

# William & Mary Journal of Race, Gender, and Social Justice

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Volume 3 (1997)  
Issue 1 *William & Mary Journal of Women and  
the Law*

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Article 7

April 1997

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# ESSAY

## THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION, 1874-1898: COMBATting DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ERIN M. MASSON\*

Ours is a famous country for protection [of industry, of ideas, and even animals]. Busy with all these gentle, wise, and patriotic measures, there is one place our brothers have forgotten adequately to protect, and that is — Home. The Woman's Temperance Crusade, embalmed in the pages that follow, was a protest against this forgetfulness and this neglect.<sup>1</sup>

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was truly an organization of women, by women, and for women. The WCTU, founded in 1874, grew to over two hundred thousand women by 1892, and was the largest and most influential woman's organization that had existed until that time.<sup>2</sup> Although the WCTU began as a temperance movement, it soon grew into a mass movement for social reform. As the main champion of women's rights, local WCTU chapters provided the primary forum for protecting women from sexual abuse and exploitation as well as other social evils.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, the WCTU turned this movement for protection of home into a cry for suffrage.

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1. Frances Willard, *Introduction to ANNIE WITTENMYER, HISTORY OF THE WOMAN'S TEMPERANCE CRUSADE* 13 (1878).

2. See RUTH BORDIN, *WOMAN AND TEMPERANCE: THE QUEST FOR POWER AND LIBERTY, 1873-1900* (1981) 3-4; see JoEllen Lind, *Symbols, Leaders, Practitioners: The First Women Professionals*, 28 VAL. U.L. REV. 1327 (1994) (stating that the WCTU eventually boasted almost two million members). For a comparison, the membership of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1893 was only thirteen thousand. BORDIN at 4.

3. This article focuses on sexual violence as one of many valuable and lasting reforms undertaken by the WCTU. Sexual violence includes the physical and emotional abuse that frequently accompanies sexual abuse in cases of domestic battering and violence. The author chose this focus to contribute to the growing literature regarding the history of sexual violence movements in America. See also ELIZABETH PLECK, *DOMESTIC TYRANNY: THE MAKING OF AMERICAN SOCIAL POLICY AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT* (1987); SUSAN SCHECTER, *WOMEN AND MALE VIOLENCE: THE VISIONS AND STRUGGLES OF THE BATTERED WOMEN'S MOVEMENT* (1982).

The woman's temperance movement is relatively unappreciated.<sup>4</sup> For example, Frances Willard, WCTU President from 1879-1898, was a household name at the turn of the century<sup>5</sup> and in 1905 was the first woman to be the subject of a bust placed in Statutory Hall of the Capitol.<sup>6</sup> Willard, however, has faded into oblivion along with the movement as a whole. This lack of recognition is not surprising given the failure of prohibition as well as the image of temperance supporters as tee-totaling moral zealots, an image outdated even in its own time.<sup>7</sup> The women's temperance movement, although loosely hinged on abstention from alcohol, raised a variety of concerns, including domestic violence, social reform, and political empowerment.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Frances Willard was one of the most dynamic and able politicians ever to lead a major women's movement, and provides lessons valuable today.<sup>9</sup>

Willard used traditional concepts of women's sphere, the home, to promote social reform and political activism for women. Although radical in her goals, Willard's rhetoric and actions appealed to traditional values, thus bringing her goals into mainstream acceptance. Her leadership of the WCTU succeeded<sup>10</sup> in part because of her ability to integrate concerns of a vast majority of her constituents, thereby allowing her to organize a

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4. No law review articles exist that directly address the woman's temperance movement or the WCTU. Only three biographies exist of Frances Willard, written in 1913, 1944, and 1986. See RUTH BORDIN, *FRANCES WILLARD: A BIOGRAPHY* xii (1986). This trend may be changing; of the thirty-six legal articles that mention the WCTU, twenty-four were published during the past five years, according to a recent Westlaw search.

5. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 67.

6. See *id.* at 4-5; See also DOROTHY SCHNEIDER & CARL SCHNEIDER, *AMERICAN WOMEN IN THE PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1900-1920* at 106 (1993).

7. See Elizabeth Mensch & Alan Freeman, *The Politics of Virtue: Animals, Theology and Abortion*, 25 GA. L. REV. 923, 957 (1991); See also BORDIN, *supra* note 4, at 5-6 (Prohibition's "failure was seen as so ignominious that public disillusionment could be handled only by translating the idealism of the temperance cause into a national joke, the epitome of midwestern pious provincialism.").

There is evidence, however, that this trend is reversing as America renews its interest in alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse and as the women's movement attempts to reclaim its history. See BORDIN, *supra* note 4, at xiii.

8. See Mensch and Freeman, *supra* note 7, at 958 (citing B. EPSTEIN, *THE POLITICS OF DOMESTICITY: WOMEN, EVANGELISM, AND TEMPERANCE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA* 150 (1981)).

9. See BORDIN, *supra* note 4, at 133 (describing Willard as "essentially a political animal").

10. Willard and the WCTU succeeded not only in influencing the passage of prohibition but also the passage of suffrage. The WCTU succeeded in empowering women, raising sexual violence issues, training women in public speaking and writing, and providing the organization and experience which eventually led to a greater political voice, including suffrage, for women. See Bordin, *supra* note 2, at 138-39.

union representing women from widely divergent backgrounds and political persuasions to form a cohesive and effective political tool.<sup>11</sup> A masterful lecturer and writer, Willard understood the power of language and manipulated language to gain power. This article illustrates Willard's ability to integrate constituents' concerns and appeal to her organization's membership by using the example of "Mother" Stewart's advocacy against sexual violence.

The WCTU linked temperance with sexual violence by focusing on the plight of women battered by drunken husbands. Mother Stewart, a founder of the Ohio WCTU, spoke out against domestic violence both in her articles and speeches, and serves as an excellent case study. In contrast to the political strategist Willard, Mother Stewart was a hands-on, practical worker for social reform. Mother Stewart's stories of domestic violence ring vivid and true today, although written over one hundred years ago.<sup>12</sup> The WCTU provided a forum for raising awareness and combatting domestic violence through practical reform.<sup>13</sup> Willard, through her "Do Everything Policy," "Social Purity" movement, and "Home Protection" ballot successfully integrated the concerns of violence against women and used them to further the suffrage movement.<sup>14</sup>

This article challenges current images of the temperance activists as tee-totaling moral zealots, of the turn of the century women's movement as a single issue crusade for suffrage, and of domestic violence as a new social issue. Section I introduces the WCTU and Frances Willard. Section II provides a case study of the Ohio WCTU and, specifically, Mother Stewart's work combating domestic violence. Section III traces the development of Willard's leadership and the movement of the organization from religious temperance to social reform and political activism. The article concludes that the WCTU united women from varied backgrounds to achieve practical and lasting social reform and political activism. Francis Willard used mainstream rhetoric to

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11. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton specifically disavowed this "do everything" approach in favor of focusing on the single issue of suffrage. See Bordin, *supra* note 2, at 96.

