

Williamsburg Temperance Pledge Signers, 1832

Meekins Library has a stack of temperance circulars on which residents of the town signed their names to the following pledge: "We the subscribers hereby pledge ourselves, that we will not, except as a medicine in case of bodily infirmity, use Ardent Spirits ourselves, or procure them for the use of our families, or provide them for the entertainment of our friends or for persons in our employment: and that in all suitable ways we will discountenance the use of them in the community."

The names of all who took the pledge are grouped below as they appear on the circulars they signed. Each group signed a separate form. In many cases the group was a family or household, but it isn't clear that that was always the case.

The circular or pledge form they signed (copy attached) was printed in Northampton in Feb. 1832. Only one of the signed forms was dated by its signers, so the period of time over which all these pledges were made is uncertain. But it is known from other records that some of these signers moved out of town, died, or married and changed their surnames not very long after Feb. 1832, so a working hypothesis is that the forms preserved at Meekins Library represent a strong push by temperance advocates to sign up other non-drinkers as soon as the pledge circulars became available, and most or all of these people probably signed during 1832.

The message headed "Fellow Citizens" in the temperance circular describes, in typically

windy and moralistic 19th-century language, the grave problem perceived by the leaders of the recently formed national and state temperance societies. It goes on to propose putting a copy of the circular in the hands of every American family, and exhorts everyone over the age of 12 to take the pledge. In fact a dozen or more signers in Williamsburg were under 16, and three were only 10 or 11 years old in 1832.

There are 227 signatures in all. Williamsburg's population in 1830 was 1225 people.

Eric Weber 3/25/2015

Mary Davenport
 Cordelia Sadler
 Mary Salmon
 -
 Thaddeus Bartlett
 Esther Bartlett
 -
 Erastus Bodman
 Mary Ann Bodman
 Desire Mayhew
 Desire Osborn
 Edmond Turner
 -
 Philoma Bodman
 -
 Theophilus Bodman
 Sophia S. Bodman
 -
 Abner Carey
 Asa Carey
 Sylva Carey
 -
 Waldo Cleaveland
 Almira Cleaveland
 -
 Clarissa Coffin
 -
 Clement Coffin
 Susan Coffin
 Elizabeth W. Coffin
 Sheldon Warner
 -

Freeman Coffin
 Hannah W. Coffin
 Ashley Meekins
 -
 Rachel Davenport
 -
 Sally (H.? W.?) Miller
 Clarissa Dickinson
 -
 Betsey French
 Jacob French
 Edmond French
 -
 Edward Gere
 Mrs. Frederick Gere
 Laury(?) Maynard
 -
 Perez Graves
 Experience Graves
 Anna Graves
 Dexter Graves
 Lyman Graves
 Hannah S. Graves
 -
 Eli Graves
 Mary A. Graves
 Clarissa C. Graves
 -
 Samuel D. Graves
 Rizpah K. Graves
 -
 Samuel Graves
 Panthera Graves
 -
 John Graves
 Eunice Graves
 Erastus Graves
 Martha Graves
 Eunice B. Graves
 -
 David Hayden
 Clarissa B. Hayden
 Sally Hayden
 -
 Alexander Hayden
 Mary R. Hayden
 Caroline R. Hayden
 Abigail (S.?) Hayden
 George F. Hayden
 -
 Josiah Hayden Jr.
 Ann Hayden
 Elvira Rhoades
 Eunice L. Taylor

