

# The Demon Drink: working-class attitudes to alcohol in nineteenth-century Port Adelaide

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*Alcohol consumption was one of the primary ways in which the nineteenth century middle-class distinguished themselves from the working-class. The working-class were perceived by those above as drunken good-for-nothings whose situation in life was brought about by their own intemperance. Drinking was central to the notion of respectability and the negotiation of one's position in society. As the middle-class used alcohol to define their position so did elements of the working-class. Their voice, however, was often not heard or was misinterpreted. Three assemblages from Port Adelaide tell two different stories – one of indifference to temperance and the other of actively using temperance to elevate social standing.*

## INTRODUCTION

The South Australian temperance movement, begun in the early nineteenth century, did not gain political and legal traction until the end of the century (Potter 1999). In a 100-year period Australia's perception of alcohol changed from a substance of medical benefit to a poison, or at least something to be taken in moderation. This move was led by the middle-class, both in Australia and abroad, who used the temperance movement as a means of defining their social status (Reckner and Brighton 1999:63). Working-class perceptions, on the other hand, have not been well recorded. Using a comparative

and historically sensitive approach, the differences in three working-class assemblages are used to explore their attitudes towards alcohol.

For the purpose of this paper, working-class is defined as any family whose main source of income is derived from manual labour (for further discussion see Briggs 2005:9-12). The three assemblages discussed cover the spectrum of the working-class, from the residents of Quebec Street, who lived in rented accommodation and had no savings, to the Farrow and McKay families who owned their homes and had small amounts of capital to invest elsewhere. No commonality or class consciousness is assumed between the families, allowing differences in the archaeological assemblages to direct conclusions regarding the place of alcohol in the construction of social status.

## HISTORY

Port Adelaide (Figure 1a) was proclaimed in 1840, four years after the settlement of South Australia, following a previous attempt to establish a port further up the Port Adelaide River (Couper-Smartt 2003:57). Built on swampy ground, development in Port Adelaide was slow, frequently being set back by drainage and flood issues. As with the study of the majority of ports, the commercial aspects have overshadowed the residential and Port Adelaide is no different in this respect. With the development of the Port came housing for those working in the associated industries. Related here is the history of three such houses and the people who occupied them: tenements in Quebec Street and the Farrow and McKay cottages on Jane Street.

Quebec Street (Figure 1b) was located over 200m from the commercial centre of Port Adelaide and development was therefore slow as flood and drainage issues were not addressed as a matter of priority. Around 1863 John Robert McDonald built four wooden cottages of two rooms each at what is now 15 and 17 Quebec Street (allotment 108 prior to sub-division, subsequently referred to as 108 Quebec Street to indicate historical configuration and size). These cottages were rented to a rapidly changing assortment of people, 63 families in all, between 1863 and 1900. Rate assessment records and births, deaths and marriages indexes indicate the residents can generally be characterised as families of between two and eight children with a father participating in manual labour and a mother who performed house duties and may have also worked outside the home (Briggs 2005:83). Little information could be discovered for the majority of residents beyond names, dates of birth, marriage and death. Where it could, the



Figure 1: Port Adelaide location map.

historical record indicates that the residents of 108 Quebec Street lead lives that could be seen as unrespectable by Victorian standards. At least two occupants had absconded from vessels they were serving on and three had venereal diseases associated with a promiscuous lifestyle.

The most detailed evidence of life in the Quebec Street cottages comes from the inquest into the suicide of Mary Wynes, reported in the *Port Adelaide News* (1882:8c-d). Wynes committed suicide while “of unsound mind” and was possibly suffering postnatal depression after the birth of her second child. The inquest highlighted the interplay of family and friendship ties in the cottages and neighbourhood. The evidence of local police Sergeant Doyle indicated that the families lived beyond the bounds of strict Victorian morals – Doyle being called on at least one occasion to defuse an argument between Mary and some of her relatives (her mother and father-in-law lived in another of the cottages). Doyle also gave evidence that he occasionally brought beer for Mary and other witnesses stated that although she had been a sober woman in the past she had recently turned to drink.

The inquest not only gives an insight into the residents, but also wider attitudes towards alcohol amongst the working-class. The consumption of alcohol by women was not wholly behind closed doors – Mary being supplied by Sergeant Doyle and also sharing a drink with her neighbour Mr Martin on occasions. There were, however, bounds in the consumption of alcohol that Mary had crossed in the weeks leading up to her death.