12. See, e.g., ELIZA DANIEL STEWART, MEMORIES OF THE CRUSADE 47-51 (Arno Press, Inc., 1972) (1889).

13. "The temperance movement became the first American reform campaign to depict for the public the cruelty of domestic violence. . . . This was the first public effort against family violence led by women on behalf of women, and it gradually became more radical." PLECK, *supra* note 3, at 49.

14. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 119.

challenge gender inequality in every sphere of society. The WCTU, under Willard, linked temperance with the plight of battered women as exemplified by Mother Stewart's stories of domestic violence. The WCTU provides valuable lessons for modern social and political reform organizations.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE WCTU

### A. *Role of Women in Temperance Associations*

Temperance societies existed for decades before the formation of the WCTU. Although many of these organizations had female members, women's roles were secondary to men's roles. For example, at a convention of the temperance societies of New York in 1852, Susan B. Anthony rose to speak, but was informed "that the 'ladies' were there to listen, not to take part in the proceedings."<sup>15</sup> A group of women immediately withdrew and decided to call a convention to organize a Woman's State Temperance Association.<sup>16</sup> The convention, attended by over five hundred women, elected Elizabeth Cady Stanton as its president.<sup>17</sup> Stanton and Anthony linked temperance reform with women's rights, a stance that the male members of the association vehemently opposed.<sup>18</sup> Anthony and Stanton severed their connection with the society which quickly faded into oblivion.<sup>19</sup>

Anthony and Stanton thereafter focused exclusively on suffrage.<sup>20</sup> They felt that by addressing multiple goals, the movement lost focus and strength. Although they continued to follow the temperance movement and became friends with Willard,<sup>21</sup> the focus of their work remained on suffrage.

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15. See ALICE F. TYLER, *FREEDOM'S FERMENT: PHASES OF AMERICAN SOCIAL HISTORY TO 1860* at 448 (1944).

16. See *id.*

17. See *id.*

18. See *id.* at 449.

19. See *id.*

20. "Susan B. Anthony was convinced she must stick to a single issue to be effective. . . . 'If I wish my hearers to consider the suffrage question I must not present the temperance, the religious, the dress or any other besides, but must confine myself to suffrage.'" BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 96. By the mid-1870s, Anthony and Stanton stopped discussing domestic violence, further demonstrating their dedication to the single issue of suffrage. See PLECK, *supra* note 3, at 101.

21. "Anthony and Willard were close friends and lifelong correspondents, and in their scrapbooks each kept a faithful record of the accomplishments and activities of the other." *Id.* at 122.

### B. *Rise of the WCTU*

The woman's temperance movement began in Hillsboro, Ohio on December 23, 1873.<sup>22</sup> Dr. Diocletian Lewis, a professional lecturer, gave a free temperance lecture on "The Duty of Christian Women in the Cause of Temperance."<sup>23</sup> This lecture, which he previously had given approximately three hundred times throughout the country, recalled the childhood story of the salvation of his drunkard father.<sup>24</sup> His mother, distressed by her husband's drinking, appealed to the owner of the local saloon to cease selling liquor by praying with a group of other women.<sup>25</sup> The women were successful; the saloonkeeper closed his business.<sup>26</sup> Lewis suggested that the women of Hillsboro could do the same thing in 1873.<sup>27</sup> The women accepted the challenge eagerly.<sup>28</sup>

The next day the women of Hillsboro, led by Eliza Jane Thompson, began the Crusades—banding together in groups to visit local saloons, pray, and ask saloonkeepers to pledge to stop selling spirits.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, Dr. Lewis gave the same lecture in nearby Washington Court House, Ohio.<sup>30</sup> The women of Washington Court House took up the crusade and within four days succeeded in closing the first saloon, the saloonkeeper pouring his stock into the gutter.<sup>31</sup> By January 2, 1874, the women of Washington Court House successfully closed all eleven

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22. Charles Carpenter claims that the first crusade, and thus the movement, actually began ten days earlier in Fredonia, New York, on December 13, 1873, and that the WCTU suppressed this information. See Francis M. Whitaker, *A History of the Ohio's Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1874 - 1920*, 133-36 (1971) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University) (on file at Ohio University Library). See also Mother Stewart's account of the Fredonia Crusade, STEWART, *supra* note 12 at 84-89.

23. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 16. For a thorough account of Dr. Lewis, see REV. W. H. DANIELS, *THE TEMPERANCE REFORM AND ITS GREAT REFORMERS* 252-53 (New York, Nelson & Phillips 1878).

24. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 16.

25. See *id.*

26. See *id.*

27. See *id.*

28. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 16. The exclusively female nature of the praying bands influenced the development of the movement by ensuring that women, rather than men, would learn all of the leadership and organizational skills. See Susan E.D. Lee, *Evangelical Domesticity: The Origins of the Woman's National Christian Temperance Union Under Frances E. Willard* 116 (1980) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University) (on file with the Iliff School of Theology, Ira J. Taylor Library).

29. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 16-17.

30. See *id.* at 19.

31. See *id.* at 19-20.

saloons in their city, and had three local drugstore proprietors pledge to stop selling liquor except with a prescription.<sup>32</sup> The movement spread rapidly and within three months, the bands of praying women had driven the liquor business out of 250 villages and cities.<sup>33</sup>

It is unclear why Dr. Lewis' speech struck such a nerve in Ohio in 1873. Ruth Bordin, who recently published a history of the WCTU, credits a number of factors for the mass movement of the WCTU, including urbanization, industrialization, universal education, growing leisure, church networks, the doctrine of separate spheres and the reality of woman's disproportionate suffering from alcohol abuse.<sup>34</sup> Clearly, the movement initially appealed primarily to Protestant, upper-class, white women of high social standing.<sup>35</sup>

Ohio continued to lead the movement, hosting the first WCTU national convention in Cleveland from November 18-20, 1874.<sup>36</sup> The convention drew approximately three hundred people from sixteen states.<sup>37</sup> From this first meeting, women controlled the organization. In fact, men were never voting members of the WCTU as they had been in previous reform movements.<sup>38</sup> The convention elected a board consisting of Annie Wittenmyer as president and Frances Willard as corresponding secretary.<sup>39</sup> The leadership of these women ensured the success of the WCTU.

32. See *id.* at 20.

33. See *id.* at 20-22.

34. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 12-13.

35. See Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 140 (quoting the *Cincinnati Commercial* as describing the women "as 'elegant,' among the 'most respectable in town,' 'of the highest social position and respectability'"); See also STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 104 (describing a Governor's daughter, and wives of Governors, Judges, Congressmen, State Legislators and Divines as members of the Crusades).

36. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 36; Lee, *supra* note 26, at 121 (discussing the predominance of Ohio in leading the Crusade movement).

37. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 36.

38. See *id.* at 36-37. Men were voting members of the earlier temperance organizations as well as the National American Woman Suffrage Association. *Id.* "The decision to exclude men from membership in the WCTU broke new ground and was crucial to the role the WCTU would play in the woman's movement." *Id.* at 37.