Williamsburg Temperance Pledge Signers, 1832

-	-	-
Esther Hannum	Keziah Hyde	Hadassah Miller
John Hannum	John W. Hyde	Oliver Nash
Silas Hannum Jr.	Polly Hyde	Clarissa Nash
Lucinda Hannum	Sally H. Hyde	Abigail Ware
Harriet Hannum	Lyman Hyde	Caroline Brown
-	Ansel Hyde	Artemus Bodman
Austin Abell	Samantha Hyde	(latter three are identified
Gamaliel Collins	Rufus Hyde	as "domesticks")
Wealthy Hannum	-	-
Quartus S. Warner	Stephen Hyde	Esther Pomeroy
Washburn Blogett	Parmelia B. Hyde	Wm. Pomeroy
Betsey Leonard	Cordelia B. Hyde	Rachel Pomeroy
Ephraim Hill	Francis A. Hyde	Wm. H. Clapp
Sarah Hill	Ellsworth H. Hyde	Nancy P. Pomeroy
Otis G. Hill	-	Elizabeth Pomeroy
Electa Bullard	Armanilla R. D. James	Thomas Pierce
Lucretia Jones	-	-
-	Austin Kingsley	Elias Root
Hiram Hill	Almira Kingsley	Susanna Root
Roena Hill	-	Spencer Root
Horace Bisbee	Henry Lord	Sally K. Root
Caroline J. Fuller	Charles Lord	Fidelia Root
Florilla Cole	Fidelia Lord	-
Cornelia A. Hill	Dorcas Wait	Luther Sanderson
Lydia Tileston	-	Abigail Sanderson
-	Benjamin Ludden	Sally W. Warner
Justin Hillman	Rebekah Ludden	Stillman Moore
Abigail Hillman	Joseph Ludden	-
Roswell Hillman	Emily Ludden	Nathaniel Sears
Elizabeth M. Hillman	Oliver D. Wait	Eliza Sears
Ozro A. Hillman	-	-
-	James Mayhew	"Wm. Snow's district,
Levi Hitchcock	Anna Mayhew	not one signer in
Phebe Hitchcock	Elizabeth A. Mayhew	the whole" *
Heman Hitchcock	Wealthy Jones	-
Jerusha Hitchcock	Polly Bodman	Solomon Strong
Lucinda T. Hitchcock	-	Sally Strong
-	Benjamin Ludden	Ruby Strong
Stephen Hopkins	Hope Ludden	Solomon Strong Jr.
Fanny Hopkins	Julia E. Ludden (partly	-
George Fairfield	crossed)	Wm. Strong
Mary E. Hopkins	Parmenas Ludden	Mrs. R. Strong
Charles S. Hopkins	Benjamin M. Ludden	L. Strong
Stephen W. Hopkins	Susan Ludden	-
Horace? or Morris? Coburn	Hope Ludden	Ezra Thayer
Sally Bunce	-	Margaret Thayer
-	Rebekah Miller	Oliver Thayer
Silvanus Hubbard	Hannah Miller	William C. Thayer
Abigail Hubbard	John R. Miller	Sarah Lewis
-	-	Henry Field
Wm. Hubbard	John Miller 2d	-
Mary Hubbard	Electa Miller	
Anna Thayer	Sarah Miller	

Williamsburg Temperance Pledge Signers, 1832

Widow Hannah Thayer
Hillman L. Thayer
Justin Thayer
Robert Thayer
Jemima H. Thayer
Roxana H. Thayer
Mary Thayer
-
Hannah Thayer
-
Jacob Thayer
Sarah Thayer
-
Martha Thyre [Thayer]
-
Mrs. Otis Taylor
-
Zene Thayer
Sybil Thayer
Cushman Thayer
-
Prudence Wait
Chester M. Wait
-
Deidama Wait
Louisa Wait
-
Sally Warner
Abigail Warner
Martha Warner
Almond Warner
-
Jane Warner
Miranda Warner
-
Job Warner
Rhoda Warner
Elvira Warner
illegible erased name
Nancy M. Warner
illegible crossed name
Cordelia Warner
-
Joseph Williams Jr.
-
Dated April 29, 1832:
Hugh G. Strong
Orrely Strong
Charles Strong
Caroline G. Strong
William M. Strong

* The note written on one form concerning "Wm. Snow's district" suggests that temperance leaders in the town's various neighborhoods, William Snow among them, may have been assigned the task of distributing the circulars to families living near them and collecting the signed forms afterwards. But this theory seems to be refuted by the fact that William Snow didn't take the pledge himself, and returned an unsigned form to make his and his neighbors' refusal perfectly clear.