The Farrow's of Jane Street occupied their own house of four rooms for 30 years between 1855 and 1885. John and Johanna had six children, three of whom survived into adulthood. The Farrow's were reasonably well off, owning their own home as well as rental properties in the same street. John, however, still worked as a labourer for the Port Adelaide Council and the archaeological evidence suggests Johanna took in laundry (Briggs 2005:198-199). The documentary evidence for the Farrow family strongly indicates that Johanna, at least, was in favour of total abstinence from alcohol. Johanna was one of the few women who received high praise from Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby, the leader of the temperance movement in South Australia and who was based in Port Adelaide. Kirby was said to “cherish her memory” (Kiek 1927:164). Kirby was a strongly opinionated, uncompromising man and it is unlikely he would have high regard for Johanna if she did not conform to his philosophy in full. A plaque memorialising her service as a Sunday School teacher still hangs in the Port Adelaide Uniting Church today.

The McKay's are slightly more enigmatic. George and Mary bought the property next door to the Farrow's in 1849, although it remained mortgaged until they sold it in 1876. The couple occupied the four to six room house of brick and wood with their four surviving children. Their eldest son, William (1836?-), was married in 1861 and probably moved out of home around this time. George senior is listed in the Street Directories as a sail maker, a profession believed to have been taken up by his son Griffith before he became a Master Mariner (Waters, *et al.* 2004:10). George senior also seems to have become a captain and, according to his obituary, was “engaged in developing the coasting trade of the colony, as was succeeded by his son, Captain Griffith McKay. He was a respected member of the society in which he lived ...” (South Australian Register 23 May 1882, supplement:1882a). There is little other available evidence on which to base an estimation of the family's respectability.

There were marked differences between the residents of the two sites. Quebec Street was occupied by larger families who, documents indicate, occasionally lived outside the accepted Victorian moral standards. On the Jane Street site all

available documentation indicates the Farrow and McKay families could be defined as ‘respectable’, Johanna seemingly actively pursuing the temperance ideal. Some of these differences can be seen in the archaeological record.

## STATISTICAL METHODS

The basis of this research is formed by excavations undertaken for one of the author's (Lampard) PhD (Briggs 2005). Between 24 September and 6 October 2002 a team of over 40 students excavated four trenches in the rear yard of 15 Quebec Street. Trenches one (6x2m) and two (2x2m) proved to be the most informative regarding the period under investigation and the artefacts recovered from Trenches three and four have been excluded from this study. Trench one uncovered the foundation wall of the c1860 cottages, sheet deposits associated with the lane and some underfloor deposits. Trench two comprised mainly brick rubble from the demolition of the cottages and underfloor deposits. All deposits were excavated by hand and sieved through three, five or ten mm mesh. Due to the nature of the deposits and rental patterns it was not possible to tie deposits to particular occupants or cottages. The assemblage has therefore been analysed as one, following Murray and Mayne's research that indicates occupancy patterns have little effect on artefact assemblages (2001:79; 2003).

The second excavation took place between 11 September and 2 October 2003 in the car park at the rear of the South Australian Maritime Museum in Jane Street. A team of over 60 students and volunteers excavated an area of 12x4m, uncovering the rear yards of the Farrow and McKay cottages.

The glass assemblages were processed in the Archaeology Laboratory at Flinders University. After cleaning, the glass was sorted according to colour, with undiagnostic fragments being catalogued together. Finishes, bases and embossed fragments were catalogued separately into an *Access* database designed by Lampard. The style of the vessel fragments was determined with reference to a range of glass analysis and bottle collecting guides (Arnold 1985; 1987; 1997; Boov 1992; Jones 1986; Jones and Sullivan 1989; Roycroft and Roycroft 1979).

The easiest method of analysing artefacts is to count how many there are. The concern of any artefact analysis, however, is how interdependent that count is. In other words, how fragmented the assemblage is. For this reason Chaplin (1971, p. 67) has stated that, while counts are easy to determine, it is “time completely wasted for it allows no comparisons to be made between any two sites because the [fragmentation] bias which is certainly present cannot be detected or determined”. While this may be an over-reaction, it is evident that a count of artefacts, by itself, is not an accurate reflection of the assemblage and since inter-site comparison is the main basis of this research fragmentation needs to be addressed.

The most commonly used technique to balance the number of fragments is a Minimum Vessel Count (MVC) (Hesse and Wapnish 1985, p.113). The basic aim of a MVC is to determine the minimum number of vessels the fragments could have come from. This is achieved by choosing one part or element and counting its frequency. The part chosen must occur only once in a complete artefact. For example, when calculating the MVC for bottles either the finish or the base can be used. Body fragments cannot be used, as there is no way of identifying whether the fragments came from the same vessel, even based on colour and thickness, as these two variables can alter drastically even in one vessel. An MVC is not affected by fragmentation. The MVC is used in this paper to alleviate the issues of bias associated with fragment counts. The MVC however, has its own weaknesses. While it lessens

the bias of fragmentation, it is also conservative and will underestimate the number of vessels in an assemblage – it provides an absolute minimum number of vessels as compared to an absolute maximum provided by a fragment count. As there is no reliable means of finding a middle ground, fragment counts and MVCs have been provided below.