39. See *id.* at 39. The convention also created a Committee on Resolutions, headed by Mother Stewart, and including Willard. See Lee, *supra* note 28, at 236-37. Because of Mother Stewart's radicalism, her election roused fears of the more conservative members. See *id.*

### C. Frances Willard's Involvement in the WCTU

The partnership between Annie Wittenmyer and Francis Willard proved successful.<sup>40</sup> Wittenmyer was a forty-seven-year-old widow, editor of a Methodist newspaper, and distinguished activist whose work with the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War had been recognized by Abraham Lincoln.<sup>41</sup> Wittenmyer's maturity and experience balanced Willard's relative youth and militance.<sup>42</sup>

Willard,<sup>43</sup> aged thirty-five, had been President of the Evanston College for Ladies prior to joining the WCTU and, after the College's absorption by Northwestern College, was Professor and Dean of Women.<sup>44</sup> Harassment by Charles Fowler, the president of Northwestern, a man to whom Willard had briefly been affianced, forced Willard's resignation in June, 1874.<sup>45</sup> Thus, she found herself without a career or means of support, and free to pursue other interests. On a trip to Maine to study the temperance movement, Willard gave her first public address on the temperance cause.<sup>46</sup> Her speech well-received, she began her lecturing career.<sup>47</sup>

Shortly thereafter, in October, the Chicago WCTU, a well-organized and militant organization, invited Willard to be their president.<sup>48</sup> She accepted, beginning what was to be a twenty-five year career as a temperance speaker and organizer.<sup>49</sup> Willard attended the National Convention in Cleveland as a member of the Chicago delegation and was elected to national office.<sup>50</sup>

A fundamental difference between Wittenmyer and Willard was their means of achieving their goals. Wittenmyer, who represented the conservative wing, emphasized gospel temperance—personal reform of the drunkard and the liquor

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40. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 47. Willard treated Wittenmyer as her "mentor, leader and spiritual advisor" as well as close friend. *Id.*

41. See *id.* at 39.

42. See *id.* at 39, 42.

43. Willard was originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin where she attended the German-English academy, now the University School of Milwaukee. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2.

44. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 42.

45. See *id.*

46. See *id.* at 45.

47. See *id.*

48. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 45.

49. See *id.*

50. See *id.*



industry through moral suasion.<sup>51</sup> Willard, on the other hand, recognized and advocated social reform and political activism, including suffrage for women.<sup>52</sup> Willard's primary interest was "the woman question"; the temperance movement was the most expedient way to work towards her personal agenda.<sup>53</sup>

During the first few years, the National WCTU struggled to establish itself. Wittenmyer, Willard, and numerous assistants struggled to fund the young organization, define and clarify its mission, and produce literature to facilitate communication and to advance the organization's goals.<sup>54</sup> During this time, Willard's reputation grew as she lectured for and corresponded with local unions around the country.<sup>55</sup> In her speeches and writing, she attempted to broaden the scope of the WCTU to include broader social and political issues. In 1879, Willard succeeded in her power struggle and was elected president of the national WCTU.<sup>56</sup>

While the national leadership struggled to define overarching policy goals and political strategy, the local unions worked in the field. The Crusades died out after 1874 as local WCTUs expanded their work to include a variety of social reform projects. The story of Mother Stewart, and the evolution of the Ohio WCTU, provides an excellent case study of the work of one section of one state's local union.<sup>57</sup>

### III. CASE STUDY: MOTHER STEWART IN OHIO

#### A. *Growth of the Ohio WCTU*

Ohio historically supported temperance. Following the national trend, men dominated the temperance movement including both moral and legal temperance reform. Women were active in temperance work in Ohio as early as 1826, and by 1835,

51. See *id.* at 45-46. Moral suasion was considered the most appropriate outlet for female temperance workers because of the social bias against women's involvement in politics and the legal system. See *id.*

52. See *id.* at 46.

53. See *id.*; see also Whitaker, *supra* note 22 at 263 (stating that "Francis Willard '[d]efinitely and without equivocation . . . placed suffrage before prohibition") (quoting MARY EARHART, FRANCES WILLARD: FROM PRAYERS TO POLITICS 293 (1944)).

54. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 47-49.

55. See *id.* at 50.

56. See *id.* at 47. "The elevation of Willard to this office signaled a formal shift in the organization's direction; for Willard was by this time a nationally-known advocate of the temperance ballot for women." Lee, *supra* note 28, at 2.

57. Other projects of the WCTU are equally deserving of study; unfortunately they are outside the scope of this article.

women's groups were assisting the wives and children of drunkards.<sup>58</sup> The movement, however, did not gain true momentum until the Crusades of 1873 and 1874.

As early as 1854, the temperance movement in Ohio achieved moderate legal reform when the General Assembly enacted a law limiting the sale of distilled liquors.<sup>59</sup> Section seven of this progressive law provided that "a wife, child, parent, guardian or employer of an intoxicated person, who has been injured in person, property, or means of support by such intoxication, could sue the individual who by furnishing the requisite liquor, was said to have 'caused' the intoxication, for damages both exemplary and actual."<sup>60</sup> The law, known as the Adair law, was amended in 1879 to impose liability on the property-owner as well as the saloonkeeper for damages resulting from liquor sales made with his knowledge or on his property, whether the sale of liquor was legal or illegal.<sup>61</sup> This section of the law, however, sat idle for almost two decades until the Ohio WCTU used the law to prosecute saloonkeepers on behalf of aggrieved wives.<sup>62</sup>

State organization began in Columbus on February 16, 1874, with a meeting organized by Dr. Diocletian Lewis.<sup>63</sup> This meeting resulted in organization of a convention on February 24, 1874.<sup>64</sup> Twelve to fifteen hundred people attended this convention; the majority of attendees were women.<sup>65</sup> After opening remarks by Lewis, Mother Stewart offered a prayer, an unusual occurrence because of the cultural bias against women speaking in public.<sup>66</sup>

Eliza Daniel Stewart, known as "Mother Stewart" due to her work in the Civil War, worked tirelessly on temperance in Ohio.<sup>67</sup> Mother Stewart was an impressive person:

With an eagle eye the watchful speaker seems to see the  
battle-field where intemperance strews the ground with

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58. See Whitaker, *supra* note 22, 84-85 ("Members of the drunkard's family, Temperance people contended, were the chief victims of the Liquor Curse").

59. See *id.* at 81.

60. *Id.* at 81-82.

61. See *id.* at 113.

62. See *infra* notes 70-95 and accompanying text.

63. See Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 193.

64. See *id.*

65. See *id.* at 194.

66. See *id.* It was considered "indecent" for women to speak in front of large audiences or mixed sex audiences. JoEllen Lind, *Dominance and Democracy: The Legacy of Woman Suffrage for the Voting Right*, 5 UCLA WOMEN'S L.J. 103, 136 (1994).

67. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 12 (reprinting a tribute to Mother Stewart by Clifton M. Nichols, editor of *The Springfield Republic*).

wounded victims—sees where help is to be had, and swoops down upon the plague-spots with infallible certitude; she brings up her corps of angelic praying women, and trusts for the success of their crusade, thinking nothing of the appearance of the thing, but only of the precious souls to be saved from tumbling into hell.<sup>68</sup>

Mother Stewart limited her political involvement, preferring to focus on providing practical assistance and raising awareness of the concrete problems of American women.