TEMPERANCE CIRCULAR.

THE Executive Committee of the HAMPSHIRE COUNTY TEMPERANCE SOCIETY earnestly recommend to the inhabitants of this County an attentive perusal of the accompanying Circular addressed to the citizens of the United States. It has been widely distributed, and with very manifest advantage, in various parts of our country. "In Albany it was the means of inducing *eleven hundred and forty persons* in one ward, *five hundred and six* in another, and a proportionate number in others, to join themselves to a Temperance Society. In Poughkeepsie, after its distribution there, *seven hundred persons* became members of a Temperance Society in one evening; and in Auburn, where but little had been done before, a similar effect was produced." In view of these and similar results, it is proposed to place a copy of this Circular, though originally designed for a single State, in the hands of every family in the Union.

Fellow citizens of Hampshire! Will you not dispassionately examine a document, which, while it discloses some of the enormous mischiefs consequent upon intemperance, points out and urges the adoption of the only measures, by which this moral pestilence may be stayed. We would compel no man to adopt our views. We only respectfully ask, that he would look at facts:—that he would listen to the statements and arguments of the friends of temperance:—and then—judge for himself. Nothing seems necessary, but information freely and kindly communicated, to such a change of public sentiment, as shall lead thousands and hundreds of thousands, who have hitherto stood aloof, to lend the whole weight of their influence to a cause intimately connected with the best interests of man. In the impressive language of the Chancellor of the State of New York, on a recent occasion,—“Satisfy the unreflecting vender of ardent spirits, that he is morally responsible for all the crime, and misery, which his maddening potations naturally produce, and he will relinquish the demoralizing traffic. Convince the retailer, who makes the drunkard, and sends him staggering home, to abuse and perhaps to murder his wretched wife and starving children, that the curse of Heaven is denounced against him, who holdeth the cup to his neighbor's lips, and surely he will forbear. Point the Christian to the sacred page, where the pen of inspiration hath written, *He who hath the love of God in his heart worketh no ill to his neighbor*, and he will not, for the sake of a few dollars, destroy the temporal and eternal happiness of those around him.”

LEWIS STRONG,
SAMUEL WELLS, JR.
NATHANIEL COOLIDGE,
MARTIN THAYER,
GEORGE BANCROFT,
ELISHA EDWARDS, JR.
JOSIAH D. WHITNEY,

Executive Committee
of the Hampshire County
Temperance Society.

NORTHAMPTON, FEB. 1832.

CIRCULAR

Of the State Temperance Societies, to the Citizens of the United States.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

We want your aid in a great work. Not your money nor your time, nor the sacrifice of any real interest. We want your names, with the pledge and the influence which is attached to them. We are earnest in our application: You will therefore ask us three questions.

What is your enterprize?

What is to be gained by its successful accomplishment?

What service can our names render?