There are many ways to calculate minimum numbers. One of the biggest problems in inter-site comparisons, using published material, is that the reader does not know how the number was arrived at, thereby lessening the value of the comparison using published data (Klein and Cruz-Urbe 1984:26). Part of this problem has been avoided in this analysis by Lampard determining all MVCs. So as not to perpetuate this problem and to make this research comparable with any future research, the MVCs discussed in this paper were calculated in the following way. Bases were ultimately chosen to calculate the MVC, being the most commonly occurring component. The MVC was calculated across all contexts in an assemblage and only included bases that were over 75 per cent complete. Where this paper refers to assemblages not excavated by Lampard the figures have been calculated from artefact databases, not from published data. Comparisons have been based on the MVC percentages to allow for the variation in frequencies between the sites.

### Bottle form and function

The question of ascribing bottle function/contents on the basis of form is a vexed one. The analysis of the contents of intact, corked wine-style bottles from the wrecks of the *William Salthouse*, *Sydney Cove* and the *James Matthews* have indicated that this style of bottle was used for a range of alcoholic beverages, including cider (Staniforth 2003:84-5, 121, 134). It is therefore possible that not all the wine-style bottles from the sites contained wine and likewise that the champagne-style bottles did not contained champagne and so on.

The reuse of bottles for other purposes, once the original contents had been emptied, also needs considering, as pointed out by Bucsh (1987). Penny Crook’s analysis of bottles from

1 Carahers Lane and 128 Cumberland Street in The Rocks, Sydney, found marks consistent with the reuse of the bottles (Crook 2000:22). Crook notes that the majority of these marks were found on alcohol-related bottles and suggests they may have been refilled at the local hotel. Ken Arnold (1997:95) states “people did not buy bottled beer – they simply took ‘their’ bottle down to the hotel to be refilled ...”. At Mary Wynes’ inquest Sergeant Doyle gave evidence that he occasionally bought Mary alcohol, and that on the Thursday before her suicide he had bought her a pint of beer (*Port Adelaide News* 18 April 1882:8c). Although not specified by Doyle, it is possible that this was brought to Mary in a recycled bottle. While no reuse marks were noted during cataloguing it is possible, and even probable, that such use occurred, if not for a trip to the pub then for other uses around the home, such as water or preserving.

The multipurpose nature of bottles makes analysis in archaeological contexts difficult. Given this, no attempt is made here to suggest the exact contents of each bottle – hence the use of the term ‘style’ following the description (eg wine-style). In order to advance discussion and to allow for some meaningful analysis of the assemblages, while it is noted that form does not always equate to contents, it is assumed that bottle forms generally will denote whether the contents were alcoholic or non-alcoholic.

### RESULTS

From the 2149 glass fragments recovered from Quebec Street a MVC of 51 was calculated. Eight of the MVC could not be ascribed a function. Of the remaining 43 there were three case gin-style bottles, two champagne-style bottles, one half-pint bottle, an ink well, two medical-style bottles, one sauce bottle, three tumblers and 29 wine-style bottles. No aerated water-style bottles were included in the MVC and only 17 fragments were found. Overall, 68.63 per cent of the MVC was related to alcohol consumption (Table 1).

A MVC of 48 glass vessels was calculated from 2437 fragments associated with the McKay cottage. The McKay

