), the East India—alias the Bengal—illustrates another, which is to tag it with the name of wherever they’re drinking ’em.

Beyond Johnson’s statement, we have very little hard information about the East India. But there were American bars aplenty in the grand new hotels that dotted the Eastern reaches of Queen Victoria’s empire, and many an American bartender to tend them. Judging by the basic soundness of this formula, which first appears (with a slightly different—and inferior—formula) in Johnson’s 1882 *Bartender’s Manual*, the East India may well have been the work of one of these wandering Yankees.

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

FILL THE GLASS WITH SHAVED ICE

1 TEASPOONFUL OF CURAÇOA (RED)

1 TEASPOONFUL OF PINEAPPLE SYRUP

2 OR 3 DASHES OF BITTERS (BOKER’S GENUINE ONLY)

2 DASHES [$\frac{1}{4}$ TSP] OF MARASCHINO

1 WINE GLASS FULL [2 OZ] OF BRANDY (MARTELL)

Stir up with a spoon, strain into a cocktail glass, putting in a cherry or medium-sized olive, twist a piece of lemon peel on top, and serve.

SOURCE: HARRY JOHNSON, *NEW AND IMPROVED BARTENDER’S MANUAL*, 1900.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For red curaçoa, use orange. The pineapple syrup, which makes this drink, can easily be prepared at home (see Chapter 10). For Boker’s bitters, Byron and others suggest Angostura, which is fine, although I find Peychaud’s gives it a lovely, soft edge. And you can of course use cognacs other than Martell, although there’s absolutely nothing wrong with Martell (as always, use a VSOP or better for best epicurean effect). The cherry can be omitted, and the olive should be avoided at all costs.

WIDOW'S KISS

Back when Fifth Avenue was still lined by millionaires' mansions, George J. Kappeler, whose precise, balanced recipes have appeared frequently in this volume, was head bartender at the Holland House hotel, at Fifth Avenue and Thirtieth Street. A German like so many who inhabited the highest reaches of turn-of-the-century mixology (such as William Schmidt, Hugo Ensslin, Leo Engel, Louis Eppinger, Louis Muckensturm, and of course that troublesome Harry Johnson), Kappeler had a true artist's combination of effortless command of detail and willingness to transcend petty rules. A less-elevated soul would have pondered the combination of apple brandy, Bénédictine, yellow Chartreuse, and bitters and said, "No, too much!" With three out of the four ingredients being highly pungent and aromatic herbal tonics, that's only sensible. But Kappeler said—well, we don't know what he said, but he put the combination on his list, under the somehow bewitching name "Widow's Kiss." It made it into all the standard Cocktail books.

We don't know if Kappeler had any particular widow in mind.* If he did, she must have been something. As the *New York Herald* observed in 1897, "The combination, if taken in rapidly repeating doses, is said to be intoxicating"—and well it should: The drink is essentially all booze, with nothing in it weighing in at less than 80-proof except the ice. Now, the *Herald* claimed that "This fact is pointed to with pride by those who champion the fitness" of the drink. There were plenty of others who would've begged to differ. Not only because of its alcoholic strength, but also because of how that strength was imparted: "Properly made," opined the *New York Sun* in 1900, "a cocktail should be a mild and harmless stimulant, but when cordials are added it is a thing to shun."

In part, the *Sun* can be excused by the novelty of the cordial Cocktail; aside from maraschino, curaçao, and perhaps a little crème de noyeaux, cordials were little used in American mixed drinks until the 1880s, when mixologists, seeking to expand their palettes of flavor, began little by little incorporating the more complex herbal liqueurs into their drinks. But I like

to think the *Sun*'s man (perhaps Don Marquis or Clarence Louis Cullen, both adepts who knew their tipples), had he tasted one of Kappeler's Widow's Kisses, would've made an exception: an astonishingly harmonious and yet intriguing drink, wherein all the usually warring ingredients are somehow held in a state of détente.

A mixing-glass half-full of fine ice, two dashes Angostura bitters, one-half a pony [$\frac{1}{2}$ oz] yellow chartreuse, one-half a pony [$\frac{1}{2}$ oz] Benedictine, one pony [1 oz] of apple brandy; shake well, strain into a fancy cocktail-glass, and serve.

SOURCE: GEORGE J. KAPPELER, *MODERN AMERICAN DRINKS*, 1895.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the apple brandy, see the [Jersey Sunset](#); here, I think the 100-proof bonded version is the best. If you can only get the green Chartreuse, make something else: The green is an entirely different product and far too concentrated to work here. Do not substitute B&B for Bénédictine. This drink is a balancing act, and if one thing is out of whack, everything is.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Normally, a drink like this should be stirred. But Kappeler says to shake, and since he's not one of those "I shake everything" types, I'm inclined to follow his advice.

ABSINTHE COCKTAIL AND ABSINTHE FRAPPÉ

Although absinthe was sold in New Orleans by 1837 and New York by 1843, it took a while for anyone to get around to making an actual according-to-Hoyle Cocktail out of it. In part, this is understandable. Absinthe was something that you dashed into Cocktails, not something you built a drink around. Eventually, though, someone saw the light, et voilà!, the Absinthe Cocktail. By the late 1870s, anyway, for the bartenders on Park Row, where New York's newspapers kept their headquarters, making Absinthe Cocktails was "child's play."

Before long, though, American absinthe drinkers began to feel that the best thing about the Absinthe Cocktail was the absinthe itself, with the ice running a very close second and the anisette and the bitters lagging by several lengths. And thus the Absinthe Cocktail begat the Absinthe Frappé, which was simply ingredient *a* shaken up with lots of ice and strained into a Cocktail glass, which may or may not have been packed with shaved ice. These "clouded green ones" were regarded by the Sporting Fraternity as (what else) just the thing to ring for

first thing in the morning when you had a “head the size of a birdcage” and a taste in your mouth “like a motorman’s glove” (as Clarence Louis Cullen of the *Sun* delineated the condition). Then, in 1904—ten years after the drink starts turning up in sporting circles—Victor Herbert and Glen MacDonough included an ode to the Absinthe Frappé and its remarkable curative powers in their new show, *It Happened in Nordland*. With “Absinthe Frappé” spreading throughout the land in sheet music and recorded on Edison cylinder, suddenly the clouded green one found itself a white-hot one, consumed by anyone, male or female, with pretensions to pretentiousness. This was akin to someone with an outstanding felony warrant going on *American Idol*. If absinthe had kept to its place among the sports and bohemians, it would have gone quietly to Prohibition with all the other spirits, and perhaps come out the other end with them as well. But given the stuff’s fearsome reputation, when the folks who live out where the bullfrogs croak saw their sons and daughters recreating on it, they took firm action. Absinthe was granted a special Prohibition all its own in 1912.

ABSINTHE COCKTAIL

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

TAKE 2 DASHES [½ TSP] OF ANISETTE

1 DASH OF ANGOSTURA BITTERS

1 PONY-GLASS [1 OZ] OF ABSINTHE

Pour about one wineglass [2 oz] of water into the tumbler in a small stream from the ice pitcher, or preferably from an absinthe glass. Shake up very thoroughly with ice, and strain into a claret glass.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS’S BARTENDER’S GUIDE, 1887.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: If you can find the Spanish Anis del Mono brand, get it—it’s historic, and excellent. The absinthe is dealt out in ponies rather than wineglasses because it was, and still is, between 120-and 140-proof. For a Frappé, simply omit the anisette and bitters and, depending on whether you’re going for the simpler Eastern style or the more baroque California style, half or

all of the water.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: The water is trickled in so the customer can watch the absinthe louche up. Once you've seen the show a couple of times, you can speed things up. For a Frappé, there are two ways to go. The Eastern style is basically as above, sometimes without the water and with the receiving glass packed with shaved ice. The California style, according to Bill Boothby of the Palace in San Francisco, is to shake a pony of absinthe well with plenty of ice and no water and then pour it and the ice into a Julep strainer perched atop a highball glass, topping it off with seltzer slowly squirted over the ice resting in the strainer. Odd, but fun to watch.

II. THE (OTHER) FIZZ

CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL

The first evolved Cocktail on record. The record is silent as to who came up with the idea of replacing the spirits in a Cocktail with Champagne, but whoever it was, he knew how to step high, wide, and handsome. The Champagne Cocktail would be a favorite of sporting gentlemen well into the twentieth century. Increasingly, it would also find a home with young ladies who had no fixed bedtime—indeed, it would eventually acquire the evocative nickname “chorus girl’s milk.” Its first appearance on record, however, is among the easy-come, easy-go Argonauts, whom Frank Marryat found drinking it in San Francisco in 1850. It is pleasant to imagine the young Jerry Thomas laying out a round of these for some party of black-fingered sons of toil as they pour the gold dust out on the bar. “More French wines [that is, Champagne] are drank in California, twice over,” wrote a visitor to the Golden State a few years later, “than by the same population in the eastern States”—much of it in Cocktail form. Not that they weren’t trying, back East: The Champagne Cocktail was to be found everywhere there was money and a desire to spend it and New York and Washington (a notorious Champagne town) didn’t shirk their duty.

The Champagne Cocktail enjoyed a considerable reputation as a morning “bracer,” to the point that bleary-eyed wags wrote verses about it; one set, from 1859, runs to eleven stanzas, ending with the peroration:

*And the morn shall be filled with cocktail,
And the cares of the early day,
Like disappointed collectors,
Shall silently slip away.*



CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL.
The Champagne Cocktail, before and after the bubbly (from Harry Johnson's *New and Improved Illustrated Bartender's Manual*, 1888; courtesy Ted Haigh).

But the Champagne Cocktail's usefulness didn't end there. Many a jittery gent began his day with Cocktails of "wine," as Champagne was simply called in sporting circles (because really, is there any other kind worth bothering with?)—saw out the morning with them—lunched on "chicken and wine"—sailed through the midafternoon doldrums with more Cocktails—supped with a foaming bottle at hand—Cocktailed at cards—watered the long-stemmed chorine with frequent sprinklings—tucked the boys on Broadway in with another—took one more for the road and another to greet the dawn. As Robert Tomes, who encountered the drink in all its glory in 1855 at the pestilential splat of mud known as Aspinwall, Panama, warned, "they are so supremely good that if he once takes them, he will continue to take them."

All this wine drinking adds up, especially when a Champagne Cocktail made with the real stuff cost three or four times what a regular Whiskey Cocktail did. When Jerry Thomas's bar was at its highest ebb, between Cocktails and just plain guzzling, the place nonetheless went through enough fizz for him and George to "sometimes buy a hundred baskets of one brand at a time." (A basket of Champagne held a dozen bottles, or two

dozen splits.) They kept at least seven premium brands on hand, including such modern icons as Veuve Clicquot, Moët & Chandon, Heidsieck & Co., and Roederer. No wonder they called it the Gilded Age.

(ONE BOTTLE OF WINE TO EVERY SIX LARGE GLASSES.)
(PER GLASS.)

½ TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR

1 OR 2 DASHES OF BITTERS

1 PIECE OF LEMON PEEL

**Fill tumbler one-third full of broken ice, and fill balance with wine.
Shake well and serve.**

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: In the latter years of the century, it was discovered that a cube or lump of sugar in the bottom of the glass, saturated with the bitters, will dissolve slowly, infusing the drink as it does; the standard Domino Dot works perfectly for this, holding as it does ½ teaspoon of sugar. In 1895, George Kappeler suggested Peychaud’s bitters as an alternative to the traditional Angostura. I find them particularly effective if I’m adding brandy, which I’ll get to in a moment.