### *B. Mother Stewart's Role in Combatting Violence Against Women*

Throughout her career, Mother Stewart worked against violence against women. She was thoroughly committed to temperance, a variety of social reform measures, and suffrage, and she used domestic violence as a concrete example of the harm inflicted on women by intemperant husbands, and the need for suffrage to protect these women and their families.<sup>69</sup> Mother Stewart's awareness of the horrors of domestic violence is evident in her legal advocacy for the drunkard's wife, and in her temperance writing and speeches.<sup>70</sup> For a woman of the turn of the century, or even today, to be as vocal as Mother Stewart was about domestic violence, is not only unusual, but also demonstrates tremendous dedication and strength.<sup>71</sup>

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68. DANIELS, *supra* note 23, at 281.

Her hazel eyes, although no longer young, are very expressive, and flash out thoughts before they find utterance in words, alternately indicating sympathy with suffering, and indignation at wrong and injustice, and constantly recurring humor. The impression she gives and leaves with all who come in contact with her is that she is a genial, kind-hearted woman, who believes in the righteousness of her cause, and is emphatically in earnest in her work.

*Id.* at 277.

69. See, BORDIN, *supra* note 2.

70. Susan Lee proposes that "the crusaders' anxiety about the safety of their homes and families was translated into a nearly obsessive preoccupation with the chaos facing the drunkard's wife." See Lee, *supra* note 28, at 147.

71. Mother Stewart's accounts of sexual violence focus on domestic violence and physical and emotional abuse by husbands, only hinting at sexual abuse.

[M]ale and female temperance reformers avoided speaking on rape, incest, and to some extent prostitution. Discussion of these, as well as many other sexual issues, was rare in the Victorian Age, and the morals of those who openly discussed them were called into question. Antiliquor speakers were cautious in discussing certain topics. Even so, the airing of domestic travail,

### C. Into the Courthouse

In 1872, before the Crusades, Mother Stewart delivered a lecture entitled "The Liquor Traffic and How to Avoid It."<sup>72</sup> Afterward, the editor of the *Springfield Republic*, Mr. Nichols who was a friend of Stewart's, suggested she encourage drunkards' wives to prosecute rumsellers under the Adair law.<sup>73</sup> Mother Stewart doubted whether any woman would be willing to take such public action.<sup>74</sup> Only two days later however, Nichols informed Mother Stewart that the first case under the Adair law had been brought and he suggested that Mother Stewart attend the trial.<sup>75</sup>

Mother Stewart entered the courtroom alone, not being able to find any other women willing to accompany her.<sup>76</sup> The prosecuting attorney requested that she deliver the opening plea to the jury.<sup>77</sup> Although this request was tremendously unusual, Mother Stewart agreed, feeling obligated to do everything in her power to further the cause of temperance and to help the drunkard's wife.<sup>78</sup> After listening and taking notes on the testimony, and studying the law, she delivered the address.<sup>79</sup>

Mother Stewart began her address to the jury by acknowledging her novel position, then reading the law, and finally appealing to the "good and true" men of the jury.<sup>80</sup> She proceeded through the testimony, questioning the credibility of witnesses and showing that the husband in question, when sober, was kind and supportive.<sup>81</sup> She then pointed to the harm inflicted on the wife: forced to work as a laborer to support her family, friendless and alone, and suffering from the stigma of being branded a drunkard's wife.<sup>82</sup> Mother Stewart closed by exhorting the jury to deal with the plaintiff as they would have

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however circumspectly presented, offered an implicit critique of prevailing family mores.

PLECK, *supra* note 3, at 53.

72. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 30.

73. See *id.* at 31.

74. See *id.*

75. See *id.* at 32.

76. See *id.*

77. See *id.* at 33.

78. See *id.* at 33-34.

79. See *id.* at 35-36.

80. *Id.* at 35.

81. See *id.*

82. See *id.* at 36.

others deal with their wives and daughters.<sup>83</sup> The jury, after a short recess, returned a verdict in favor of the wife in the amount of \$100 and costs.<sup>84</sup>

The local newspaper account described Mother Stewart's address to the jury as follows:

The argument [Mother Stewart] made on this occasion was one worthy of her sex and of the bar. She was placed in such a position that she could appreciate the situation. It was a woman speaking in behalf of one of her sex, and she could portray to the jury the circumstances of the injustice, cruelty and hardships which Mrs. Hukins suffered from the whiskey-seller. Mrs. Stewart spoke for a half an hour, and alluded with telling effect to the sneers which had greeted the poor woman, Mrs. Hukins, when on the stand. She also spoke of the moneyed interest which backed up the defense.<sup>85</sup>

"A lady in the court-room, and winning her case against one of the best lawyers in the city, created quite a sensation."<sup>86</sup> Newspapers throughout the country reported the unusual occurrence of a woman arguing in court.<sup>87</sup> Although Mother Stewart attributed her continued good relations with the losing attorney to her sense of humor,<sup>88</sup> her high social standing in the community allowed her reputation to survive unscathed.

Mother Stewart did not become involved in another Adair law case until October, 1873.<sup>89</sup> This time, she was able to enlist the support of her neighbors, and a group of women accompanied the plaintiff and her children into the court room.<sup>90</sup> Mother Stewart examined the witnesses, as well as making the opening charge

83. *See id.*

84. *See id.* at 37. The defendants appealed and the appellate court sustained the lower court's decision, with the damages reduced to forty dollars. *Id.*

85. *Id.* at 38 (reprinting *Argument of Mrs. E.D. Stewart to a Jury in the Whiskey Case—Mother Stewart in the Role of a Lawyer*, THE SPRINGFIELD ADVERTISER, January 25, 1872).

86. FRANCES E. WILLARD, WOMAN AND TEMPERANCE OR, THE WORK AND WORKERS OF THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION 83 (1883).

87. *See STEWART, supra* note 12, at 37.

88. Mother Stewart, having noted that a jury member slept through the opposing attorney's argument, "could not resist the temptation to tell him that at least I could keep the jury awake." *Id.* at 37.

89. *See id.* at 39.

90. *See Another Dealer in Blue Ruin Brought to Grief Under the Adair Law*, THE SPRINGFIELD REPUBLIC, October 17, 1873, reprinted in STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 54-59 (reprinting ("The presence of these Christian ladies, representing some of the best families of our city, was a new and pleasant feature, and was no doubt a pleasure and support to the suffering woman obliged to pass through such a painful ordeal.")).

and opening plea to the jury.<sup>91</sup> After a fifteen or twenty minute recess, the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff for \$300, the amount requested.<sup>92</sup>

This case inspired Mother Stewart to compose a sketch of a drunkard's wife, compiled from the many stories she had heard.<sup>93</sup> Nichols published the sketch in the local newspaper and created quite a commotion, including a response from a gentleman who was certain his own wife had written the article.<sup>94</sup> The article read, in relevant part:

*Women of Springfield, My Sisters:*—My misery has become greater than I can bear. I know not which way to turn. I have no one to whom I can go for redress, for protection—no one but God. I am a drunkard's wife. This, to those who have had the experience, explains all, and tells my pitiful tale, better than any words I can command. ... My story is a brief one, and so like hundreds and thousands of others that you hear of daily, till they have become such a matter of indifference to you that I fear you will pass it by unheeded. Yet, oh, I pray you for God's sake, listen to me.