**Table 1: Glass artefact Minimum Vessel Count from Quebec Street and the Farrow and McKay Cottages by Form**

Specific Identification	Quebec Street		Farrow Cottage		McKay Cottage	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Aerated Water-Style Bottle	0	0.00	10	5.32	2	4.17
Ale-Style Bottle	1	1.96	1	0.53	0	0.00
Bottle (unidentified)	8	15.69	49	26.06	9	18.75
Case Gin-Style Bottle	3	5.88	4	2.13	2	4.17
Champagne-Style Bottle	2	3.92	5	2.66	0	0.00
Cosmetic-Style Bottle	0	0.00	5	2.66	0	0.00
Decorative Hollowware	0	0.00	3	1.60	0	0.00
Ink Bottle	1	1.96	1	0.53	0	0.00
Jar	0	0.00	2	1.06	0	0.00
Medical or Cosmetic-Style Bottle	0	0.00	2	1.06	0	0.00
Medical-Style Bottle	2	3.92	21	11.17	10	20.83
Pickle-Style Bottle	0	0.00	0	0.00	11	22.92
Salad Oil-Style Bottle	0	0.00	7	3.72	1	2.08
Sauce-Style Bottle	2	3.92	4	2.13	1	2.08
Serving Vessel	0	0.00	4	2.13	1	2.08
Shot-Style Glass	0	0.00	1	0.53	0	0.00
Tumbler	3	5.88	8	4.26	1	2.08
Vinegar-Style Bottle	0	0.00	2	1.06	0	0.00
Whiskey-Style Bottle	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	2.08
Wine-Style Bottle	29	56.86	53	28.19	8	16.67
Wine-Style Glass	0	0.00	6	3.19	1	2.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.00</b>
% of MVC alcohol related	35	68.63	63	33.51	11	22.92

assemblage was slightly more diverse, 12 forms being identified. Pickle-style bottles formed the largest group with a count of 11, followed by ten medical-style bottles, nine unidentified bottles and eight wine-style bottles. A minimum number of two was determined for aerated water-style and case gin-style, while there was one each of salad oil-style, sauce-style and whiskey-style bottles. The remaining three were a serving vessel, a tumbler and a wine-style glass (Table 1).

The 3362 fragments from the Farrow cottage assemblage were calculated to form a minimum of 188 vessels. With over double the count of the Quebec Street and McKay cottage, there was also a wider variety of forms. Wine-style bottles accounted for 53 vessels, unidentified for 49 and medical-style bottles for 21. A minimum of 10 aerated water, eight tumblers, seven salad oil-style bottles, six wine-style glasses, five champagne and cosmetic-style bottles, four sauce-style bottles and serving vessels, three hollowware vessels, two jars, medical or cosmetic-style and vinegar-style bottles and one ale-style bottle and one shot-style glass (Table 1).

### Comparisons

In terms of alcohol-related bottles Quebec Street (68.63 per cent) had over double the percentage of the Farrow cottage (33.51 per cent) and two thirds more than the McKay cottage assemblage, with 22.92 per cent (Table 1). The extent of the difference, together with the use of MVC to reduce the bias of fragmentation suggests the figures are not coincidental. It is again noted that all three assemblages were retrieved from sheet deposits subject to similar taphonomic processes. What, therefore, could account for the variation?

The first variable presenting itself to account for this discrepancy relates to differing tenancy types: rental as opposed to owner-occupied. This explanation stands in contradiction to the research of Murray and Mayne (2001:79; 2003), who hold that such differences did not impact the assemblages formed at Little Lonsdale Street. It was on this basis that the Quebec Street assemblage was analysed as though it were a single household. Research in the Five Points district indicates that there is “no homogeneous pattern of smoking and drinking” (Reckner and Brighton 1999:80). Data extracted from the Five Points database (Table 2) indicates that there are large variations in alcohol-related items between the excavated deposits, across households and occupation periods. When the deposits are separated into those with known tenants and those created by multiple households slightly higher numbers are seen in the tenanted deposits.

**Table 2: Data collated from Five Points Database calculating number and percentage of alcohol-related items**

Feature/ Strata	Artefact Count	Glass MVC	No. Alcohol in MVC	%
<b>Known Households</b>				
B-IV	4005	34	6	17.65
B-V	3118	57	6	10.53
H-IV	3006	15	2	13.33
N-IV	3892	82	20	24.39
<b>Average</b>				<b>16.47</b>
<b>Tenants</b>				
J-III	13913	116	15	12.93
J-V	25158	137	31	22.63
Z-II	3901	15	1	6.67
AN-III	10175	19	9	47.37
AL-II	1471	89	28	31.46
<b>Average</b>				<b>24.21</b>

Given the wide variations within and across the two groups at the Five Points, together with the findings from Little Lonsdale Street, there is little likelihood of the difference at Port Adelaide being attributable to tenancy type. That such a range exists displays personal or family preferences.

Even compared to the Five Points data the Quebec Street assemblage contains a far higher proportion of alcohol related bottles. The McKay and Farrow cottages, however, fall within the upper end of the range exhibited at Five Points. Quebec Street also exhibits a higher proportion than the boarding houses for mill workers in Lowell, Massachusetts. The only accessible figures for this site were published by Reckner and Brighton (1999:79) as a contrast to the Five Points data. Between 35 and 40 per cent of bottles from two Lowell excavations were related to alcohol. This large number has been interpreted as resulting from active resistance to the mill owners, whose control over their employees even extended to the prevention of alcohol consumption in the boarding houses (Beaudry, *et al.* 1991:285). Quebec Street is still well above the level described as ‘active resistance’ in Lowell.