We respectfully ask your attention, while we attempt to answer these inquiries. What is the enterprize? It is one of pure benevolence and patriotism in which we have no separate interest. We have been driven to it by facts which concern you. Our country is now harboring a fatal enemy; cherishing a plague of dreadful malignity; submitting to a tax which brings no increase to our treasury, while it perpetuates poverty, misery and crime. To prove this, let us state a few facts which may be relied on. Whatever may be said in favor of the temperate use of ardent spirits, (if that indefinite line could ever be drawn,) facts will show incontestibly, that the excessive use of them is the severest scourge with which our nation is visited: and you know that all drunkenness commences in the moderate use of them. Ardent spirit destroys health: ardent spirit creates idleness: ardent spirit ruins character: ardent spirit makes paupers: ardent spirit makes criminals: ardent spirit brutalizes men: ardent spirit destroys domestic happiness: ardent spirit ensures premature death: ardent spirit makes three-fourths of the business and expense of our criminal courts, jails and almshouses: ardent spirit throws an immense tax on a Christian community to support vice: ardent spirit unfits thousands and tens of thousands for the duties of this life and exposes them to the awful retribution of the next. All these charges, and more, can be substantiated. The testimony of the most eminent medical men in our country and in Europe, has been obtained on the first point. Some of them say, that three-quarters, some that one-half their practice would at once cease if ardent spirits were no longer drank as a beverage. That ardent spirit makes three-fourths of our criminals, is the united testimony of judges and lawyers in this country and in England. The most shocking cases of murder have occurred under the influence of alcohol. Almost all the cases of assault and battery likewise. Those guilty of burglary, larceny, counterfeiting, riots, &c. are almost uniformly ascertained to have destroyed their moral sensibilities and emboldened themselves for the violation of their country's laws, by the inebriating cup. That every man loses his character when he drinks to excess is obvious. That it brutalizes the man, the husband, the father, the mother; that it induces poverty, disease and premature death; that it unfits for social and refined enjoyments; for duty to man, and to our Maker, in this life; for the pure and elevated joys of Heaven, none can question who have ever seen its operation in an individual case. But to what extent it is inflicting all these evils upon our fellow citizens, is now the point which we wish more immediately to contemplate.

In the early part of the last year a careful investigation was made by a committee consisting of gentlemen chosen from the most respected citizens in one of the wards of the city of Albany, relative to the intemperance of that section. The result was most alarming. It was ascertained that there were in the ward 112 places where ardent spirits were retailed; and that the quantity thus sold amounted to 45,500 gallons, and cost to the consumers 56,875 dollars. In this ward there was found one place for retailing liquor for every 45 inhabitants, or about one to every nine families. The enormous profits were also adverted to; being about 200 per cent on foreign, and 600 on domestic spirits, when sold by the single glass. The ward alluded to contains a population of 5,000; and should the four remaining wards consume in the same proportion, then the consumption for the whole city would amount to the enormous sum of 284,355 dollars.

In candor it may be admitted, that the ward mentioned consumes more than an average of the city; but when it is considered that there are in the city 415 licences granted to taverns and groceries, and that should each one sell only \$2 per day, then the whole amount would be \$302,950 for the whole city; when, therefore, we take into consideration the

Time spent in drinking, recovery from drunkenness, and the strength diminished by it;
Paupers made by intemperance, thrown on the poor-house, or relieved by private charity;
Expenses of criminal prosecutions and imprisonment occasioned by intemperance;
Loss to the public by carelessness, mismanagement, &c. of the intemperate;

There cannot be a doubt that the city suffers a dead yearly loss of three hundred thousand dollars; a tax which is annually paid by the temperate and intemperate of Albany, to support a most detestable monster. Now suppose the city should entirely abandon the use of ardent spirit, and raise this sum by a direct tax on the very individuals who now pay it. Merely to give up the use of the article would enable the former consumers to meet the tax; and would at once secure more physical strength, more industry, more economy, and more happiness among the laboring classes who now suffer the principal part of the evils of intemperance, than can be estimated. If such is the cost, and such the quantity of distilled spirit drank in the city of Albany in one year, what is the estimate for the Union? How many families are beggared by it, our alms-house records can tell. How great a nuisance it is, our public officers can testify. How much of the sinew and strength and intellect of the Union it destroys; how many sighs and tears of wives worse than widows; how much beggary and wickedness of children, who have exchanged their fathers for brutes; how many broken-hearted parents; how much blasphemy, and poverty, and crime, and death; no one can tell. But we can make one or two other calculations which will bring the subject before us in another light. We have clearly shown the tax the city of Albany, with a population of only 25,000, now pays for the use of ardent spirit. Let us now see to what beneficial purposes it could be applied; while the very abstinence secures the improvement of health, competence, morals, and happiness among us. Each individual can indeed exercise his own invention in devising methods for such an expenditure of the sum as would improve the intellectual, social, physical, and moral condition of all classes, and particularly of those who suffer most severely by intemperance. How many schools could be established, for carrying the education of the poorest to an extent not yet attained in any country. How many hospitals and houses of humanity for the unfortunate, the sick, the friendless, would it not build. Then again, at the present value of money, the tax the city of Albany alone pays to alcohol would pay the interest on six millions of dollars yearly; would build 200 houses each year, costing 1500 dollars each; and rent 2000 tenements at 150 dollars each per year. Should the whole nation be taxed in the same proportion, say 300,000 dollars for every 25,000 inhabitants, it would amount to the enormous sum of one hundred and forty-four millions of dollars yearly. These facts and statements, will apply with greater or less force, to every city, town and village in the Union.