Jerry Thomas and his contemporaries preferred broken or cracked ice in their Champagne Cocktails, doubtlessly because they disappeared them so fast there was little danger of dilution. Later in the century, when giants ceased to walk the land, the Cocktails were smaller, dryer, and used a single lump of ice, which was far less likely to water down the Champagne.

As for the wine. If complete authenticity is a priority, a (sweeter) sec or even a demi-sec should be used. On the other hand, the brut Champagne that came late in the century (famed “King of the Dudes” Evander Berry Wall claims it was his exquisite taste responsible for this, and it may well have been) makes for a better Cocktail. In any case, one bottle of Champagne will yield six small Cocktails, not large ones. Some—the *Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual*, anyway—liked to disburse the stuff with a heavier hand: “One quart bottle,” its author notes, “will make a little over four large cocktails.” To me, this is more like it, but you must of course follow the dictates of your conscience.

There are, of course, variations and refinements. I must confess that I’m shamefully partial to the hot-rails-to-hell practice Delaware mixologist Joseph Haywood recorded in 1898 of adding “one-half glass of brandy,” although I

usually settle with one-quarter glass, or ½ ounce, of VSOP cognac or better.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: By *shake*, Thomas here clearly means “pour back and forth.” This makes for a cold and foamy drink, but one that flattens quickly; better have another lined up. Before long, the accepted practice was, as the *Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual* instructed, to “agitate well with a spoon.” Later, once the bittered sugar cube became standard, even this was felt to be too much for the drink. The admonition in Boothby’s *World’s Drinks* from 1908 was typical: “Never stir . . . this beverage.” This was calculated to keep the bubbles streaming up from the cube as long as possible and the drink almost as dry as naked Champagne.

JERSEY COCKTAIL

Unbeknownst to its consumer, many a Champagne Cocktail was actually a Jersey Cocktail. Much more French Champagne was consumed in America than was shipped here from France, and the “apple-knockers” of New Jersey were more than ready to make up the deficit. In an age of “compound” or “artificial” beverages—we would say “adulterate,” “fraudulent,” or “recklessly toxic”—few were so voluminously and openly counterfeited as Champagne. If you were lucky, you’d get good Garden State hard cider, pressurized with CO₂ (preferably without too much residual carbonic acid), and bottled in a Frenchy-looking bottle. If you were unlucky . . . processed beet juice. Better to simply call a spade a spade and enjoy your cider for what it is.

The Jersey Cocktail doesn’t turn up often outside of bartender’s guides, but in Thomas’s formulation it’s an honest, straightforward drink. Let that be its recommendation.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

1 TEASPOONFUL OF SUGAR

2 DASHES OF BITTERS

Fill tumbler with cider, and mix well, with lemon peel on top.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The sugar, as always, is a matter of preference; some add another ½ teaspoon. Use a good, filtered hard cider. In 1908, Boothby suggested that one “flavor” the drink with applejack. He’s not wrong: ½ ounce or so of bonded Laird’s does wonders for its oomph. For Jerry Thomas’s Soda Cocktail, replace the cider with soda water (use ice and the large glass). This formula was, and still is, much appreciated by the hungover.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Thomas’s 1862 version is made without ice; presumably, the cider is chilled. Others built it on the rocks or even shook it and strained it.

BUCK AND BRECK

When Alan Dale got Jerry Thomas to talk about the famous drinks he had invented, that Sunday afternoon in 1883 or 1884, the Professor owned up to five: the Tom & Jerry, the Blue Blazer, the Champarelle, Lamb’s Wool, and the “Buck and Brick” [*sic*]. The first two we have discussed in detail. Champarelle is both confusing—he described it one way to Dale and another way in his book, and there were other versions out there—and not particularly interesting, so I will skip over it. About Lamb’s Wool, which in Thomas’s seems to have been nothing more than a flaming Hot Buttered Rum flavored with curaçao, we have too little information to comment further. That leaves the “Buck and Brick,” which Thomas describes as a mixture of brandy and Champagne served in a sugar-coated glass.

At first glance, it doesn’t seem like much to claim—an oddly named drink that appears in none of the standard compendia of drink. But not so fast. If you trace back the lineage of the standard works of drink history, most of them go back to a handful of books by New York bartenders, and—as it turns out—the Buck and Breck, as the drink’s name must be spelled (“Buck and Breck” was the popular nickname for the winning 1856 Democratic ticket, James Buchanan and John C. Breckinridge)—was a West

Coast drink. It pops up here and there in California and Nevada newspapers from the 1860s to the 1880s (the Professor, you'll recall, left New York for the City by the Bay in 1863). It even appears, under a garbled name, as late as 1900, in the classic record of California mixology, Bill Boothby's *American Bartender* (that garbling is understandable: Until recent times, Buchanan was a candidate for worst president in American history).

Did Jerry Thomas actually invent the Buck and Breck? In 1856, he was nowhere near California. But the drink doesn't actually appear in print until early 1864, when it turns up in the pages of the *San Francisco Daily Alta* as a specialty of the Bank Exchange (for which see [Pisco Punch](#)). The Professor having recently been in town and made rather a big splash, what with his diamonds and his recent literary celebrity, it seems more than likely that one or another of his signature concoctions would have caught on. As if to corroborate the Professor's claim, one veteran San Francisco bartender recalled the drink in 1883 as "an old New York" one that he "used to fix up" twenty or so years back (although with cider instead of Champagne; see above). In any case, if a drink is going to catch on, it might as well be this—to taste it made properly, with a couple of touches that the Professor neglected to pass on to Alan Dale, is to agree with the *Daily Alta* reporter, who dubbed it "Bully! Pleasant to the taste and mild as a zephyr." It is, however, rather intoxicating, so heed that old San Francisco bartender: "If a man took three or four glasses of it and had very far to go, he wouldn't get there."

Fill a small bar-glass with water and throw it out again, then fill the glass with bar sugar and throw that out, leaving the glass apparently frosted inside. Pour in a jigger [1½ oz] of cognac [and a dash of absinthe and 2 of Angostura bitters] and fill the glass with cold champagne. Then smile.

SOURCE: *COCKTAIL BOOTHBY'S AMERICAN BARTENDER*, 1900 (BOOTHBY CALLS IT THE BRECK AND BRACE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: According to that San Francisco reporter, the Bank Exchange's bartender "put in something that looked like a solution of verdigris [and] added a bright crimson liquid." The only green and crimson ingredients in general bar use in 1864 were absinthe and bitters, both of which were used in dashes. Because dashes are the kinds of things that people tend to omit when describing a drink, it seems entirely reasonable to restore these—besides, they

make for a far more bewitching beverage. If you want to use lemon juice to wet the inside of the glass, that's an old San Francisco bartender's bit of fanciness for this sort of drink (there were others like it: Omit the dashes, do the lemon juice thing, and replace half the brandy with kummel, and you have Ernest Rawling's equally stupendous Russian Cocktail). Use a VSOP or better for the cognac.

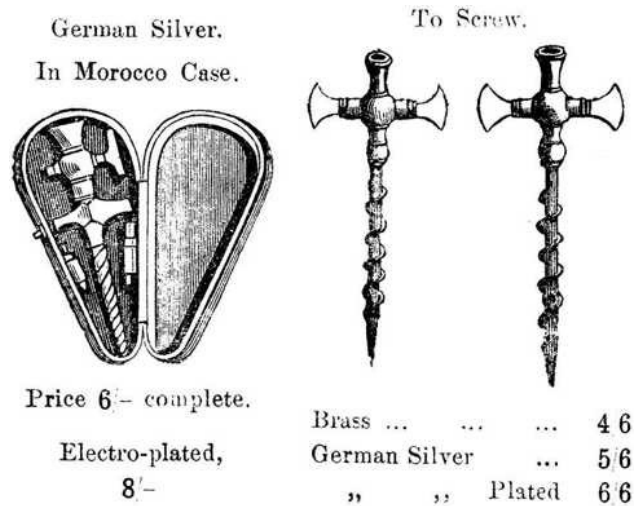
NOTES ON EXECUTION: A Champagne flute makes a good substitute for the bar glass here.

PRINCE OF WALES'S COCKTAIL

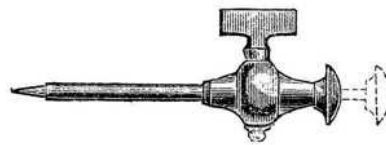
The prince was a pup. A gay dog. A letch. A lush. A charming—if stout—son of a bitch, said bitch being Queen Victoria, he watched decade after decade roll by with her grasping the reins of power for dear life and nothing for him to do in the official line but wave to the nice folks. So he did what anybody else would have: He got grumpy and he got loose. Mistresses and mischief ensued. He spent a lot of time at the table, the theater, and the club. Somewhere along there, he learned how to make a pretty fair variation on the Improved Whiskey Cocktail—in fact, one of the sportiest on record. If his circumstances had been different, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, would've made a hell of a bartender.

The particular sportiness of the prince's brainchild lies in the addition of Champagne. This Gilded Age refinement appears to date from the 1880s, when any saloon with pretensions to quality was splashing the bubbly about pretty liberally into anything from a Brandy Punch to a Manhattan Cocktail. It helped that they had special equipment, like the "solid silver champagne case pendant from the ceiling over the bar" installed at the new Palace Exchange in Decatur, Illinois, in 1882. "This novel contrivance is an innovation in Decatur," the local paper explains, "and will be used to 'dash' punches, sours, cocktails, and other fancy drinks." Most bartenders made do with a "champagne tap," a hollow-stemmed gimlet with a tap at the end that you screwed through the cork. The prince, he probably sabered the top off a

magnum of Mumm and hosed it about with gayish abandon.



Improved Patterns.



With removable Pin, Nickel-plated, 2 6 each.



Ditto, with Wood Handle, Nickel-plated, 3/- each.

Champagne taps, ca. 1898; handy things and well worth reviving (author's collection).

[The Prince of Wales] is also credited with having composed an excellent “cocktail.” It consists of a little [1½ oz] rye whisky, crushed ice, a small square of pineapple, a dash of Angostura bitters, a piece of lemon peel, a few drops [¼ tsp] of Maraschino, a little [1 oz] champagne and powdered sugar to taste [1 tsp]. This “short drink” is often asked for at the clubs which he frequents.

SOURCE: *PRIVATE LIFE OF KING EDWARD VII*, BY A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD, 1901.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Obviously, for the quantities we must rely on our judgment. The Champagne should be brut, of course, and no doubt expensive. The pineapple should, preferably, be fresh, but the drink doesn't suffer unduly if you use an eighth or so of a canned pineapple ring; just make sure it's not

dripping with syrup.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Put the sugar in the mixing glass with the bitters and ½ teaspoon of water. Stir briefly until it has dissolved. Add the rye, the maraschino, and the pineapple chunk, fill two-thirds full of cracked ice and shake brutally to crush the pineapple. Strain into a chilled Cocktail glass, add the cold Champagne, and deploy the twist. Then smile.

If you want to reserve the sugar and stir it in last, it'll give the drink an impressive, if short-lived head. Useful if people are watching you mix the thing.

MORNING GLORY COCKTAIL

As we have seen, much of the Cocktail's development was intimately connected to the search for a better hangover cure. In an age before aspirin, Advil, or morphine, an age without Alka-Seltzer, Pepto-Bismol, or Starbucks bottled Frappuccino, this quest was not an unreasonable one, particularly for the sports who were ordering Champagne by the basket. When confronted by the "cold grey light of dawn" (a phrase coined by humorist George Ade for just this situation), the toper recognized it as "the great necessity of the age" (to quote the *Brooklyn Eagle*) that he should at once take some sort of "antifogmatic" (attested as early as 1808), "eye-opener" (1818), "bracer" (1829), "corpse reviver," or "morning glory" (both 1862).