In comparison to an Australian excavation, the Wapping District of Hobart, Tasmania, Quebec Street still has a high percentage of alcohol bottles, although the Wapping percentage is between Quebec Street and the two Jane Street sites at 43.29 per cent (Austral Archaeology 2002: calculated from appendix 6). Casselden Place, Melbourne also lies in between with 52.39 per cent of bottles relating to alcohol (Godden Mackay Logan and LaTrobe University 2005, calculated from Volume 4ii, appendix C, table 4). The assemblage of a geographically closer site, the Rookery in Adelaide, had roughly 38 per cent alcohol bottles (Austral Archaeology 1992:41), very close to that of the Farrow cottage. The Cumberland Gloucester Streets site in The Rocks has the closest figure to Quebec Street, with 57.38 per cent of glass bottles relating to alcohol in phases five and six – c1851 to c1900 (Crook, *et al.* 2006, calculated from Access Database). Comparatively, therefore, the two Jane Street sites fall at the bottom end of alcohol consumption in Australia, while Quebec Street displays the highest level within the compared sites.

### DISCUSSION

In the examination of working-class sites, alcohol-related artefacts are a very divisive group, given recent attempts to ameliorate the preconception of the drunken, shiftless manual labourer, created by the nineteenth-century middle-class and perpetuated into the present (Reckner and Brighton 1999). In the attempt to refute this prejudice there has been a tendency to sanitise the working-class in the opposite direction. This re-evaluation obscures some of the diversity within the community. Quebec Street is a caution against this tide. Some of the residents at Quebec Street obviously enjoyed a drink; maybe one too many on occasion. Documentary research has shown that many of the residents, being deserters and destitutes, teetered on the edge of respectability. When Mary Wynes committed suicide it was insinuated that she had begun drinking heavily. That the Sergeant was willing to bring beer to Mary on occasions suggests that alcohol was still considered, by at least sections of the community, to be an acceptable drink for women. This could provide a clue to the higher number of bottles. Could these bottles represent the consumption of alcohol by women?

Port Adelaide, like most working-class areas of the period, had a ‘pub’ culture. At the end of the day men went to the pub for a drink. Whether women also drank regularly in pubs is difficult to ascertain. Temperance reformers couched their arguments in terms of saving men from drinking themselves to

death. Contemporary female temperance writers did not discuss women drinking in pubs, women were characterised as being temperate and their role was to save men (Potter 1999:457). Wright (2003) has discussed the prevalence of female publicans in colonial Victoria, but does not touch on whether women were also patrons. Wright (2003:6) suggests that women were seen as ideal licence holders as the provision of meals and accommodation was an extension of their domestic role and they added “respectability and maternal restraint” to the masculine pastime. The authors have found limited research indicating whether women frequented public houses. Harrison (1971:47) and Rorabaugh (1979:12) have both suggested that women were excluded from public drinking houses. In an Australian context Karskens (1999:164) writes that by the 1860s women in The Rocks could no longer drink in pubs as they had done in the convict period, as they would have been considered prostitutes. To enjoy a drink they had to take a jug to be filled at the hotel, or send one of their children.

Whether or not all working-class women were mindful of the moral danger of drinking in such establishments has been obscured by the actions of the middle-class temperance movements who, believing women should not be there, did not record their presence. As Rorabaugh (1979:12) puts it “The subject received scant attention because it was ‘too delicate’ to be discussed”. It does not necessarily follow that women did not visit the public houses of Port Adelaide. A vignette published by the *Port Adelaide News* and reproduced by Potter (1999:454) includes the sentence “There was [a girl] this week, aged about twenty, who was seen reeling about a public house, having been a little ‘overtaken’”. While obviously being used to illustrate a point, and therefore not necessarily true, the story does indicate that women drinking in bars was not completely unheard of.

Kirkby (1997:61), in her survey of women working in pubs, states “Certainly there is evidence that ... working-class women in the colonies drank, although how much of this was done on licensed premises and how much in the street is unclear”. Elsewhere Kirkby (1997:60) maintains that the number of women drinking in pubs was increasing during the nineteenth century, in contradiction to Karskens. The evidence to support this comment is not presented, making it difficult to assess. Dingle (1980:240), in his survey of alcohol consumption in Australia, dismisses women as drinkers, believing they did not have an impact on the per capita consumption rate. He instead believes that women civilized the colonies with their presence. The normalisation of sex ratios led to a decline in alcohol consumption, a masculine activity, as the home began to compete with the pub for time and money (Dingle 1980:240). What is evident from this discussion is that the subject of women’s drinking habits during the nineteenth century requires further attention.