. . . . When twenty, I married a man whom I loved—intelligent, upright, honorable, sober—as I thought.

. . . .

So bright and happy were those days, gone forever. But alas! I directly found that my husband, when he met his old associates, would come home with the smell of liquor on his breath. I will not weary you with a repetition of the common story of neglected business, the going down, down, the loss of our little Eden, the gradual change in my husband's nature,

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91. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 55.

92. See *id.* at 59. In addition, the men on the jury donated their fee. The defendants, supported by the liquor industry, appealed the case for four years before a final decision was entered upholding the lower court's decision. *Id.* at 56.

93. See *id.* at 47-51. Andrea Dworkin best describes the common experience of sexual violence activists of hearing the stories, many of them never before disclosed, of the victims of abuse:

As a feminist, I carry the rape of all the women I've talked to over the past ten years personally with me. As a woman, I carry my own rape with me. Do you remember pictures that you've seen of European cities during the plague, when there were wheelbarrows that would go along and people would just pick up corpses and throw them in? Well, that is what it is like knowing about rape. Piles and piles of bodies that have whole lives and human names and human faces.

Andrea Dworkin, *I Want A Twenty-four Hour Truce During Which There Is No Rape*, in *TRANSFORMING A RAPE CULTURE* 21 (1993).

94. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 51.

from one of the most tender and loving, to a moody, morose, abusive husband and father. So changed, so besotted and imbrutted has he been made by his consuming appetite, that he is an object of loathing and terror to those who once were thrilled with delight by the sound of his approaching footsteps.

....

So destitute have we become, that the poorest fare barely saves us from starvation. Our clothing is so poor and scant that my children are no longer able to attend school, and if they were, the older ones are becoming unable to bear the taunts and jeers of the other more fortunate children, who call their father a drunkard, and them, drunkard's children.

....

Do you, oh my happy sisters, ever think to put up a prayer for the drunkard's family? We are told that the law is now on our side, and are exhorted to go into the courts and prosecute those more than murderers, the liquor-sellers. But how little do people know of the difficulties that surround the drunkard's wife. The shame and mortification of a public exposure, a woman's ignorance of the law, and the fear of doing something wrong; the difficulty of getting such witnesses as will testify to the facts necessary to a successful prosecution; the shrinking from appearing in a court-room alone, among a low class of drinking men, whom the dignity of the Court cannot restrain from jeering and making low, coarse remarks; where even respectable (?) lawyers can be bought for a price to plead against her, using low, personal attacks, when the facts fail them.

Could one, of all the Christian women of this city, be induced—even for the love of Christ—be induced to come and sit by her side—her husband forbidding her, and using his authority or perhaps violence to prevent it? Besides, what has a poor drunkard's wife to offer a lawyer to prosecute her case? Oh, sisters, sisters poverty, wretchedness and black despair are settling down upon me; I have no way to turn.

....

... In the name of our Blessed Master, who when he was on earth went about doing good, oh, sisters of Springfield, help us.

A Drunkard's Wife.<sup>95</sup>

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95. *Id.* at 47-51.

The Adair law was weakened in February, 18, 1875, by an amendment requiring ten days notice before prosecution.<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, there are no thorough accounts of the Adair law, and prosecutions thereunder, although it seems clear that this amendment left the law eviscerated and useless.<sup>97</sup> Mother Stewart, however, continued to work actively in the temperance movement, lecturing and writing about the evils of domestic violence.

#### *D. Spreading the News*

The women of Springfield, under the leadership of Mother Stewart, banded together on "White Wednesday," February 11, 1874, to visit saloons.<sup>98</sup> Encouraged by the news of the Crusaders' success in Hillsboro and Washington Court and inspired by regular temperance meetings, the women hoped to rid Springfield of the liquor curse.<sup>99</sup> The Crusades continued in Springfield as the movement spread through the country. On February 24, 1874, the first state convention met in Columbus.<sup>100</sup> The convention elected Eliza Thompson chairman, and Mother Stewart as chairman of the committee on resolutions.<sup>101</sup> Although Mother Stewart was a staunch supporter of suffrage and prohibition, the committee produced a moderate resolution without political overtones.<sup>102</sup>

Mother Stewart continued lecturing and leading bands of women in cities and towns throughout Ohio.<sup>103</sup> Her speeches continued to stress the horror of domestic violence: husbands, under the influence of alcohol neglecting and abusing their wives and children. Her speeches frequently relayed stories of women

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96. See *id.* at 408-09; See also Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 248 ("If [notice to the supplier of the liquor] was not given, the individual or individuals claiming personal injury from the drunkenness of another could no longer collect damages from the individual supplying the liquor from which this intoxication ensued").

97. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 409. Although the Adair law is not mentioned, Elizabeth Pleck provides a brief account of similar laws in New York and Arkansas. See PLECK, *supra* note 3, at 100-01. See also Bernadette D. Sewell, Note, *History of Abuse: Societal, Judicial, and Legislative Responses to the Problem of Wife Beating*, 23 SUFFOLK U. L. REV. 983 (1989).

98. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 161-62, 178.

99. See *id.*

100. See *id.* at 234.

101. See *id.* at 235.

102. See Lee, *supra* note 28, at 181-82.

103. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 280.



she had met in her work, who shared with her their personal tragedies. In her autobiography Mother Stewart relates a number of these accounts of domestic violence.

In Somerset, Mother Stewart's hostess confided the story of her drunkard brother.<sup>104</sup> Obsessed with alcohol, her brother stole from his own children to support his habit.<sup>105</sup> One drunken January evening, he returned home in a crazed state, drank a bottle of laudanum, and tried to shoot his pregnant wife and two sons.<sup>106</sup> The woman fled with her children into the snow and bitter cold.<sup>107</sup> She hid with her youngest child while her oldest ran the half-mile to the nearest neighbor for help.<sup>108</sup> The neighbor restrained the drunken husband, who fell into a deadly slumber.<sup>109</sup> Mother Stewart mourned for the children, noting the "silent pondering of their little, burdened minds over it; . . . why their mamma is so sad and cries so much, and why their papa is not nice and manly, and does not love them like other men do their children."<sup>110</sup>

In Franklin Mother Stewart addressed a crowd reeling from the shock of a murder and suicide.<sup>111</sup> A woman in town worked as the sole support of herself and five children.<sup>112</sup> Her husband, a drunkard, was abusive and dangerous, often threatening her life.<sup>113</sup> She approached the town authorities and the temperance men, explaining her situation and her fear for her life, but was told not to be alarmed, there was no danger.<sup>114</sup> One July night, the husband came home to his sleeping wife, took a gun and shot his wife and then himself.<sup>115</sup> The children, sleeping in the same room, witnessed the shootings.<sup>116</sup> Mother Stewart does not comment further on this incident in her autobiography, allowing the story to stand on its own.<sup>117</sup>

In a series of anecdotal stories in her autobiography, Mother Stewart links domestic violence to temperance, social reform and

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104. *See id.* at 300.

105. *See id.*

106. *See id.* at 300-01.

107. *See STEWART, supra* note 12, at 301.

108. *See id.*

109. *See id.*

110. STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 301.

111. *See id.* at 404.