We are now prepared to say what we want to accomplish. It is to awaken the attention of our fellow-citizens throughout the nation to these facts; to excite the public indignation against the insidious foe; to induce all to abandon the use and sale of ardent spirit, and discountenance such use in all over whom they have influence. All must be enlisted in it, or the work will never be entirely accomplished. It is true, we are engaged in a war of extermination; but we wield no other weapons than the truth exhibited in love and candor. We expect to conquer; but by a moral influence. You can now see what we want to accomplish, and what will be the results of our success. We shall dry up some of the deepest fountains of disease, crime, poverty, blasphemy, indolence, needless taxes, orphans' tears, and widows' broken hearts. Some may perhaps think we have given an exaggerated view of things; but such a supposition can only arise from a want of minute observation of the scenes of wretchedness, poverty and crime, which intemperance creates among us. Were we now to name any one evil within the power of man to remove, which is chief of all others, and yet to be removed by the simplest, easiest process, that should be Intemperance. If before the present year closes, all the alcohol in the country could be destroyed, and its sources dried up, it would be an immeasurably greater blessing than if a foreign State should put into our coffers millions of dollars, and insure us a diminution of three-fourths of our criminal trials and imprisonments, and of our alms-house tenants. And now in view of these facts, can we appeal in vain, when it can be shown that never was there so dire a curse so entirely within our power to remove? It is the strongest of enemies—more terrible, cruel and unrelenting than the Turk; and yet none was ever attacked with such absolute certainty of conquest. It is the most dire of all the plagues which have ever scourged our beloved country; and yet no epidemic could ever be so readily arrested in its ravages, were all but willing to have it stayed. It only requires an unanimous vote of the people of the United States, and to-morrow we are unburdened from the heaviest of our taxes—saved from the most malignant and destructive plague with which Heaven ever chastened us. Surely then indifference on this subject must be criminal, if it would be criminal to sit still and see our neighbors' property devastated, their children beggared, their temporal and eternal prospects blasted, and yet make no effort to prevent it.

We feel a deep interest in the deliberations of our National and State Legislatures; but no Legislative decision of the present year can produce such immediate and immeasurable blessings to our favored country, as the abandonment of alcohol as a beverage.

In the name of humanity, and for the honor of our country, let us arise as one man, and break the chains of self-imposed slavery. If the ruthless savage had invaded our frontier, surely the appeal would not be in vain—our young men would forsake their homes, their business, and risk their lives in their country's defence. But here is an enemy as real and as cruel; and where then is the spirit of '76, if we are unwilling to make a sacrifice, if such it be, of personal gratification or of pecuniary interest, that the community may be delivered from so great a curse? But you may inquire, What can I, a single individual, do? Much. The nation is composed of individuals. If every individual adopts the resolution for the public good, "I WILL USE NO MORE ARDENT SPIRITS," then the work is accomplished; or if you singly adopt this resolution, the making it known will exert an influence on some one or more to do the same. This is the reason why your name is requested. THE PLEDGE TO OTHERS IS NOT NEEDED FOR YOUR OWN SAKE. Some have scorned to bind themselves in this way; but they have mistaken the design of it. It is not for yourself, but for others. Our forefathers pledged themselves to drink no tea under British taxation. Now is it not manifest that, however firmly any number of individuals around Boston might have kept the secret resolution of drinking no tea, the moral influence of that resolution on the country would have been wholly lost, had they not made this public pledge? And if you would see the moral influence of pledges on a larger scale, recur to the solemn day of '76, when the band of patriots rallied around the altar of Liberty, and pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. That pledge shook the political world. But these men did not need the pledge for themselves. It was to confirm the wavering; to present to tyranny a solid phalanx of men bent on liberty or death. We want their sons to imitate them. Almost all that has been accomplished already to diminish the amount of drunkenness in our land, has been effected by the temperate, who have publicly enlisted their influence in favor of total abstinence as the only effectual remedy. Your name may save one, two, one hundred, and ultimately perhaps a thousand from the disgrace, the wretchedness, the grave of a drunkard.