Regardless of how much was consumed, drinking at home allowed women to indulge without subjecting themselves to public scrutiny, unless alcoholism became impossible to conceal. Their responsibilities at home – the care of children and housework would have been another factor making it difficult for women to drink at the pub. It is, therefore, a strong likelihood that the women of Quebec Street, if they wanted to, were drinking at home. That Mary Wynes, at least on occasions, chose to drink at home could indicate she was somewhat mindful of her standing with her neighbours; and the same may be said for other residents. Harrison (1971:305) says of women drinking that there were many “tales of concealed intemperance above stairs”.

At the time of Mary Wynes’ suicide in 1882, temperance campaigning in South Australia, and in Port Adelaide in particular, was beginning to gain momentum under the

leadership of Reverend Joseph Coles Kirby. Kirby had arrived in Port Adelaide in mid-1880 to take up the pastorship of the Port Adelaide Congregational Church and he continued his active work in the area of temperance (Potter 1999:409). A Band of Hope branch had been established in Port Adelaide in 1879 (Potter 1999:414) and the intemperance of sailors and labourers was a well-canvassed subject in the Port. It was not until Kirby’s arrival, however, that support was galvanised, eventually leading to a reduction in the number of licenses and the introduction of six o’clock closing time across South Australia.

It is unclear, however, where support for temperance groups, such as the Band of Hope, came from – whether the middle-class, the working-class or a mixture of both. Research by Reckner and Brighton (1999) would suggest that the working-class resisted attempts to convert them into teetotalers. Alcohol was not the only attraction of drinking establishments. The often cramped conditions of home also encouraged men to spend time elsewhere.

While the efforts of the temperance movement did not materialise legally until the 1880s, by which time all three sites at Port Adelaide were losing their residential nature, it is still an issue worth mentioning here. In light of the success the movement had in closing public houses and restricting trading hours, it is interesting to examine alcohol consumption before peoples’ drinking habits were changed.

If the higher frequency of bottles at Quebec Street represents the consumption of alcohol by women living in the cottages, then it would follow that those in the Farrow and McKay cottages were not drinking to the same extent. The possible aspirations of these two families may have influenced their consumption of alcohol. It has been suggested by several authors, including Harrison (1971:305), that the aspirational members of the working-class used the temperance movement in an attempt to elevate their status. For the Farrow family, at least, this would have been linked very closely with religious fervour. Johanna’s involvement with Kirby and the Congregational Church would have elevated her standing in the community. Kirby’s high opinion, however, would not have been granted to Johanna without her adherence to the ideals of the temperance movement.

Here the archaeology and the historical record have enabled a view of the lived experience of temperance for one family. The discrepancy between the documents relating to Johanna and the alcohol bottles found on the site, clearly signifies tension between husband and wife. While Johanna embraced the ideals of the movement, John obviously did not want to give up alcohol. It is not suggested that he was an alcoholic – there is no record of John’s drinking reaching a publicly unacceptable level. Kiek (1927:126), in fact, attributes Johanna’s salvation to him. The archaeological evidence, however, clearly points to his partiality of a drink. The tension caused by these divergent views towards alcohol probably did not play out as vocal fighting, and was possibly not even visible outside the home. What can be seen here is a more subtle difference of opinion coexisting within the home, maybe not always peacefully, but pointing towards the daily compromises of married life.

Without historical information on Mary McKay it is more difficult to determine why her family had the lowest percentage of alcohol bottles of the sites. There are several possible interpretations. The first is that the men of the McKay family consumed the majority of their alcohol in public houses, drinking infrequently at home. This may or may not have been further reduced by how much, if any, the women drank. The second is that the family, while not practicing total abstinence, drank in strict moderation. A further possible interpretation is that the family recycled its bottles with more



Figure 2: Glass tumblers and wine-style glasses from the Farrow assemblage. Photo: Susan Briggs.

consistency. There could be many more explanations, or even a combination of those mentioned here. The McKays' attitudes towards alcohol will be discussed further below.

A different attitude to alcohol is not only indicated by the number of bottles in the McKay and Farrow assemblages – a number of associated vessels are also relevant here. Table 1 indicates there were no wine glasses and very few tumblers found at Quebec Street, whereas these items were located at both the other sites (Figure 2). Alcohol was not just consumed; it was now regulated with the right equipment. By regulating alcohol, through the use of material culture, it could be viewed as respectable consumption. The wine glasses indicated the gentility and control placed over the alcohol.