Which brings us to the Morning Glory Cocktail (which is to be distinguished from the Morning Glory Fizz). The plain Cocktail was clearly considered to be a pretty fair tonic—as well it should be, that function having been bred into it from the very beginning. But by the 1880s the original Cocktail was something like a hundred years old, and the antifogmatic arts had made some important advances. Perhaps a Cocktail could be produced to reflect this progress? That, at any rate, seems to be the consideration driving this formula, which first appeared in the 1887 rewrite of Thomas's book. It's got every key eye-opening ingredient, beginning with brandy and whiskey, running through bitters and absinthe, with a little

curaçao to take the edge off and a healthy tot of soda or seltzer to provide hydration. Not surprisingly to one who has drunk of the Sazerac and the Improved Cocktail, which it closely resembles, it also tastes pretty fine.

(USE MEDIUM BAR-GLASS.)

TAKE 3 DASHES [1 TSP] OF GUM SYRUP

2 DASHES [½ TSP] OF CURAÇOA

2 DASHES OF BOKER'S BITTERS

1 DASH OF ABSINTHE

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF BRANDY

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF WHISKEY

1 PIECE OF LEMON PEEL, TWISTED TO EXPRESS THE OIL

2 SMALL PIECES OF ICE

Stir thoroughly and remove the ice. Fill the glass with Seltzer water or plain soda, and stir with a teaspoon having a little sugar in it.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS'S BARTENDER'S GUIDE, 1887.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the bitters, use Angostura (it's the purest and most medicinal). The brandy should be a VSOP cognac (at this crucial time of day, it's especially important to use a mild and mellow product). Cognac mixes particularly well with rye whiskey, so that choice is made. And use more ice than the book calls for. Oh, and if you're like me, you'll have an anarchic little voice in your head that suggests substituting Champagne for the seltzer. Listen to it at your peril.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: This hybrid Cocktail-Fizz should be stirred in the mixing glass and strained into a chilled small highball glass, with fizz water to follow. The trick with the teaspoon will raise a nice head; see the [Gin Fizz](#) for details.

III. MISCEGENATION, OR CRUSTAS, WET HENS, AND COCKTAIL PUNCHES

You know how hard it is in America to keep things apart that belong apart. If it's not churches running political campaigns, it's peanut-butter-and-bacon sandwiches; if it's not hillbilly rhythm-and-blues, it's reality television. Establish a boundary, and we just want to cross it. This holds as true in the field of mixology as it does everywhere else. Cocktails were short drinks with bitters, Punches were long drinks with citrus. Shouldn't be too hard to keep them apart, if you wanted to. But really the only surprising thing is that it took so long for them to get naked with each other.

BRANDY, WHISKEY, OR GIN CRUSTA

Just like drinkers of the 1990s who liked the Martini more for its glass than for the strongly alcoholic mixture of gin and vermouth that it contained, there were plenty of drinkers in the middle of the nineteenth century who appreciated the newly popular iced Cocktail more for the idea of a quick, short blast of something cold than for the strongly alcoholic mixture of spirits, bitters, and sugar that made it flesh. Some thought that perhaps a little lemon juice in that Cocktail might be just the thing; who cares if, by some arbitrary system, that kind of makes the drink a Punch. Some might kick about it, but it's a free country, so it's really none of their business, right?

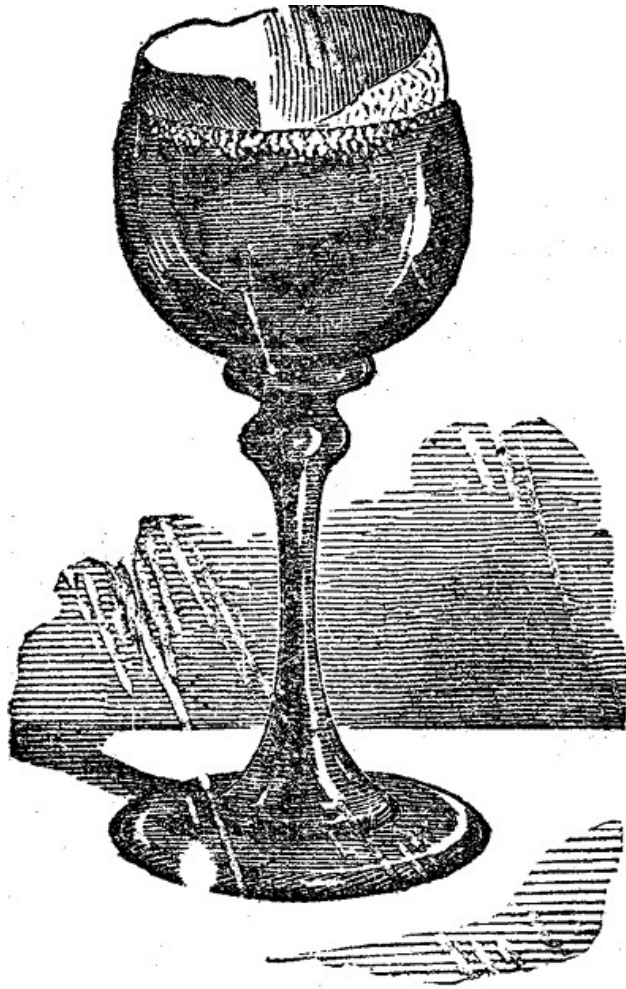
It wasn't the hard-drinking Yankees who first crossed that line. Not surprisingly, as far as we can tell it was the Epicurean Creoles, to whom "the fiery cocktail" had always been a little suspect. Sometime around 1850, a youngish Trieste Italian named Joseph Santini took over management of the bar and restaurant at New Orleans' City Exchange, right in the heart of the French Quarter; five years later, he opened his elegant Jewel of the

South saloon on Gravier Street, in the American Quarter. At one of these bars, he invented the Crusta, a fancy variation on the Cocktail that introduced citrus juice into the list of things that could go into the drink. This was purely a local drink until Jerry Thomas, who must have met Santini and/or had his drinks when he was in the Crescent City in the 1850s, put the Crusta in his book. (Santini must have impressed the Professor, even if Thomas did spell his name “Santina” and identify him as Spanish: There are three of his drinks in the book, more than from any other person.) This isn’t to say that the Crusta was a huge hit; it was always a cult drink, one with few but fanatic devotees. But it planted a seed. That seed would remain dormant until the 1890s, when suddenly everyone started putting lemon juice, lime juice, even orange juice into their Cocktails. From the Crusta, evolution brings us the Sidecar, and life without Sidecars would be very dreary indeed. If Santini hadn’t done it first, they still might have done that anyway, but at least they had someone in the dark backward of time shining a flashlight for them to show them the way. Mr. Santini, we salute you. (And besides, there are few drinks as purely delightful as a properly assembled Brandy Crusta.)

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

Crusta is made the same as a fancy cocktail, with a little lemon juice and a small lump of ice added. First, mix the ingredients [1 tsp gum syrup, 2 dashes bitters, 2 oz spirits, ½ tsp orange curaçao, 1 tsp lemon juice] in a small tumbler, then take a fancy red wineglass, rub a sliced lemon around the rim of the same, and dip it in pulverized white sugar, so that the sugar will adhere to the edge of the glass. Pare half a lemon the same as you would an apple (all in one piece) so that the paring will fit in the wineglass, as shown in the cut, and strain the crusta from the tumbler into it. Then smile.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.



The proper way to present a Crusta (from *The Bon Vivant's Companion*, 1862; author's collection).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Although Thomas also includes a gin version (use Hollands, of course) and a whiskey one, the only Crusta one actually hears of people drinking is the brandy version. Later in the classic period, the curaçao got displaced by maraschino liqueur, which works quite as well. But let's talk lemon juice. How much is "a little"? Thomas's indeterminacy left a good deal of room for interpretation, and mixologists are all over the map on the question. Modern drink mixers—well, the few who bother with things like Crustas—tend to splash the stuff around pretty liberally, going so far as the juice of half a lemon. Back in the day, though, it's clear that the drink was conceived differently—not as a Sour, but a true Cocktail, with the lemon juice serving as merely an accent. Thus the experts of the period suggest everything from no lemon at all to a quarter of a lemon (about $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce), with a decided preference for less rather than more. Harry Johnson, a fine mixologist, fixed the amount in 1882 as "4 or 5 drops." In

my view, 1 teaspoon will do it.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Use a vegetable peeler on the lemon; your life will be easier. For the business with the peel to work, you really need a shallow, 3-to 4-ounce small wineglass. A visit to the thrift store might be in order.

COFFEE COCKTAIL

If some cocktails started allowing citrus in, by the 1880s, when the Cocktail was enthroned as King of American Drinks and all others got pulled into its court, others offended against class by leaving out the bitters, the one thing supposedly essential to a Cocktail.

Rumor had it that this suave and rich concoction, first noted in 1887 in the third edition of Jerry Thomas's book (it would not have been called a Cocktail ten years earlier), came from New Orleans. I shouldn't wonder. In any case, it clearly pushes the Cocktail envelope, as the book's anonymous compiler noted: "The name of this drink is a misnomer, as coffee and bitters are not to be found among its ingredients, but it looks like coffee when it has been properly concocted, and hence probably its name."

(USE LARGE BAR-GLASS.)

TAKE 1 TEA-SPOONFUL POWDERED WHITE SUGAR

1 FRESH EGG

1 LARGE WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF PORT WINE

1 PONY [1 OZ] OF BRANDY

2 OR 3 LUMPS OF ICE

Break the egg into the glass, put in the sugar, and lastly the port wine, brandy and ice. Shake up very thoroughly, and strain into a medium bar goblet. Grate a little nutmeg on top before serving.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS'S BARTENDER'S GUIDE, 1887.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Use a decent ruby port and a lot more ice.

WET HEN

“Well, you know how tart or sour drinks are liked best on hot days, and yet some cocktail drinkers love their dash of bitters.” The Baltimore barkeeper was explaining the Wet Hen, a strange drink the guy down the bar had ordered, to a *Sun* reporter, one summer day in 1900. It “is made exactly like a plain cocktail, with a strong dash of Peychaud bitters and half a lemon squeezed into it; so it’s a cross between a whiskey cocktail and a whiskey sour.”

That wasn’t the first time such a thing had happened, not by a long shot, nor was it the only name for the concoction. In 1863, the whopping eighty-three-drink list Charles Hammack was laying before DC tipplers had featured a Cocktail Soured; twenty-four years later, Billy, a popular Wall Street bartender, was claiming something similar was a Turf Club (although he managed to pass it off to his customer as an Adonis, just as the man had ordered). It really wasn’t until the turn of the century that such things began catching on, though. Tasting one, there’s no reason whatsoever anyone should have waited that long. Here’s Jerry Thomas’s Whiskey Cocktail, Wet-Henned by crossing it with his Whiskey Sour recipe.

(USE SMALL BAR-GLASS.)

3 OR 4 DASHES [1½ TSP] OF GUM SYRUP

2 DASHES OF BITTERS (BOGART’S)

1 WINEGLASS [2 OZ] OF WHISKEY

1 OR 2 DASHES [½ TSP] OF CURAÇOA

¼ OF A LEMON.