Ministers of the Gospel of every denomination, we call upon you to increase your efforts in this work of mercy, and if agreeable to your feelings, read this address to your people from the pulpit.

Parents, we call upon you to enlist your children on the side of total abstinence. It can do them no injury, and may

save one or more of them from ruin; and will make your family a little regiment in the army of reform. Enlist your domestics, because it will increase the respectability, happiness and value of this class of our citizens.

Masters of apprentices, employers of laborers and clerks, we call upon you as men possessed of influence, to combine with us in a cause of the deepest importance to those who are under your charge.

Magistrates and men elected to public offices, we appeal to you as guardians of the general interest and protectors of the public morals, to give the sanction of your influence to this work.

Christians, professing to have the spirit of Christ, surely this appeal cannot be in vain to you. Your very profession is a declaration that you live for the glory of God, the good of men, and the advancement of truth, temperance, righteousness and happiness. All these are to be secured to a very great extent by the success of the Temperance Reformation. To you we look with the fullest confidence, because you have already pledged yourselves to abstain from every thing that will injure others.

To *Ladies*, we would suggest for imitation the example already set by the most influential females in many parts of the country. Your influence is great; and the peculiar considerations are weighty, which urge you to enlist in this cause. While husbands, brothers, fathers, sons, have been drinking from the fiery cup, many of you have drunk in solitude the bitterest dregs in the cup of sorrow. Mothers, daughters, sisters, wives, we entreat you to throw your gentle influence around society, to hold it back from the enchanted cup of death. Surely your hearts will bleed at the facts we have recited. Surely you will unite with us. And with all your sex on our side, we shall feel that the work is more than half accomplished.

The State Societies claim from an intelligent community a serious attention to the subject of this Circular. They seek only to enlighten and persuade by the free distribution of information and by mild argument. From the first, the avowed object has been, to persuade to the entire abandonment of ardent spirits. The Societies would recommend to all the friends of the cause, great forbearance and charity. The subject is still of recent agitation: the habit which is attempted to be reformed has been of long duration: no one should be judged hastily for not at once being convinced: all the friends of the cause have to do, is to be diligent and persevering in placing the important matter fairly and kindly before the public.

It is proposed to place a copy of this Circular in the hands of every family in the Union, though the agency of the County and Town Societies, or friends of the cause where there are no societies yet formed, and the officers of all societies will exert themselves to carry the plan into operation.

Signed by SAMUEL HERRARD, President

of the American Temperance Society,
REUBEN H. WALWORTH, Albany, President
of the N. Y. State Temperance Society.

JOHN C. WARREN, Boston, President
of the Massachusetts State Temperance Society,

and by the Presidents of all the other State Societies.

MUTUAL AGREEMENT.

Any person, signing the following agreement, will, upon the return of this paper to the Secretary of the Town Association, be deemed a member. It is hoped that all persons, males and females, over the age of twelve years, will lend their names and influence to this good cause.

We the subscribers hereby pledge ourselves, that we will not, except as a medicine in case of bodily infirmity, use Ardent Spirits ourselves, or procure them for the use of our families, or provide them for the entertainment of our friends or for persons in our employment: and that in all suitable ways we will discountenance the use of them in the community. And we hereby authorize the Secretary of the Temperance Association in this town to enroll our names as members of that Society.

Prudence Wait
Chester M. Wait