The consumption of alcohol on the Quebec Street site was probably not solely for the purposes of satisfying thirst or a wish to become inebriated. Alcohol had long been considered as having medicinal value. One of the early barriers to temperance campaigns was the belief that alcohol cured all sorts of ills and gave energy during particularly stressful times (Freeman 1989:94; Harrison 1971:39, 41). Quebec Street had the lowest percentage of medicinal bottles of any of the assemblages, 3.92 per cent compared to the moderate 11.17 per cent of the Farrow's and the 20.83 per cent of the McKays' (Table 1 and Figure 2). Evidence from the Five Points suggests that patent medicine was increasing in popularity during the 1840s and 1850s, with greater availability, (Bonasera and Raymer 2001:61) and that the reliance on alcohol as a medical cure was diminishing. Still, a wide range of approaches to disease is evident in the Five Points District. The 18 deposits analysed by Bonasera and Raymer (2001:51) had a range of between 4.3 and 48.2 per cent medicine bottles. This includes soda and mineral water bottles. When these particular bottles are removed from the Five Points calculations the range widens to between 1.2 and 41.9 per cent, bringing them into the range of the Port Adelaide sites. The Wapping District excavation gives a percentage of 3.46 (Austral Archaeology 2002, calculated from appendix 6), very similar to Quebec Street. Denny's analysis of medicinal bottles from Adelaide's Rookery indicate that at least 35 per cent of the bottles recovered were medicinal, although it is unclear whether this calculation considers fragments or MVC (Denny 1994). At Casselden Place 2.49 per cent of bottles were medicinal (Godden Mackay Logan and LaTrobe University 2005, calculated from Volume 4ii, appendix C, table 4), while in The Rocks the figure reached 7.96 per cent (Crook, *et al.* 2006, calculated from Access Database). It appears that the Quebec Street resident's use of medicine is roughly equal to that of other Australian working-class neighbourhoods, while the Farrow's and McKay's is

somewhat higher. The residents from Quebec Street, it would seem, were either yet to be convinced that alcohol was no cure, or did not see the necessity of additional expenditure on a patent medicine when a bottle of beer had worked previously.

This was the age when germ theory was only just beginning to be accepted. When illness did occur the residents of the sites chose different methods of treatment. At Quebec Street the time-honoured tradition of alcohol was used, with the occasional foray into patent medicines. For the Farrow's, perhaps, there was a mixture of responses depending on the medical condition, with a larger reliance on alcohol and a lesser reliance on patent medicine. The McKay's, in contrast, seem to have embraced preparatory medicines and even visited the chemist.

Medicinal use (Figure 3), however, still cannot fully account for the difference between Quebec Street and the other two assemblages. A further clue to the nature of the assemblage may lie in the absence of particular kinds of artefacts from that assemblage. No glass aerated water bottles were included in the Quebec Street MVC; even when fragments are counted there are only 17. Ginger beer in stoneware bottles was more popular, comprising 2.74 per cent of the ceramic MVC. In contrast glass aerated water bottles comprised 4.17 per cent of the McKay MVC and 5.32 per cent of the Farrow's (Table 1). Ginger beer from stoneware bottles was consumed infrequently on Jane Street comprising 2.34 per cent of the McKays MVC and 1.64 per cent of the Farrow's.

Bonasera and Raymer (2001:61) have argued for the Five Points site that soda and mineral water were considered as medical alternatives. This may also have been the case in Port Adelaide, but Portonians also required an alternative to water. Port Adelaide received piped water in 1866, but the supply was unreliable and most families continued to depend on water carried from Adelaide or collected rain water. During excavations at Quebec Street and the Farrow's cottage, barrel hoops were uncovered in the yards. These were interpreted as barrels to store water and possibly collect roof runoff. In the McKay cottage yard a concrete slab is thought to have been a base for the ship's tank that was found in the opposite wall, evidence of attempts to collect water by all the families. Water was obviously a concern, it was expensive and only inadequate amounts could be obtained, even by the well-off families of Port Adelaide (Duncan 1933:27). The McKays and Farrow's may have used aerated waters as a partial substitute, while the residents of Quebec Street again opted for alcohol, possibly in the form of beer. Beer was a common replacement, being cheap and, in London (probably also in Port Adelaide),

easier to obtain (Harrison 1971:298). Dingle (1980:243) suggests that in Australia, beer was not used as a thirst-quencher to the same extent as it was in Britain. While the inhabitants of Britain consumed around 30 gallons per capita in a year, the highest rate recorded by Dingle (1980:242) was 18 gallons in Victoria for the period 1871–1880. The archaeological evidence suggests, however the residents of Quebec Street may have continued to rely on beer. Aerated water would also have provided the temperate members of the two Jane Street families with an alternative to water, tea and coffee. It is notable that no cordial bottles were included in any of the MVCs, suggesting that this was not a popular refreshment for Port Adelaide residents. Tea, Dingle (1980:243) suggests, was the most commonly used alternative in Australia. Per capita consumption of tea, measured in pounds, was well above that of Britain's during the nineteenth century.