Fill two-thirds full of shaved ice. Stir with a spoon. Be careful and put the lemon skin in the glass.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862 (COMPOSITE).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Sugar and lemon juice may of course be adjusted as you like. To my taste, at least ½ ounce of the latter should be used, but not much more. The bitters may be adjusted as well. I always find Peychaud’s works well

with lemon juice; 3 or 4 dashes is more like it. The whiskey is your call. Rye, bourbon, and Irish all work well here.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Shake, of course. If you shake it with the lemon hull, that will conceivably impart some of the lemon oil to the drink, in which case the hull may be strained out and the whole thing served in a Cocktail glass.

MODERN COCKTAIL

An odd-sounding but truly delightful Scotch Wet Hen from Charley Mahoney of the Hoffman House. Sloe gin was one of the trendy ingredients of the nineteen-aughts, as was Scotch. For some reason, they work just fine together.

(BAR GLASS HALF FULL OF ICE.)

Three dashes [$\frac{1}{4}$ oz] lemon juice, one dash orange bitters, one dash absinthe, four dashes [1 tsp] of syrup, one-half jigger [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] of Scotch whiskey, one-half jigger [$1\frac{1}{2}$ oz] Sloe gin; mix well and strain in cocktail glass with cherry.

SOURCE: CHARLES S. MAHONEY, *HOFFMAN HOUSE BARTENDER'S GUIDE*, 1905.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: I prefer a teaspoon of superfine sugar to the syrup here. For the Scotch, use a good, rich blend, such as Johnny Walker Black. Plymouth Sloe Gin is a must.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Stir the sugar into the lemon juice before adding the other ingredients. Shake.

BRONX COCKTAIL

If, at the very end of the twentieth century, the Cosmopolitan made it safe for a nice, middle-class person to have a Cocktail before a meal, it was just repeating what the Bronx Cocktail did at the century's very beginning. Either unknown or practically so in 1900, by 1910 this simple, Wet-Hennish mixture of gin, fresh orange juice, and two kinds of vermouth was being served at charity dinners and banquets of state.

As with most famous drinks, its origin is unclear. In 1931, Albert Stevens Crockett, former press agent of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, claimed that John J. Solan, one of the hotel's bartenders, threw it together for a customer and named it to honor both the famous zoo and the "strange animals [the customers] saw after a lot of mixed drinks." On the other hand, in 1921 the *New York Times* reported on the closing of one Peter Sellers's café on Brook Avenue in the Bronx, noting that "it was said to be the place where the Bronx Cocktail had its inception" and that Billy Gibson's Criterion Restaurant, another Bronx bar, "also claims that distinction." Back to the first hand, though, a 1901 Associated Press article refers to John E. "Curly" O'Connor, also of the Waldorf-Astoria, as the "Inventor of the Bronx." We may never know, but the Waldorf is certainly ahead on points.

Whoever concocted it, it took a couple of years to reach general popularity. Its breakthrough came in 1907, when suddenly the Bronx Cocktail was everywhere. That didn't mean everybody was satisfied with it, though. The most common criticism was encapsulated in this zinger from Zoë Akins in her 1913 play *Papa: An Immorality in Three Acts* (don't ask): "He looks as weak as a Bronx cocktail." The problem wasn't the gin, or even the vermouth. It was—you guessed it—that damned orange juice. Put enough in that you can taste it, and the drink is weak; leave it out, and you've got nothing more than a Perfect Martini. People tried everything in the way of dashes of juice, orange bitters, and orange peel to effect a compromise, but ultimately it was a case of you pays your money and you takes your choice. Myself, I like my Bronx with a fair amount of Florida sunshine in it, accepting the weakness—which is, after all, relative: The drink is no weaker than, say, an Aviation. But people were used to lemon juice in their drinks. Orange juice was a different story. Before the Bronx, it was not an acceptable Cocktail ingredient; after, it was, although there were still dissenters well into the twentieth century who could be called on to rant and rave about kiddie drinks and fruit punch and what the hell is the world coming to when a perfectly good Martini is going around with breakfast

squeezings in it (the story is much the same with cranberry juice and the Cosmopolitan).

(À LA BILLY MALLOY, PITTSBURGH, PA.)

One-third [1 oz] Plymouth gin, one-third [1 oz] French vermouth and one-third [1 oz] Italian vermouth, flavored with two dashes of Orange bitters, about a barspoonful of orange juice and a squeeze of orange peel. Serve very cold.

SOURCE: WILLIAM T. "BILL" BOOTHBY, *WORLD DRINKS AND HOW TO MIX THEM*, 1908.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: It should be noted that Plymouth Gin was an advertiser in Boothby's book, although it does indeed make a toothsome Bronx. But so does Tanqueray, or Beefeater, or any other good London dry gin. As for the proportions: Mr. Malloy is a trimmer, trying to have both the orange and the strength. His recipe—the first on record—is not a bad drink, but for the full Bronx experience I suggest waiting for a very hot day and then mixing 'em up as Johnny Solan of the old Waldorf bar did: 1½ ounces of gin, half that of orange juice, and 1 teaspoon each of French and Italian vermouth. No garnish. When I want a stronger drink, I'll fix myself a Sazerac and be happy. But when the heat is oppressive, a nice, cold Bronx prepared thus is a fine thing.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Shake well with cracked ice; strain and serve.

JACK ROSE COCKTAIL

I spent many years believing that this drink, one of only two classic applejack Cocktails (for the other, see the [Star](#)), was named after "Bald Jack" Rose, one of the yeggs involved in the notorious 1912 Becker-Rosenthal case (in which Police Lieutenant Becker eventually went to the chair—probably wrongly—for hiring Rose to put out a hit on gambler "Beansy" Rosenthal in front of the Metropole Hotel; see [here](#)). In part, this belief was wishful thinking of the kind all mixographers indulge in. Alas, the facts say different, or at least the *Police Gazette* does, which is not

always the same thing. In this case, however, the evidence seems pretty straightforward: According to a squib the *Gazette* published in 1905, “Frank J. May, better known as Jack Rose, is the inventor of a very popular cocktail by that name, which has made him famous as a mixologist.” This May/Rose fellow was apparently employed at Gene Sullivan’s Café on Pavonia Avenue in Jersey City—and indeed, it’s worth noting that applejack is the state spirit of New Jersey. A less glamorous back story, to be sure, but more likely a factual one. Even more likely than that, however, is the possibility that it was created at Eberlin’s, of Whiskey Daisy fame. The Jack Rose first saw print in 1899, and the reporter who mentioned it had just been drinking with Frank Haas, at Eberlin’s (see the [Daisy](#)); according to a later interview with Old Frank, it was in fact one of his, and the bar’s, specialties. Most suggestive. Bald Jack’s out either way. As for that worthy, according to a widely reprinted newspaper squib from the end of 1912, his notoriety put such a dent in the drink’s popularity that some bartenders took to calling it a Royal Smile instead. Perhaps.

Whatever its origins, the Jack Rose is the first popular drink to pass for a Cocktail while containing citrus juice and no bitters at all. As such it makes the Cocktail’s final pacification of the Kingdom of Punch. From now on, a Punch could travel on a Cocktail’s passport.

1 JIGGER [2 OZ] APPLEJACK

[JUICE OF] ½ **LIME**

¼ **JIGGER [½ OZ] GRENADINE SYRUP**

Shake well.

SOURCE: JACQUES STRAUB, *DRINKS*, 1914.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The Jack Rose’s basic formula was definitely open to debate. Some early recipes, such as the one downtown New York bartender R. H. Townes gave Bill Boothby sometime around 1905 (the first in print), call for lemon juice. Others agree with Straub. Personally, I prefer lime juice in this; its sharp fragrance helps cut the thickness of the grenadine. For the applejack, see Chapter 2. Try to use real grenadine, if possible. Jack Grohusko, inventor of the Brooklyn, preferred raspberry syrup in his; it definitely has its merits here. Some used to make this drink with a little French vermouth, say ¾ ounce, to twice that amount of applejack, plus the lime and the grenadine (thus veteran New Haven “wine clerk” Jere Sullivan, writing during Prohibition). Straub prints this, too—

but as that Royal Smile . . .

CLOVER CLUB COCKTAIL

The Clover Club was a rather riotous Philadelphia organization that met at the famed Bellevue-Stratford hotel in that city from the late 1880s until at least World War I. Dedicated to raillery and refreshment, it was the Friar's Club of its day, although with more lawyers and fewer professional comics. We don't know exactly when it was fitted out with a Cocktail of its very own, but it appears to have been rather late in the club's history. At any rate, it had happened by 1901, when the Waldorf-Astoria's head bartender, Michael J. Killackey, gave a recipe for it to the *New York Press*. He came by it honestly, anyway: by then George Boldt, the man behind the Bellevue-Stratford's legendary service and cuisine, had been lured to the "Hyphen," as the Waldorf-Astoria was known, no doubt bringing the formula with him. It took until the end of the decade, but the drink finally caught its wave. "The 'Clover Club cocktail' is fast becoming the rage in New York," wrote the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* "A. Jin Rickki" (ouch) in 1910. "All of the actors drink it now and the bartenders of the Plaza can teach the man who invented them"—sadly unidentified—"the art of mixing."

The following recipe, substantially identical to the telegraphic 1901 one, comes from the bar book of the Waldorf-Astoria, where in 1911 William Butler Yeats, in town with his Irish Players, found Killackey's Clover Clubs so seductive that he drank three in a row. There are some who even say he kept at them right through dinner. While I might not go that far, a properly assembled Clover Club is a powerful argument that the center might just hold after all.

JUICE ½ LEMON

½ SPOON [⅛ OZ] SUGAR

½ PONY [2 TSP] RASPBERRY [THAT IS, SYRUP]

¼ PONY [½ OZ] WHITE OF EGG

1 JIGGER [2 OZ] GIN

Shake well. Strain.

SOURCE: ALBERT STEVENS CROCKETT, *OLD WALDORF BAR DAYS*, 1931 (CROCKETT WAS THE WALDORF'S PRESS AGENT, AND WHEN PROHIBITION CLOSED ITS BAR, HE RECEIVED CUSTODY OF ITS HANDWRITTEN BAR BOOK).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Paul E. Lowe, in his 1909 *Drinks: How to Mix and Serve*, suggests swapping out half the gin for French vermouth; that's also how Harry MacElhone, who worked at the Plaza in the early 1910s, made his. This is a truly transformative suggestion, turning a serviceable drink into an ambrosial one. MacElhone also suggests lime juice instead of lemon, which is worth trying; in either case, ½ ounce should do. *Beverages De Luxe*, a 1911 drink book that prints a Clover Club recipe its authors picked up from the Hotel Belvedere in Baltimore, agrees about the lime and the vermouth and suggests replacing the raspberry syrup with actual raspberries, if in season. This is a fine suggestion, but if adopted, it will require more sugar: say, half a dozen berries and ¼ ounce of superfine sugar, depending on the tartness of the raspberries. If you lightly whip the egg white—here to add froth and body—with a fork, you can divide it; otherwise, use one white for every two or three drinks.

Whichever formula you use, float a leaf of mint on top and you've got a Clover Leaf.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: If you use fresh raspberries, muddle them with the sugar and the citrus and double-strain the drink—that is, use the Hawthorne strainer in the shaker and put a Julep or tea strainer over the glass to catch the raspberry seeds. Like all drinks using eggs, this one will have to be shaken extra hard.