112. *See id.*

113. *See id.*

114. *See STEWART, supra* note 12, at 404.

115. *See id.*

116. *See id.*

117. *See id.*

political activism.<sup>118</sup> Her sketches address the myth that "Women Have All the Rights They Want," that "Home is Woman's Sphere," and that "Women Don't Want to Vote." She continues by addressing the "Need of a Higher License," referring to the legal reform movement to require a license to sell liquor, and "The Little Martyr and Her Monument," referring to child abuse. Undoubtably, Mother Stewart often recounted these sketches during her public speeches.

"Women Have All the Rights They Want"<sup>119</sup> recalls the story of a mother of three, a drunkard's wife.<sup>120</sup> Her husband had "made her life for years one long agony."<sup>121</sup> Besides his neglect, which forced the woman to labor to support herself and her children, he had a "furious and abusive temper."<sup>122</sup> Mother Stewart described:

What blood-curdling pictures were those she gave of the drunkard's home. Whole nights had he kept her and her children in terror. On one occasion he came home insanely drunk, locked the door, took his axe, sharpened and examined the edge, telling the children he was going to chop their mother up; and she and they knew if anything, however trivial, should go wrong, he would carry out the threat. He laid her on the floor and would go through the motions as if he was going to strike, the wretched victims of this horrid pastime not daring to resist or protest, the wife keeping a cheerful smile, saying, 'Why John, I know you are only in fun,' while she could hear her heart beat; and this, through long, weary hours of the night, with no deliverance near, till the effect of the liquor at length overpowered him and he sank into a beastly stupor.<sup>123</sup>

The woman left her husband and brought her daughter to a relative in another state which constituted a crime because in her home state, the father was the lawful custodian of their children.<sup>124</sup> Now a kidnapper, Mother Stewart did not know

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118. See generally STEWART, *supra* note 12 (illustrating the connections among women's political powerlessness, alcohol, and domestic violence).

119. See *id.* at 466-69.

120. See *id.* at 467.

121. See *id.*

122. See *id.*

123. STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 467.

124. See *id.* at 468.

whether the woman was successful in her second "criminal attempt to steal" her son to bring him to safety.<sup>125</sup>

In an anecdote entitled, "Home is Woman's Sphere," Mother Stewart recounts the story of a refugee who had appeared on her doorstep.<sup>126</sup> The woman, who was from an old and respected family, married with expectations of a bright future.<sup>127</sup> However, her husband became a drunkard.<sup>128</sup> "She had, finally, through his abuse, bec[o]me afraid for her life,—had . . . secretly stole away, reach[ing] the railroad and fled, leaving the husband—now the terror of her life—in peaceable possession" of her family's homestead, left her by her father.<sup>129</sup> She appeared a "broken, emaciated woman, broken mentally as well as physically."<sup>130</sup> From Mother Stewart, she sought refuge and safety from her husband, who she feared would come and take her child away from her.<sup>131</sup>

In "Women Don't Want to Vote,"<sup>132</sup> Mother Stewart tells the familiar tale of a drunkard's wife, the story "of neglect, poverty, abuse, the night-long vigils, lest her life—which he threatened repeatedly, and for which purpose he kept his razor under his pillow—should be taken."<sup>133</sup> The woman hid her husband's abuse from everyone, including her own parents, for eight years, before her health and endurance failed, forcing her to seek from her parents refuge and protection for herself and her two children.<sup>134</sup> The woman, Mother Stewart reports, believed that "if women could only vote, how soon would the liquor dens be closed and all this suffering ended."<sup>135</sup>

In "Need of Higher License," Mother Stewart recalls meeting an old acquaintance.<sup>136</sup> The familiar story of her husband's drunkenness, his "neglect of business, reverses, poverty, confirmed drunkenness, and abuse of wife and family" had reduced her to a bed-ridden invalid.<sup>137</sup> In the doorway, Mother Stewart was

125. *Id.*

126. *See Id.* at 469-70.

127. *See STEWART, supra* note 12, at 469.

128. *See id.*

129. *See id.* at 469-70.

130. STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 469.

131. *See id.* at 470. The woman did return to her husband, briefly, but found the situation unchanged and sought a legal separation. *Id.*

132. *See id.* at 470-71.

133. *Id.* at 471.

134. *See id.*

135. STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 471.

136. *See id.* at 471-73.

137. *Id.* at 472.

shown a deep cut, "where a hatchet, aimed at his wife in one of his drunken rages, had struck, barely missing her head."<sup>138</sup> "Perhaps a high license might have met this case," suggests Mother Stewart, referring to the legal reform movement to require licenses to sell liquor.<sup>139</sup>

Finally, in "The Little Martyr and Her Monument,"<sup>140</sup> Mother Stewart introduces a drunkard's wife, deserted by her husband, fighting starvation and struggling to protect herself and her five children.<sup>141</sup> Finally, she entreated the local physician to help her find homes for her children.<sup>142</sup> A local missionary to the Indians undertook to find a home for the youngest daughter.<sup>143</sup> Shortly after placing the child, the missionary heard that the child had been accidentally killed in a drunken fight between her adopted parents.<sup>144</sup> The missionary returned to Ohio, "weak in body but strong in her purpose to devote her life to the establishment of a children's home."<sup>145</sup> She founded the Washington County Children's Home, "a home for the homeless and a fitting monument to the Little Martyr of the Drink Curse."<sup>146</sup>

Mother Stewart represents the work of one influential member of the WCTU. She is credited with inspiring the temperance movements in the South and in Great Britain.<sup>147</sup> Willard's organization provided Mother Stewart with a voice: a forum for speaking out against domestic violence. Without this forum, it is unlikely that these stories would have received the national and international attention that comes with being part of the largest woman's movement.

#### IV. WILLARD'S LEADERSHIP: 1880S— 90S

Frances Willard transformed the WCTU from religious temperance to social reform and political activism. This transformation occurred because Willard created a national organization responsive to the needs and interests of a wide array

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138. *Id.* at 473.

139. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 473.

140. See *id.* at 476-79.

141. See *id.* at 477.

142. See *id.*

143. See STEWART, *supra* note 12, at 477.

144. See *id.* at 478.

145. *Id.*

146. *Id.* at 479.

147. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 78-79, 159.

of constituents.<sup>148</sup> Willard successfully transformed these radical issues into mainstream issues. Willard "combined skillful leadership, broad social vision, and keen intelligence with the womanly virtues so dear to the nineteenth-century white middle class, love of home and family and that special quality called womanliness."<sup>149</sup>

In 1879, Willard took over leadership of the National WCTU. As president, she worked tirelessly, travelling to organize and lecture, while maintaining contact with local unions throughout the nation. Personally, Willard focused on the national political agenda, working to move the membership from gospel temperance to ever more progressive social reform and political activism.<sup>150</sup> Willard's favorite personal issues were female suffrage, labor, and in later years, socialism.<sup>151</sup>

The effectiveness of the WCTU is in part related to Frances Willard's ability to form alliances. She instilled in others a sense of sisterhood, creating a circle of intimate acquaintances. She, herself, described the WCTU as "a sort of mutual admiration society."<sup>152</sup> This sense of sisterhood translated into a unity that kept the Union together through differences of strategy and goals.<sup>153</sup>

The movement began with the Crusades, which created fervor and excitement for the temperance issue.<sup>154</sup> Next, during the "Sober Second Thought," the social reform movement began.<sup>155</sup> This movement was embodied in the "Do Everything" policy, which encouraged women to work on social issues of concern to them, regardless of whether they related to temperance. One of many WCTU projects, the Social Purity Committee worked to

148. See *id.* at 95-98 (noting that "[p]art of the Union's appeal in the closing decades of the nineteenth century was its eclecticism").