There is another explanation for the larger proportions of proprietary medicine bottles in the Farrow assemblage and especially in the McKay's. The base of the majority of such medicines was alcohol, in one form or another, and many also contained opiates. Rorabaugh (1979:12) indicates that as the restrictions on women drinking became more severe some turned to patent medicines to hide their alcohol consumption. At Boott Mill in Lowell, Massachusetts Beaudry *et al.* (1991:169) believe they have found archaeological evidence of this, although the deception was directed to the mill owners and may not have been solely along gender lines. Unfortunately the authors did not provide figures and it has not been possible to identify from the reports available the number of medical bottles excavated.

In small communities it may have been easier for women to explain away frequent purchases at the chemist for a "headache" than to justify their trips to the public house. Such a farce would indicate a preoccupation with respectability, a wish to avoid the gossip of neighbours and a view of alcohol as contrary to respectability. Geismer (1993:68) uses this

explanation for the large number of medicinal bottles and the lack of alcohol bottles in a privy in New York's Greenwich Mews. There is limited support for such an explanation in Port Adelaide for two reasons. Firstly, on the whole, the medicinal bottles in the Farrow and McKay assemblages are of a small size, whereas quantity would be a consideration if purchasing for the alcoholic content. Secondly, neither assemblage has a predominant number of a particular brand, as might have been the case when the consumer found their ideal balance of alcohol and taste. Mrs Ann Lewis, in The Rocks, disposed of eight bottles of the same stomach bitters into her privy, which may have been consumed for the alcohol rather than the cure of a stomach complaint (Lydon 1998:140). Mrs Lewis' position in society was somewhat tenuous, as she ran a boarding house to make a living. Such an occupation required a delicate negotiation of her social position and being seen drinking alcohol would have upset the fine balance between virtuous business woman and immoral boarding housekeeper. The residents of the Port Adelaide sites, however, were probably not in such delicate situations. Denny (1994:42) likewise concludes that the residents of the Rookery "did not feel an obligation to uphold an appearance of decency by concealing the volume of alcohol consumed". As Bonasera and Raymer (2001:51) so succinctly put it, "If a poor worker possessing limited assets wished to conceal his or her alcohol consumption, it does not seem logical that they would buy a foul tasting medicine that cost more than either whiskey or wine".

## CONCLUSIONS

The higher proportions of alcohol bottles at the Quebec Street cottages relate to differing strategies employed to deal with conditions in Port Adelaide. For the Jane Street families medical trust was placed in new preparatory medicines, a belief in science (however unscientific some of these preparations were in reality) being the mark of a respectable, educated person (Burke 1999:78). The people at Quebec Street, however, did what their parents had done – have a drink. Beer or other alcoholic beverages may also have made up for the unreliable water supply in Port Adelaide. The Jane Street families occasionally treated themselves to an aerated water or ginger beer.

The part women played in adding to the deposits at Quebec Street could not be determined due to a lack of historical information on female drinking habits in the nineteenth century. Further research and comparisons archaeologically may help to confirm the thesis forwarded that women drinking at Quebec Street contributed to the number of alcohol bottles. Archaeological and documentary evidence from Jane Street suggests the Farrow and McKay women were active in limiting the amount of alcohol consumed on the premises – a possible indication of their desire for respectability.

Beyond all the explanations discussed above remains the conclusion that the residents of Quebec Street, both male and female, do not appear to have considered temperance as an important social display. By choosing to quench their thirst with alcohol and using it as a medicine, the residents were, intentionally or unintentionally, communicating their attitudes towards alcohol. Those reading these signals would have brought their own values to the purchase and consumption of alcohol. For the middle-class observers of Mary Wynes' inquest this was disapproval. Her family, friends and neighbours may have had a more lenient view; they themselves variously used alcohol medicinally and as a water substitute, but probably first and foremost as a form of relaxation and socialisation.



Figure 3: Medicine-style bottles from the Mackay assemblage.  
Photo: Susan Briggs.

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