DAIQUIRI COCKTAIL

The first true classic Cocktail invented outside the United States to catch on there. I'm going to take advantage of that fact to ignore the whole Cuban part of its history and focus briefly on its early fortunes stateside. Although the Americans who in 1898 suddenly found themselves in Cuba in great

numbers took to Bacardi's exceptionally smooth, light rum pretty much instantly, it needed about ten years for it and the Daiquiri to filter across the Florida Straits and invade the invader, beginning ironically enough with a beachhead at the Navy Club in Washington (Remember the *Maine*!). After a couple of years of percolating, in the mid-1910s Cuban rum suddenly became a sensation. The usual mixological capers ensued. New Cocktails were mixed, with racy new names (the September Morn, named after a famous painting of a naked chick; the Jazz, named after a music that was considered to be a concatenation of vulgarity). Old Cocktails were dug up and rebored to fit the new spirit, and everybody ran around trying to figure out how to make 'em all.

1 JIGGER [2 OZ] BACARDI RUM

2 DASHES [1 TSP] GUM SYRUP

JUICE OF ½ LIME

Shake well in a mixing glass with cracked ice, strain and serve.

SOURCE: HUGO ENSSLIN, *RECIPES FOR MIXED DRINKS*, 1916 (ENSSLIN ACTUALLY CALLS THIS THE CUBAN COCKTAIL, BUT HE CORRECTS IT IN A LATER EDITION. JACQUES STRAUB HAD ALREADY PUBLISHED A FORMULA IN 1914, BUT IT WAS GARBLED).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: In the absence of true Cuban Bacardi, one is reduced to finding a substitute or carrying Havana Club in from abroad (the Cuban H. C. is made in part in the old Bacardi plant). The one you want is the three-year-old. The Flor de Caña from Nicaragua is a fine and economical substitute, but many other white rums will work as well (Banks 5 Island is another favorite). Alas, the modern Bacardi is not among them—it's just too light. Some Progressive Era American bartenders took to sweetening their Daiquiris—alias Bacardi Cocktails—with grenadine. This makes for a nice pink drink, but it muddies up the clean flavor of the original. A far, far better option than either grenadine or sugar syrup is to make the drink the original Cuban way, with a barspoon of sugar as the only sweetener.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: If you make this with the barspoon of sugar (and you should), use superfine, if possible, and stir it into the lime juice before adding the rum and ice. Daiquiris were often served frappé, which is to say poured into a Cocktail glass full of finely shaved ice. Save this option for days when it's 100°F with 100 percent humidity.

AVIATION COCKTAIL

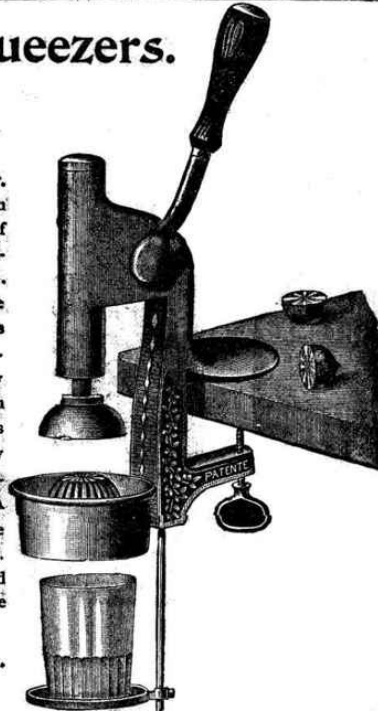
One of the last truly great Cocktails to be invented before Prohibition. In recent years, this once-obscure combination of gin, lemon juice, and maraschino liqueur has become a favorite of true Cocktail fiends everywhere. Until recently, it was generally considered to be a London drink because its most prominent early appearance was in Harry Craddock's classic *Savoy Cocktail Book*, published in 1930. In fact, its origins lie in pre-Prohibition New York, for it is among the formulas found in the last serious Cocktail book published in Gotham before the great drought—the 1916 *Recipes for Mixed Drinks*, by the thirty-six-year-old German-born head bartender at the Wallick House Hotel in Times Square, Hugo Ensslin. Although Ensslin's book was one of the prime sources for both Craddock (who nicked from it such Savoy favorites as the Affinity, the Fair and Warmer, the Fluffy Ruffles, and the Raymond Hitchcocktail) and Patrick Gavin Duffy, whose classic *Official Mixer's Manual* plundered it wholesale, the extreme rarity of *Recipes for Mixed Drinks* long prevented its author from getting credit where it is due. Fortunately, this most useful little book has now been reprinted, and Ensslin has gotten his credit. One can only wish that it had happened much earlier: Ensslin shot himself in 1930, driven to despair by seeing his ex-fiancée come in with another man to the obscure Pennsylvania hotel where he was working.

Lemon Squeezers.

No. D 371. The Rapid Lemon Squeezer.

Is made to clamp to Bar. The Cup and Cone between which lemon is placed are of Solid Aluminum, thus avoiding all danger of corrosion. When handle is lowered, the plunger not only presses down on lemon, but also rotates, thus securing every drop of juice. This lemon squeezer is "rapid" in its operation and is especially valuable where a large number of lemons are used. A whole day's supply can be prepared in a few moments. The Cup catches both seed and pulp so that you secure the pure juice.

Price.....\$2.45 each.



For the citrus-heavy Cocktails fashionable in the years before Prohibition, bartenders rolled out the heavy artillery (author's collection).

Of course, just because Ensslin printed the first recipe for the Aviation, that doesn't mean he invented it—the only notice of the drink I've been able to find in the contemporary press, a 1911 three-liner from the pages of the *Albany (New York) Knickerbocker Press*, merely notes that "The 'aviation cocktail' is the latest," with no clue as to its origin. The new sport of aviation was much in the news at the time, and there were two other drinks of the same name floating around (one merely a Jack Rose with a dash of absinthe, the other a rather unimpressive fifty-fifty mix of Dubonnet and dry sherry with an orange twist)—and no hint of who might be responsible for them, either.

One thing that has always puzzled the drink's aficionados: Whence the name? Here, too, Ensslin makes himself useful. His Aviation recipe calls for one additional ingredient that didn't make it into Craddock's final recipe: Besides the maraschino, there's also a bit of crème de violette, a violet-flavored liqueur that tints the drink a pale sky blue and, incidentally, explains its name.

$\frac{1}{3}$ [$\frac{3}{4}$ OZ] LEMON JUICE

$\frac{2}{3}$ [$1\frac{1}{2}$ OZ] EL BART GIN

2 DASHES [$1\frac{1}{2}$ TSP] MARASCHINO

2 DASHES [1 TSP] CRÈME DE VIOLETTE

Shake well in a mixing glass with cracked ice, and serve.

SOURCE: HUGO ENSSLIN, *RECIPES FOR MIXED DRINKS*, 1916.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: El Bart has gone to that happy land far, far away where Crazy Eddie zooms around in his Kaiser-Frazer with his arm around Virginia Dare and Burma Shave loafing in the backseat. No matter; since El Bart was a sponsor of Ensslin's book, we can assume that its selection here was driven by other than gustatory necessity. In other words, use the (dry) gin you like. To my palate, Ensslin's equilibrium between the maraschino and crème de violette produces a drink that tastes like hand soap; I prefer more maraschino and less of the blue stuff—just enough to produce the requisite color, but not so much as to shoot the drink down. If you like it sweeter, it's better to round the drink out with a touch of simple syrup rather than adding more of the liqueurs, as they have a tendency to hijack the drink.

WARD EIGHT

The Ward Eight looms large in the mythical history of mixology, wherein it is the Champion of the Hub, proving to one and all that when Boston was called on to contribute a Cocktail to the great pageant of American intoxication, it did not say “I shall not serve.” The story goes—well, if I may quote myself, here's what I said in *Esquire Drinks*: “They say this old smoothie was inaugurated at Boston's ancient Locke-Ober restaurant, at the victory supper (held the night before the election, naturally) for Martin ‘the Mahatma’ Lomasney, running for something or other from Boston's Ward Eight.” All well and good, but try documenting it. Sure, there's a passing mention in Amy Lyman Phillips's 1906 *A Bachelor's Cupboard* confirming its association with Locke-Ober, but on the other hand there's also a circumstantially detailed 1934 letter to G. Selmer Fougner's “Along the Wine Trail” column in the *New York Sun* wherein the veteran Boston bartender Charlie Carter claims he invented it for the celebration of one of

Lomasney's election successes, but at the Puritan Club in 1903, not Locke-Ober in 1898 (in point of fact, the election mentioned was in 1905). There are other claims, none of them better supported than these.

Considered from a mixological point of view, the presence of grenadine in the drink makes it somewhat unlikely that it goes all the way back to 1898; grenadine was the hot ingredient of the 1900s (it's in the *Bachelor's Cupboard* reference) and was quite rare before that.

The only pre-Prohibition recipe for the drink is a rather lackluster affair, so I've taken the liberty of substituting one another reader sent to the *Sun* in 1934, when Fougner was seeking further information on the drink. "The basis of a 'Ward 8' was a whisky sour," the reader wrote with unmistakable authority, "the idea being to eliminate certain objectionable features of that drink. The Ward 8 was distinctly a warm weather drink, and should be so considered. It was always served in a large, heavy glass of the type generally used for beer—that is, with a large round bowl." His recipe, which checks out with pre-Prohibition accounts of the drink, is equally precise.

For quantities, see the "Notes on Execution."

Juice of one lemon, one barspoon of powdered sugar, a large whisky glass three-quarters full of Bourbon (dissolve the sugar in the juice and whisky), place a rather large piece of ice, in the glass, pour in glass, add three or four dashes of orange bitters, three dashes of crème de menthe, one-half jigger grenadine, fill glass with either plain water or seltzer, add two half slices orange, piece of pineapple and one or two cherries.

When fresh mint is available the crème de menthe is omitted, and a slightly bruised sprig of mint added with the slices of orange, &c. This is an improvement.

Many prefer the juice of half an orange instead of the orange bitters.

The amount of sugar should be regulated to taste, and likewise the grenadine. The important factors are good liquor and care in mixing. Properly made, the drink is very pleasant, although highly potent.

SOURCE: G. SELMER FOUGNER, "ALONG THE WINE TRAIL," 1934.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: This is always considered to be a rye drink and is described as such in that sole pre-Prohibition recipe, from *The Cocktail Book: A Sideboard Manual for Gentlemen* (numerous editions from 1900 through the

1910s; the early ones don't have the Ward Eight, though). I say use the fresh mint instead of the crème de menthe and the orange juice instead of the orange bitters.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: The man knows what he's talking about, but it's a little hard to untangle what he's saying. I offer this as an aid to construction:

COMBINE IN MIXING GLASS,

JUICE OF 1 LEMON

JUICE OF ½ ORANGE

1 BARSPOON SUPERFINE SUGAR

Stir until sugar dissolves, and add:

3 OZ RYE WHISKEY

1 SPRIG OF MINT

Add ice, shake gently so as not to brutalize the mint and strain into a large beer-goblet containing 1 or 2 large ice cubes. Add grenadine to taste (½ ounce should be plenty) and fill with chilled seltzer. Fruit as above.

LAST WORD

In 1915, Frank Farrell came to Detroit. Farrell, the “Dublin Minstrel,” was a vaudevillian and a most popular one, and Detroit treated him well.

Somebody must have taken him over to the new Detroit Athletic Club for a gargle, because before long his signature drink, the Last Word, was right there on the club's drinks list, between the Lone Tree (a bitterless Martini) and the F.E.W. (your guess is as good as mine), and priced at a hefty thirty-five cents, more than any other Cocktail on the list. It was worth it: There are few wilder-looking mixtures in the annals of classic barkeeping, but somehow it just works, the strong flavors pulling together rather than fighting each other.