149. BORDIN, *supra* note 4, at xiv. This strategy of using traditional, even stereotypical rhetoric to achieve radical goals continues to be a controversial leadership style.

150. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 98.

151. See ANNA A. GORDON, *THE BEAUTIFUL LIFE OF FRANCES E. WILLARD* 113 (1898) (quoting "[l]et us not be disconcerted, but stand bravely by that blessed trinity of movements, Prohibition, Woman's Liberation and Labor's Uplift").

152. See FRANCES E. WILLARD, *WOMAN AND TEMPERANCE OR THE WORK AND THE WORKERS OF THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION* 48 (1883).

153. See Lee, *supra* note 28, at 146-47 (emphasizing that "[s]isterhood—bonds of equality rooted in woman's sexual inequality—was a powerful force at work in the crusade.").

154. See *supra* notes 22-33 and accompanying text.

155. For more information on the "Sober Second Thought" and the genesis of the social reform movement, see Willard, *supra* note 86, at 121-26; see also BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 34-51.

combat domestic violence and exploitation. Finally, the "Home Protection Ballot" movement supported woman suffrage.<sup>156</sup>

A. *"Do Everything"*

Frances Willard, a master at choosing slogans, introduced the "Do Everything Policy" in her first speech as National WCTU president in 1880<sup>157</sup> with the goal of providing something of interest to every woman.<sup>158</sup> Departments, led by one woman specialist in the field, dealt with a variety of issues tied to temperance, labor, or the status of women.<sup>159</sup> Under this mandate, local WCTUs embraced a broad program of charity and social action.<sup>160</sup> In this way, the WCTU appealed to almost every woman, offering her an opportunity to work for the causes closest to her heart.<sup>161</sup> "Do Everything" succeeded partially because of the structure of the WCTU: local Unions were given broad discretion in deciding which actions to undertake.

"Do Everything" appealed more to the field workers such as Mother Stewart than did the political maneuverings of Willard. Willard demonstrated throughout her temperance career a preference for lecturing and writing on broad social issues.<sup>162</sup> Anna Gordon, Willard's lifelong assistant and confidant explained, "The 'Do Everything Policy' was not of our choosing, but is an evolution, as inevitable as any traced by the naturalist, or described by the historian."<sup>163</sup> Politically, Willard appreciated the utility of "Do Everything" because it allowed field workers, like

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156. But see STEVEN M. BUECHLER, *WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES* 50-54 (1990) (arguing that "[a]lthough the WCTU under Willard may have recruited more women into the suffrage cause in the long run, in the short run its presence as a competitor to suffrage organizations, [and] its appeal to more conservative women," undermined the suffrage movement).

157. See Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 326.

158. See *id.*

159. See *id.* at 325. Upon assuming the Presidency of the WCTU Willard reorganized the Union. Besides local unions, which retained their independence, the Committee system was restructured. Committees represented particular concerns, such as juvenile work or prison reform, that a committee of women had traditionally run. Because these women were geographically spread out, organization was difficult and the Committees were ineffective. Willard turned the leadership of the Committees into the hands of one well-chosen woman, expected to be or become an expert in that field. Thus, the committees became more efficient and effective tools of the national leadership. See *id.*

160. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 95.

161. See *id.* at 97.

162. See GORDON, *supra* note 151, at 95.

163. "Everything is not in the Temperance Reform, but the Temperance Reform should be in everything." GORDON, *supra* note 151, at 114 (quoting Willard).

Mother Stewart, to work on the broad array of reforms necessary to support Willard's national political agenda while avoiding the fragmentation that has plagued other women's movements.

Under the guise of the WCTU, a vast array of reforms were implemented.<sup>164</sup> Women taught temperance to children in Sunday schools and visited drunkards in prison. These activities led to movements for free public kindergartens and prison reform. By 1889 WCTU members were operating nurseries, Sunday schools, homeless shelters, and homes for fallen women.<sup>165</sup> Members supported labor reform, suffrage, disarmament, and "sensible" clothing, while opposing the manufacture of cigarettes and vivisection.<sup>166</sup> The concerns of women were a consistent undercurrent in the WCTU's work.<sup>167</sup>

This hands-on approach transformed the movement from the drawing rooms of the affluent to the city slums.<sup>168</sup> Faced with the realities of the lives of the working class, a new phenomenon of the industrial age, the reformers sought practical solutions to the problems of the day.<sup>169</sup> The WCTU supported kindergartens as a service for working-class mothers, pushed for the eight-hour work day, and provided coffee tanks in factories to discourage workers from drinking beer.<sup>170</sup> As working class women joined the WCTU, class issues received greater attention.

164. "[B]ecause Willard was primarily interested in bringing women out of the home, getting them organized, and teaching them how to work in the community, she was less concerned with what they did, as long as they did something that gave them a sense of pride and accomplishment." Lee, *supra* note 26, at 328.

165. See GORDON, *supra* note 151, at 98.

166. See *id.* at 97-98. See also Matthew Baldini, Comment, *The Cigarette Battle: Anti-Smoking Proponents go for the Knockout*, 26 SETON HALL L. REV. 348 n.3 (1995) (noting the WCTU's raids on tobacco shops and education campaigns to teach children about the health risks of smoking).

167. For example, the WCTU is credited, in the prison reform movement, with separating male from female prisoners and installing police matrons as well as improving overall prison conditions. See *id.*

168. "Best of all, 'going out on the street' [during the Crusades] brought women face to face with the world's misery and sin. . . . Never can I forget the day I met the great unwashed, untaught, ungospelled multitude for the first time. Need I say it was the Crusade that opened before me, as before ten thousand other women, this wide, 'effectual door?'" Frances E. Willard, *Introduction to ANNIE WITTENMYER, HISTORY OF THE WOMAN'S TEMPERANCE CRUSADE* 16 (1878).

169. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 98-99.

170. See *id.* This is not to say that the WCTU was immune from the biases and prejudices that plagued American society. In fact, some WCTU members blamed immigrants for intemperance, primarily the Irish for their whiskey and the Germans for their beer. See *id.* at 86-88.

During this time the WCTU moved toward viewing alcoholism as an effect rather than a cause of poverty.<sup>171</sup> By 1889 Willard "attributed intemperance to bad working conditions and long hours, stating that overwork drove men to drink and that poor working conditions sent the factory girl to the saloon at night."<sup>172</sup> Among the issues raised by contact with and communication among women was the prevalence of domestic violence and exploitation, a concern addressed by the movement for social purity.