¼ [³/₄ OZ] DRY GIN

¼ [³/₄ OZ] MARASCHINO

¼ [³/₄ OZ] CHARTREUSE

¼ [³/₄ OZ] LIME JUICE

ICE

Serve in cocktail glass.

SOURCE: TED SAUCIER, *BOTTOMS UP*, 1951.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The Chartreuse should be green and the maraschino Luxardo.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Shake.

IV. THE STINGER

Properly considered, the Stinger shouldn't be here. Not only is it made without vermouth or any other kind of fortified wine but, according to many of its devotees, it isn't even a real Cocktail. Joyce Kilmer (the author of the oft-quoted poem "Trees"), for one: "white mint and brandy shaken up together with cracked ice," he wrote his mother in 1914, "make a good substitute for a cocktail." And indeed, the bartender's guides of the time always list this combination among the after-dinner drinks; the sticky, multilayered Pousse-Cafés; the Champerelles (a simpler Pousse-Café); the Sam Wards (see [here](#)). But unlike the others, the Stinger was produced like a Cocktail and served like a Cocktail, and eventually it was drunk like a Cocktail, which is to say before dinner, or in the morning, or in the afternoon, or any time at all, even including after dinner.

As for its origins. Despite its name, which in the vernacular meant a quick shot to the head, whether liquid or fistical, the Stinger has always been considered a Society drink. As Hermione—the ultradumb young socialite that Don Marquis created for a series of columns in the *New York Sun* lampooning the dim-bulb civic and spiritual pretensions of the rich—notes while supporting Prohibition for the working classes, "Of course, a cocktail or two and an occasional stinger is something no one can well avoid taking, if one is dining out or having supper after the theater with one's own particular crowd." And in point of fact, New York folklore has always associated the drink with Reginald Vanderbilt (Gloria's father). This, it turns out, is no coincidence: According to a gossipy 1923 syndicated piece on this worthy, back in the Roosevelt years "Reggie" was highly devoted to the ritual of Cocktail hour, which "was observed in all its pomp and glory in the bar of [his] home, and he himself was the high priest, the host, the mixer."

From four to seven every day, Reggie would stand behind the bar—which was modeled on the one in the William the Conqueror tavern in Normandy—and shake up Stingers, "his favorite cocktail." In fact, "the 'Stinger' was his own invention, a short drink with a long reach, a subtle blending of ardent nectars, a boon to friendship, a dispeller of care." Well, OK; properly concocted, the Stinger is all of those things.

(À la J. C. O'Connor proprietor of the handsomest café for gentlemen

in the world, corner Eddy and Market Sts. S.F. Calif.)

**¼ [³/₄ OZ] WHITE CRÈME DE MENTHE AND ¾ [2¼ OZ] COGNAC. SHAKE WELL
AND SERVE COLD IN SHERRY GLASS.**

SOURCE: WILLIAM T. "COCKTAIL" BOOTHBY, *AMERICAN BARTENDER*, 1900 (UNDATED TYPED SUPPLEMENT;
MOST LIKELY DATING TO AROUND 1905).

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Other recipes call for two parts or even one part cognac (and don't skimp on the quality!) to one part liqueur. This way's better. In any case, the only crème de menthe to use for a top-flight Stinger is the French Get brand; well worth tracking down. And whatever you use, it must always be white, not green. Report has it that Reggie liked a dash of absinthe in his. He would, wouldn't he?

NOTES ON EXECUTION: Even though it has only spirits in it, this drink is always shaken. That bolsters the Vanderbilt story: If you were a millionaire making drinks for show behind your replica Norman bar in your Fifth Avenue mansion, wouldn't you want to shake them? As for the glass: Use a Cocktail glass, on the small side.

BITTERS AND SYRUPS

Most nineteenth-century bartender's guides closed with a section on compounding bitters and syrups and producing cheap booze out of raw whiskey and various natural, if dodgy, and artificial flavorings. Because this book is devoted to the best traditions of the bar, I'll ignore that last part entirely. As for the bitters and syrups, were these to receive the attention they deserve, they would easily fill another volume the size of this one. But I shall confine myself to offering formulas for three kinds of bitters (including Jerry Thomas's own, for historical purposes) and a handful of essential syrups.

I have not indicated individual sources for botanicals and other ingredients. In general, they are relatively easy to source online, but I am reluctant to give websites for each as these have a distressing habit of disappearing as soon as they appear in print. But I will say that two I have found to be stable and reliable are G. Baldwin & Co. (baldwins.co.uk) and Frontier Co-Op (frontiercoop.com).

I. BITTERS

Fortunately, the return of the Cocktail has brought in its wake a renewed interest in bitters, and every year brings more varieties on the market. Orange bitters, for a long time a rarity, are now much easier to find (both Fee's West Indian Orange Bitters and Regans' Orange Bitters No. 6 can easily be located online). Here, however, are three kinds that cannot yet be purchased.

JERRY THOMAS'S OWN DECANTER

BITTERS

This is one recipe in Jerry Thomas's book that we can be absolutely sure is his own. Evidently, it was successful enough for Thomas to keep making it, or something like it, since the 1871 *Bonfort's Wine & Liquor Circular* devoted to the Thomas brothers' cellar closes by mentioning that "Mr. Jerry Thomas makes a very wholesome kind of bitters, for the use of his bar, himself." Unfortunately, modern medical science begs to differ about their wholesome nature, since aristolochic acid, found in the Virginia snakeroot (*Aristolochia serpentaria*) Thomas used to give the bitters their herbal punch, has been proven to cause liver failure, and snakeroot can no longer be purchased. Nor can it be adequately replaced: Having taken the trouble to grow some from cuttings, I can attest that this fragrant, spicy root imparts a bewitching I-know-not-what to the bitters that is unlike anything I know.

I offer the Professor's recipe—which was clearly sold as a tonic, by the glass—for its historical interest only and do not recommend that it be reproduced or consumed.

(BOTTLE AND SERVE IN PONY-GLASS.) TAKE ¼ POUND OF RAISINS
2 OUNCES OF CINNAMON

1 OUNCE OF SNAKEROOT

1 LEMON AND 1 ORANGE CUT IN SLICES

1 OUNCE OF CLOVES

1 OUNCE OF ALLSPICE

Fill decanter with Santa Cruz rum.

As fast as the bitters is used fill up again with rum.

SOURCE: JERRY THOMAS, 1862.

STOUGHTON'S BITTERS

There is a surfeit of old recipes for Stoughton's Bitters in existence, but unfortunately none of them can be traced to the good doctor himself (then again, I must confess that I have not yet searched through the British patent office records from 1712, if indeed they still exist). Most of the existing recipes contain snakeroot. Here is one that does not. It is a composite recipe from several sources, the earliest of which is that 1867 Charles Campbell book (I don't know if the bitters recipes from the back were poached from Jerry Thomas like the other drinks' recipes were).

Macerate one-quarter ounce of chamomile flowers and one-half ounce each of gentian root, bitter orange peel, cassia bark, and calumba root in thirty ounces of brandy and ten ounces of grain alcohol. After two weeks, stir in one ounce by weight of burnt sugar, strain through filter paper and bottle.

SOURCE: COMPOSITE.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: The burnt sugar can be purchased in some ethnic food stores or you can make your own. Many recipes for Stoughton's Bitters call for them to be colored with cochineal; this can easily be replaced by a few drops of red food coloring, in which case the burnt sugar should be reduced by at least half (it is merely there for coloring).

NOTES ON EXECUTION: If you plan on making bitters frequently, it will be worthwhile to acquire a vacuum filtration rig (alias Büchner funnel/flask), which will make filtering your bitters quick and easy. Otherwise, you'll need a coffee filter and a lot of patience.

BOKER'S BITTERS

I won't delve deeply into the complex history of Boker's Bitters. The leading Cocktail bitters for much of the nineteenth century, they were produced by the L. J. Funke Company of New York City. By Prohibition, their heavy, Christmas-spiced nature made them quite old-fashioned. An adequate substitute is Fee Brothers Old-Fashioned Aromatic Bitters (feebrothers.com). Or you can make your own, as many a bartender did. This English formula for them hails from 1883, when there was still plenty of genuine Boker's around to test it against.

1½ OZ. QUASSIA

1½ OZ. CALAMUS

1½ OZ. CATECHU (POWDERED) 1 OZ. CARDAMOM

2 OZ. DRIED ORANGE PEEL

Macerate for 10 days in ½ gallon strong whiskey, and then filter and add 2 gal. water. Color with mallow or malva flowers.

SOURCE: ROBERT HALDAYNE, *WORKSHOP RECEIPTS* (2ND SERIES), 1883.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: For the whiskey, which would have been the young, rectified kind, not the old, wood-mellowed kind, you can substitute 151-proof rum or even Everclear. The water is added in this quantity to make these decanter-type bitters, for drinking straight; to make them into Cocktail bitters, cut the amount of water in half. And there's no shame in making a half-size recipe.

II. SYRUPS

In general, the recipes in this book call for a thicker syrup than the one-to-one formula that is in general use today, the glassware then being much smaller and hence easier to fill without “volumizing” the drinks.

GUM SYRUP (TRUE)

The gum Arabic, an emulsifier, gives this a silky texture that helps soften the bite of drinks made with liquor and nothing else—plain Cocktails, in other words. But it works well in just about anything, and is worth the extra expense in time and money.

Dissolve 1 lb. of the best white gum Arabic in 1½ pints of water, nearly boiling; [take] 3 lbs. of white sugar or candy; melt and clarify it with half pint of cold water, add the gum solution and boil all together for two minutes. This gum is for cocktails.

SOURCE: E. RICKET AND C. THOMAS, *GENTLEMAN'S TABLE GUIDE*, 1871.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: Make sure the gum Arabic is food grade (you can get it from frontiercoop.com). Plain white sugar will work fine.

NOTES ON EXECUTION: It's easier to simply melt the sugar in the half pint of water over a low flame, rather than melting the sugar first and then adding the water (our sugar needs less clarifying). The mixture should be kept refrigerated.

GUM SYRUP (BARTENDER'S)

While the gum may be nice in drinks, bartenders rapidly discovered that few customers could tell the difference, and the vast majority of bartenders' recipes for gum syrup omit the gum altogether. Since the period ones are heavily concerned with clarifying the syrup, a step that is no longer needed, a modern recipe is provided here.

Over a low heat, dissolve two pounds of white sugar in one pint of water. Let cool, bottle and add one-half ounce grain alcohol or one ounce vodka to retard spoilage. Keep refrigerated or use quickly.

NOTES ON INGREDIENTS: To make what I call Rich Simple Syrup, replace the white sugar with Demerara sugar. The resulting syrup will be brown, which sometimes causes visual problems, but it adds a depth of sugar flavor that I find an improvement to most drinks.

PINEAPPLE, RASPBERRY, AND OTHER

FRUIT AND BERRY SYRUPS

These are easy to make: Simply cube the large fruits and wash and pat dry the small ones, put them in a bowl, press them lightly, and add enough gum syrup or rich simple syrup to cover. Leave them overnight, strain out the solids, and you're done.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

A list of every book, pamphlet, article, item, blog post, or squib I have consulted in the assembly of the present work would swell what is already a bulky text beyond any reasonable limits. To some degree, it would also be redundant: I have included sources for each of the recipes, and attempted to give enough information elsewhere to allow quotations to be tracked down by those determined to further pursue them. I will therefore not even attempt to list all the pre-Prohibition books and periodicals I have consulted in the years I've spent writing this book or the secondary sources I have turned to to corroborate what I found there.

There is, however, a clutch of modern books—by which I mean ones written after the close of the Saloon Age—that have very much helped me to form my views on Jerry Thomas and the drinks of his age (at least, the parts of those views that make sense), and I would be remiss in not citing them. William Grimes's *Straight Up or On the Rocks* (2001) is still the best connected narrative of the history of mixed drinking in America, followed by Gary Regan's introduction to *The Joy of Mixology* (2003). Lowell Edmunds's *Martini, Straight Up* (1998); Richard Barksdale Harwell's *The Mint Julep* (1975); Guillermo Toro-Lira's history of Pisco Punch, *Alas de los querubines* (2006); and Robert Simonson's *The Old-Fashioned* (2013) are all invaluable monographs on essential drinks. Ted "Dr. Cocktail" Haigh's *Vintage Spirits & Forgotten Cocktails* (2005) is still an essential aid to exploring some of the byways of booze. Byron and Sharon Peregrine Johnson's pioneering *Wild West Bartenders' Bible* (1986) remains the best modern look at how you ran an old-time saloon. Henry Crowgey's *Kentucky Bourbon: The Early Years of Whiskeymaking* (1971) is thorough, accurate, and uninfected by bourbon jingoism. Stanley Clisby Arthur's 1937 *Famous New Orleans Drinks and How to Mix 'Em* is one of the first attempts to uncover the history of American drinks and is still of great value. The many works of Anistatia Miller and Jared Brown—by now, there are too many to list—all contain useful information. For any questions of technique,

I still make a beeline to Dale DeGroff's *Craft of the Cocktail* (2002). If Dale can't do it, it can't be done.

The things that have made this book possible though, are the computerized databases of nineteenth-century books and periodicals. As I noted in the Introduction, Cocktails, Punches, Fizzes, and the like were not considered worthy of headlines or historical attention, and their traces in the press of the day are well buried, if omnipresent. To dig them up the old-fashioned way, by scrolling through reel after reel of microfilm, is a lifetime's work. Thankfully, such a thing as Optical Character Recognition software exists, imperfect as it is. But with its help, this buried culture of the bar can be unearthed and examined. This is truly a revolution in the study of popular culture (if it can uncover something as trivial as the history of the Florodora Cooler, think what it can do with things that are really important, like the origins of jazz). In general, though, it should be noted that this technology is still relatively new and making it yield useful results requires persistence and often more ingenuity than I am able to command.

The databases consulted are too many to list: For a more or less current list of what's available, see "List of Online Newspaper Databases" at Wikipedia. Some of the most useful ones are still free: the Library of Congress's Historic American Newspapers (chroniclingamerica.loc.gov); Tom Tryniski's incomparably rich, albeit challenging, archive of New York newspapers, Old Fulton NY Postcards (fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html); the *Brooklyn Eagle* (eagle.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); the California Digital Newspaper Collection; and, of course, Google Books, with its inexhaustible heap of obscure nineteenth-century books. Among the for-pay databases, I've found Genealogy Bank by far the most useful, but Newspaper Archive and Newspapers.com have also contributed tiles to the mosaic that is this book. Without all these, this would have been a far poorer, and thinner, book.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have done this by myself. Well, parts of it I could have—the jumping to conclusions, the unsubstantiated opinionizing, the throwing my hands up in the air and saying, “Who the hell knows?,” all that stuff I can do without any help whatsoever. But wherever I’ve managed to avoid that and actually offer something substantial that makes sense, I’ve had help. I can’t thank everyone who pitched in here—hell, so many people have rallied around this project that I can’t even remember everyone (it doesn’t help that a significant part of the road testing was conducted in bars). In other words, if your name is not on this list and should be, you have my sincere apologies and it’s my round.

There are some people without whom there would be no book at all. The divine Ms. Theodora Sutcliffe, although contemplating a book on the Professor herself, was generous enough to share her research with me at a very early stage, which infected me with the bug. Throughout this project, Dale DeGroff has been my model of the perfect saloonkeeper, a wise and convivial presence who can meet any challenge with confident good humor and competence; he and the Professor would have got along famously. My editor, Marian Lizzi, has been patient beyond belief with a project that stretched far beyond its appointed bounds; no author could hope for better. My agent, Janis Donnaud, stuck with this celebration of the life and works of somebody few people have ever heard of until it found its perfect home. My fellow partners in Beverage Alcohol Resource, Dale (again), Doug Frost, Steve Olson, Paul Pacult, and Andy Seymour, displayed remarkable forbearance as my writing drew me away from our collective enterprise. Brendan Vaughan, Tara Q. Thomas, and David Mahoney, my editors at *Esquire*, *Wine & Spirits*, and *Drinks*, respectively, were similarly tolerant.

There are many, many other people who assisted in the research. Some—William Grimes, Angus Winchester, John C. Burton, and John Myers—lent or even outright gave me rare old bartender’s guides, the essential building blocks of this book. Many others were kind enough to answer my queries, look things up for me, or send me items of interest even without my asking, among them Brian Rea, Gary Regan, Phil Greene (whose brother Ed procured for me a copy of Dick & Fitzgerald’s original 1859 copyright), Ted “Dr. Cocktail” Haigh (who provided lots of good advice and a few rare illustrations), Lowell Edmunds, George Thompson, Guillermo Toro-Lira, Robert Hess, Anistatia Miller and Jared Brown, Philip Duff of Bols (who generously sent me enough corenwyn to test the gin drinks), Chris McMillan, Paul Erickson, Jeff Pogash, John Burton (who graciously allowed me to use the business card of Jerry Thomas in his collection), Mauro Mahjoub, Jorg Meier, George Sinclair, Michael Waterhouse, Barry Popik, and David A. Smith of the New York Public Library.

Besides taking some wonderful photographs of vintage barware that we ultimately couldn’t find space for, Nick Noyes has provided me with venues and support to test some of the larger recipes herein, as have Melissa Clark and Sherwin Dunner. Audrey Saunders and her crew at Pegu Club and Julie Reiner and hers at the Flatiron Lounge have made many an old drink to my specifications and acted as sounding boards for my half-mixed theories, and it is at their establishments you will find me—there, or online with Robert Hess at his DrinkBoy board or with the cocktail geeks who loiter on egullet.com.

Finally, my wife, Karen, and my daughter, Marina. Thanks, guys (and Karen, now you can have the dining room back). Without you, the book would mean nothing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS FOR THE REVISED EDITION

Same as the first, of course, plus a few new names—the ones I’ve remembered, anyway (to the ones I haven’t, next round’s still on me).

Books and such: Jeff Berry, Greg Boehm, Jake Burger, Fernando Castellon, Federico Cuco, Martin Doudoroff, Adam Elmegirab, Leo Leuci, Don Lindgren, Chris McMillian, Jim Meehan, and Ben Schaffer.

Booze: Salvatore Calabrese, Philip Duff, Alexandre Gabriel, Allen Katz, Davorin Kuchan, Tal Nadari, Steven Remsberg, Eric Seed, Tad Seestedt, and John Troia.

Mayhem: Simon Ford.

Edition: Lew Bryson, the crew at *Imbibe* (the magazine), Ross McCammon, Noah Rothbaum.

Inspiration: Dale and Del and gaz [*sic*] and Julie and Mr. T-Baby Vaught.

Agents of Chaos: Greg Best, Derek Brown, Jason Crawley, John Gertsen, Shawn Kelley, Sean Kenyon, Don Lee, Lynnette Marrero, Ivy Mix, Andy Seymour, and the Rabbit gang.

Those Who Served (Drinks) on St. Crispin’s Day: Tony Abou Ghanim, Fernando Castellon, Wayne Collins, Dale DeGroff, Daniel Estremadoyro, Ted Haigh, Robert Hess, Eben Klemm, Francesco Lafranconi, Ryan Magarian, Anistatia Miller and Jared Brown, Ben Reed, Gary Regan and Mardee Haidin Regan, Julie Reiner, and Audrey Saunders. Their lovely drinks made the first edition come alive.

The Without Whoms: Karen and Marina, always and forever.

A FEW RECOLLECTIONS OF THE DISTANT

PAST

The double Bronxes at the Holland House . . . the stingers at the Belmont . . . the silver fizzes at the Manhattan . . . the ginger-ale highballs at the bar of the Buckingham . . . the Benedictine at the Lafayette . . . the seidels of Münchner at Lüchows . . . the Navy Rainbows at Maxim's . . . the Château Yquem at Mouquin's . . . the Manhattan Cocktails at the Hotel Knickerbocker . . . the gin daisies at the Astor . . . the yellow chartreuse at the Brevoort . . . the Infuriators at the Beaux Arts . . . the pousse-café at Rector's . . . the Stone Fences at Churchill's . . . the milk punches at the Savoy . . . the Martinis at Sherry's . . . the champagne cocktails at Delmonico's . . . the Central Park Souths at the Plaza . . . the sherry flips at the Cadillac . . . the Clover Clubs at Bustanoby's . . . the Jack Roses at Eberlin's . . . the beakers of stout at Dinty Moore's . . . the Louis Röderer at Martin's . . . the mint juleps at the Casino . . . the kummel, with a dash of tabasco, at the Fifth Avenue . . . the Tom & Jerry at Shanley's . . . the Pilsener with scrambled eggs and Irish bacon at 5 a.m. at Jack's. . .

—*Life magazine*, 1925

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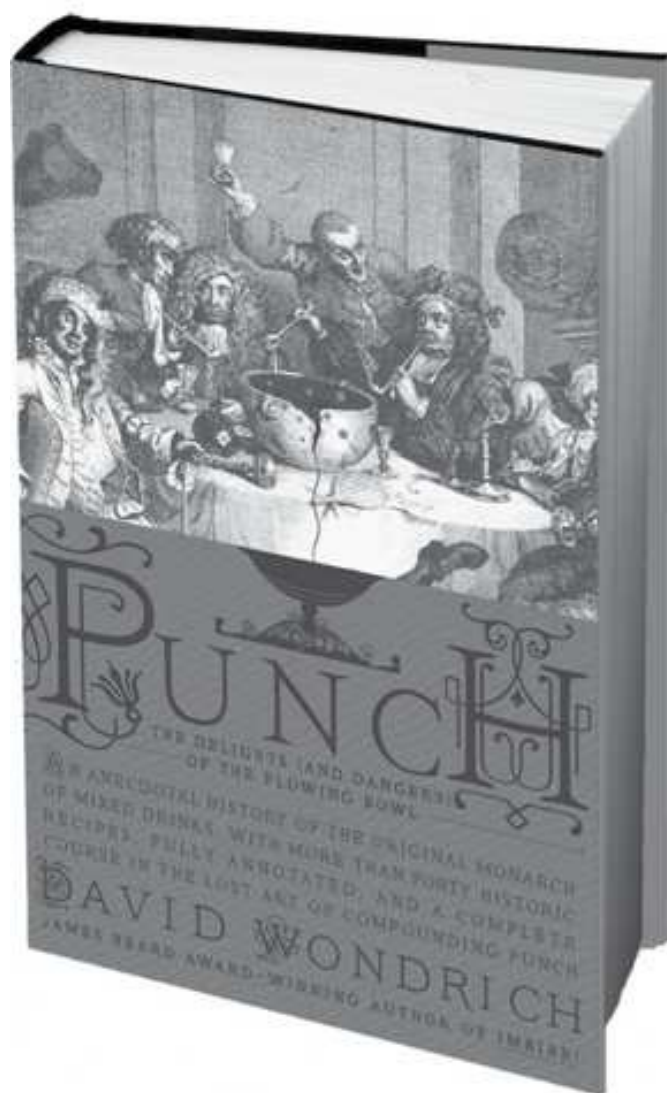
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Also by
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T114.0111

[*](#) Perigee published that book, *Punch: The Delights (and Dangers) of the Flowing Bowl*, in 2010.

** Indeed, it took me six years of searching to turn up that name, so loath was he to use it. His heirs, however, had no problem with it, putting it in the sale notice for his property, where I eventually found it.

* Alexander (ca. 1780–1858) was born a slave in New York, waited on George Washington in his youth, gained his freedom, and by 1812 was running the coaching tavern in upper Manhattan that he would keep until the 1840s, amassing, and losing, a large fortune in the process. He died in 1858. Sherwood E. “Shed” Sterling was born in Trumbull, Connecticut, in 1805. In his youth he worked at his family’s Sterling House, in Bridgeport, before moving to New York. His tenure behind the bar at the Astor House earned him the nickname “the Napoleon the Second of the Bar.” He died in 1856. For Snow (1799–1856), another freed slave who saw both great success and great travail in the bar and restaurant business, see Jefferson Morley’s *Snow-Storm in August* (2012). For Brigham, see [Moral Suasion](#). For Vennigerholz and Redding, see [Joe Redding’s Julep](#).

* Thomas sailed from New York as a member of the large retinue accompanying John “Old Smoke” Morrissey, the great Irish American bare-knuckle champion, gang leader (the dread Dead Rabbits, of *Gangs of New York* fame, were his crew), anti-Tammany Democratic paladin, congressman, and gambling-joint tycoon—in short, one of the sportiest Americans who ever lived.

* Campbell's name, at least, is the one that appears on the cover and as signatory to the brief introduction. The sole Charles B. Campbell in San Francisco at the time was a printer. It's possible his name went on as a front for another bartender—perhaps even the great Harry Johnson, who was in town at the time and claimed to have written a book there that has never turned up.

* Shooting galleries were not uncommon in the larger saloons of the day; the way they generally worked was the house employed young women—sober young women—to shoot against the (tipsy) customers, who hated to be outshot by mere girls, as they were on almost every occasion, and kept trying to redress the natural order of the sexes, paying good coin for each attempt. I fear this useful revenue-enhancer will not be revived.

* This organization, ostensibly a bunch of gourd-growing fanatics, met in the Barclay Street saloon for a while in 1878 and left their fetish objects festooning the bar. According to the *Times*, Thomas was their leader, and had various grandiose plans for exhibitions, thrones made out of the things, and so on. The whole business seems fishy to me, but I can't put my finger on the exact angle being worked, and in any case by 1879 we hear of it no more. As for George, he long outlived his brother, and indeed in 1905, when he was enjoying a comfortable retirement, Jerry's son, Milton, a sign painter and former bartender (I shall withhold editorial comment), was living with him and his much younger wife. Milton died four years later. Hard to be Jerry Thomas's son.

* When young William Randolph Hearst met his father, the senator, at the Hoffman House bar and asked him for some money, Hearst Senior sent someone to get his coat from the check room and, according to Berry Wall, who was there, “drew thirty thousand dollars from the pocket, his winnings that day at the races, peeled off two thousand, and gave them to his son, saying ‘Is that enough, Willie?’” Willie hoped it was. It was that kind of place.

* The canonical long-stemmed, conical Martini glass does not appear on the scene until the 1920s, although the engravings of Cruikshank are full of Victorian Londoners drinking gin and punch from short-stemmed, flaring affairs that bear some similarity, and the 1902 Albert Pick & Company catalog displays a conical Cocktail glass that gives one pause. For what it's worth, Hollywood seemed at first to consider the iconic, streamlined version we use today to be a Champagne glass—that's how it appears, anyway, in Lewis Milestone's 1928 *The Racket* and Buster Keaton's 1929 *Spite Marriage*—in the latter, in a scene where people are also drinking Cocktails out of the standard coupes. Both films were made by different studios, so we know it's not some brain-bent set dresser's mistake.

* For a while there the company tried to cut costs by selling that here in the United States as well, but consumers didn't bite, and recently they switched back to the extra-light formula made especially for the very, very Dry Martini-guzzling American market since the early 1960s. (The light color and taste meant that people would presumably use a touch more in their Martinis as it would make a smoother, less alcoholic drink without being detectable to the eye; in an age where macho posturing over the dryness of one's Martini was rampant, an important consideration.)

* The one major revision I'd make to the techniques contained in that volume concerns the handling of the "oleo-saccharum"; the traditional sugar-citrus oil mix that is the basis of classic Punch making. In *Punch*, I suggest muddling citrus peels with sugar. Far easier, I've found, is to seal up the peels and sugar in a Mason jar (use the smallest jar that will accommodate the volume of the sugar plus the eventual volume of the juice) and leave it in a warm place overnight or for a few hours in the sun. Then open the jar, add your juice, seal it up again, and shake it until the sugar has dissolved. Instant shrub.

* Of course, this description is sufficient to build an excellent Whiskey Punch on, if not Delmonico's precise iteration of the drink.

* In the mid-twentieth century, with Hollands barely available in America, the John Collins mutated into a whiskey drink, which I suppose makes a certain amount of sense given genever's whiskeyish ways.

* For reasons of his own, he signed the letter to the *Herald* conveying the drink “Henry Griffin Duffy,” the name of his infant son.

[*](#) Surprisingly, the appellation comes not from New Yorkers blowing their own horns but from Boston, of all places: The name first appears in print in the *Boston Herald* in 1885. The earliest recipe is found in the 1913 third edition of *The Cocktail Book*, published in Boston. The name was finally cemented in place by another Bostonian, Leo Cotton, a liquor rep who penned the *Old Mr. Boston Official Bar-Tenders' Guide* in 1934. That's three generations of generosity to New York—unless they all meant it as “this is the sort of horseshit they like in New York.”

[*](#) There's also a Knickerbocker Punch in the 1869 *Steward & Barkeeper's Manual*, but it has little in common with either of these. There is, however, a recipe-double for the Knickerbocker called the White Lion in Thomas's book, which shows up on an augmented version of Brigham's list used in 1855 by a California saloon. The genealogy of old drinks is rarely simple.

* Moran, who set up the place in 1880, deserves a footnote in the history of the American Cocktail for contributing at least two drinks to fellow-Irishman Lafcadio Hearn's groundbreaking 1885 work on New Orleans cooking, *La Cuisine Creole*.

* When I wrote this, in 2007, it was before the great Cocktail Revolution. But there are still a great number of stupid drinks sold every year, even if they are now called something like Krapp's Last Flip or ApPEARent Danger.

* In 1860, Anthony Trollope found “ice houses” operating in Guyana, Trinidad, Barbados, and St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands: “A West Indian ice house is but a drinking shop,” as he explained, an American-style bar “at which the drafts are all cool, are all iced, but at which, alas! they are all too strong.” His was a minority opinion: Soon, such establishments would be found throughout the Caribbean.

*For the record, the precise variations acknowledged in Thomas's book are hot Apple Toddy, cold and hot Brandy Toddy, cold Whiskey Toddy, cold Gin Toddy, cold (and presumably hot) Brandy Sling, hot Whiskey Sling, and cold Gin Sling.

^{*} It may, in fact, be a one-shot adaptation of a sailor's drink called the Blue Blazes, which appears to have been a sort of flaming Punch. Information is scarce, though, and more research is needed; see *Journals of the Ocean* by William Augustus Weaver, USN (1827).

* Indeed there were still a few drinkers, more honest or less humorous than their fellows, who called a Sling a Sling: In 1787, for instance, the *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer* published an anonymous political poem that began with fifty-one lines in praise of Mint Sling, which it detailed as “water, sugar, rum and mint”—precisely what the Reverend Toulmin found being passed off as a Julep just six years later (he was the first to document the Julep, so named, made with mint). By the 1820s, however, delusion and Julep triumphed and it was a Mint Sling no more.

* The issue has been confused by its use of the old rhetorical trick of *hypallage* or transferred epithet: In reality, it's the drink that's ginger, and *cock-tail* is the vulgar appellation. This can be confirmed by John Badcock's 1825 *Sportsman's Dictionary*, where he writes, "Cock-tail—is ginger," and by the same author's 1828 *Boxiana; or, Sketches of Modern Pugilism*, where he describes fight fans in a country pub drinking "gin and [that is, or] beer, or both combined with a scratch or two of *cock-tail* in it," where the *cock-tail* has to be something like ginger extract.

* Cocktail is not the only new drink in the article. At 3:00 our narrator “Went into the Doct’s.—found Burnham and Van Hogan—drank a little gin bim—vile stuff. . . .” I was puzzled by that “gin bim” for years, a drink otherwise unexplained. It couldn’t be a typo, since it turns up again, also unexplained, forty-seven years later in a Boston newspaper. It wasn’t until I learned that *Bim* is an old nickname for Barbadians that all became clear: Gin Bim equals “gin Bajan style,” which must be Gin Swizzle—the old, Holland-gin-and-water-and-nothing-else version, not the nectareous Green or Red version.

* These last are nothing more than nicknames for an eye-opener or morning jolt.

* Irving's book was indeed first published in 1809, but he frequently and extensively revised it and Cocktail was one of the things he shoehorned in later.

[*](#) As far as I have been able to discern, the drink makes its sole recorded appearance in *Southward Ho!*, an 1854 novel by William Gilmore Simms, another *Southern Literary Messenger* writer, who describes it as a “curious amalgam of the sweet, the sour, the bitter and the strong—bitters and brandy, lemon and sugar and . . . a little sprinkling of red pepper.” Actually, not bad. At all.

* In 1904, Tommy Lane, head bartender at New York's Marlborough Hotel, was already pushing a drink billed as "a combination between the old-fashioned cocktail and a whisky toddy," which was basically an Old-Fashioned with a slice of orange and one of lemon muddled into it (and, to be sure, the bitters left out).

* The Jerome part of the story probably comes from the fact that the Manhattan Club later occupied a house once owned by Leonard Jerome, Jennie's father (the same building, in fact, that had housed the Turf Club).

* Well, maybe *some* difficulty was encountered: For the next couple of years, there were bartenders who believed, as did the one interviewed in March 1883 by the *Cleveland Leader*, that “the liquor in [it] is gin”—not so crazy if you think about it. Made with genever, then still the dominant gin in America, and a lot of vermouth, as was standard then, it is surprisingly difficult to distinguish by taste from a whiskey drink.

* Hollands, when mixed with sweet vermouth, is insufficiently distinguishable from whiskey to pull the Martini away from the Manhattan, as we've noted. At the same time, it mixes poorly with dry vermouth, as the bartenders discovered for themselves—their unanimity in avoiding it in the Martini was no doubt born of experience. When the epicurean DC saloonkeeper Joe Chamberlain was served a drink with Holland gin and dry vermouth instead of the Plymouth gin and Italian vermouth he ordered, he sent it back, remarking, "I wouldn't give ten cents for a hundred such drinks."

* Unless Harry's our mysterious, plagiaristic Charles B. Campbell: That book was published in San Francisco in the 1860s and did have some rudimentary tips on bartending, both things that Johnson claimed for his work.

* Indeed, truth be told we don't know a damn thing about Kappeler beyond the fact that his name appears on the title page of a fine book (two editions, 1895 and 1911) and the *Herald's* claim in that 1897 piece that he was "for a long time at the head of the drink laboratory connected with the Holland House, which has a reputation for the excellence of its damp delights." He is unknown to the city's directories and the Census.

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