### *B. Social Purity Movement*

The Social Purity movement in the WCTU began in 1877, working to combat the prevailing double standard of sexual morality.<sup>173</sup> The Committee for Work with Fallen Women strove to save prostitutes through gospel temperance.<sup>174</sup> By 1885, the name and emphasis of the Committee had changed to the Department for Social Purity.<sup>175</sup> The Department stressed practical, preventative measures including providing temporary housing for women fleeing prostitution, "life-saving stations" for young girls entering the city for the first time, and mothers' associations designed to encourage sex education for children.<sup>176</sup> The Department opposed pornography,<sup>177</sup> worked to strengthen rape laws,<sup>178</sup> and struggled towards sexual equality.<sup>179</sup>

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171. *See id.* at 99.

172. BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 107.

173. *See id.* at 110. Social purity drew support from suffragists and family violence activists as well as temperance reformers. *See* PLECK, *supra* note 3, at 89. Susan B. Anthony, as early as 1875, gave an address on social purity. *See* AILEEN S. KRADITOR, *UP FROM THE PEDESTAL* 159 (1968). Anthony's address began with the temperance question:

No one can doubt that the sufferings of the sober, virtuous woman, in legal subjection to the mastership of a drunken, immoral husband and father over herself and children, not only from physical abuse, but from spiritual shame and humiliation, must be such as the man himself can not possibly comprehend. ...

The prosecutions in our courts for breach of promise, divorce, adultery, bigamy, seduction, rape; the newspaper reports every day of every year of scandals and outrages, of wife murders and paramour shootings, of abortions and infanticides, are perpetual reminders of men's incapacity to cope successfully with this monster evil of society [alcohol].

*Id.* at 159-60. The solution, according to Anthony, lies in political power—through female suffrage. *See id.* at 162-63.

174. *See* BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 110.

175. *See id.*

176. *See id.* at 111.

177. *See* Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 344.

178. *See* BORDIN, *supra* note 4, at 131-32.

179. *See id.* at 110-11; *see also* BORDIN, *supra* note 4, at 132-33.



A series of 1895 newspaper articles disclosed the kidnapping of thirteen and fourteen-year-old girls presumably for sexual exploitation.<sup>180</sup> Legislative efforts to raise the age of consent were successful, and in twenty states, the legislature raised the age to sixteen.<sup>181</sup>

The 1884 "Purity Petition" for the legal protection of women and children read:

... The increasing and alarming frequency of assaults upon women, the frightful indignities to which even little girls are subject, and the corrupting of boys, have become the shame of our boasted civilization.

We believe that the statutes of \_\_\_\_\_ do not meet the demands of that newly awakened public sentiment which requires better legal protection for womanhood and childhood;

Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of \_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_, and State of \_\_\_\_\_, pray you to enact further provision for the protection of women and children. And, we call attention to the disgraceful fact that protection of the person is not placed by our laws upon so high a plane as protection of the purse.<sup>182</sup>

The Social Purity movement exemplifies the type of work done by local unions and supported by the national organization. Through the organization of talent and resources provided by the national WCTU, local women were able to work on substantial and successful projects. Willard was thus able to address the issue of domestic violence and exploitation felt by some of her constituents. Willard's final achievement was to transform this energy into a call for suffrage.

### C. Home Protection Ballot

The "Home Protection Ballot" was perhaps the most significant contribution made by Willard and the WCTU. As early as 1874, Willard supported woman's suffrage "for God and Home and Native Land,"<sup>183</sup> and proposed to then WCTU president

180. See Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 341; See also PLECK, *supra* note 3, at 94-95.

181. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 110. For example, in Ohio the WCTU secured sixteen thousand signatures to a petition calling for an increase in the "age of protection of girls" from fourteen to eighteen. They succeeded in having the statutory rape age raised to sixteen. See Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 342.

182. See GORDON, *supra* note 151, at 128.

183. Willard linked the home to religion and patriotism under the motto "For God and Home and Native Land." See Lee, *supra* note 28, at 349. "Like any good politician, Willard

Wittenmyer that a proposal be made at the annual convention of 1876 in support of suffrage.<sup>184</sup> At this convention, she proposed female suffrage only for issues touching the home — temperance and education.<sup>185</sup> As the common understanding of the scope of issues affecting women expanded, the "Home Protection Ballot" evolved into a universal call for woman's suffrage.<sup>186</sup>

At the WCTU Convention of 1881, Willard passed a resolution calling for either the temperance ballot or full suffrage, depending on the local sentiment.<sup>187</sup> Local unions differed in their acceptance of this resolution. Some unions ignored it, while others pushed for state and federal constitutional amendments to allow female suffrage.<sup>188</sup> By 1887 the liquor interests saw woman's suffrage as so closely linked to prohibition that they used their political influence and money to defeat suffrage laws.<sup>189</sup> Fearing such powerful opposition, suffragists occasionally distanced themselves from temperance reform.<sup>190</sup>

"Home Protection" appealed to a variety of issues ranging from temperance to women's rights. The slogan and campaign effectively appealed to women's fears of abuse by drunken husbands, without threatening traditional notions of family.<sup>191</sup> Willard integrated concerns for safe homes into a cry for suffrage. Willard "took an ill-defined sentiment, gave it practical applicability, and persuaded many Union constituents that protecting the home legitimized woman's suffrage on temperance issues."<sup>192</sup>

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knew how to popularize ideas. She understood the emotional appeal of motherhood and home to most people, and she put mom and apple pie right up alongside God and country." *Id.*

184. See GORDON, *supra* note 151, at 115.

185. "Willard tapped women's feelings of injustice without asking them to accept sexual equality or to endorse unqualified suffrage. Rather, she moved towards these positions gradually by wedding temperance to a limited form of suffrage." Lee, *supra* note 28, at 16.

186. "Step by step Willard convinced the Woman's National Christian Temperance Union to support her home protection stance." *Id.* at 16.

187. See Whitaker, *supra* note 22, at 351. This controversial resolution led to the withdrawal of a number of antisuffragists, including Annie Wittenmyer. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 119.

188. See BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 119-21.

189. See *id.* at 121.

190. See *id.*

191. "Willard couched feminist impulses in a domestic ideology that legitimized women's political activity on the basis of women's traditional, familial identity." Lee, *supra* note 28, at 16.

192. *Id.* at 362.

## V. CONCLUSION

"By the end of the century, the WCTU was a substantial political force in the United States, and its membership was well-trained in the art and craft of politics."<sup>193</sup> The WCTU succeeded in making woman's suffrage respectable in mainstream society, and contributed substantially to the eventual passage of female suffrage.<sup>194</sup> The WCTU's most important accomplishment, however, was increasing the organization and experience of women.<sup>195</sup> Many of their projects, including statutory rape laws, sex education, and prison reform, left a lasting and tangible effect on American society.

The success of the WCTU is primarily attributable to Frances Willard. Catering to the varied concerns of her constituents, Willard united women from diverse backgrounds to work towards a common goal of empowering women. She gave important issues such as domestic violence a forum for expression and action. Willard's successful transformation of the WCTU from religious temperance to social reform and political activism created one of the strongest and most influential women's organizations in American history.

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193. BORDIN, *supra* note 2, at 138-39 (noting that "[t]housands of women participated at some level in political action, testifying before legislative committees, drafting and circulating petitions, writing legislation, and getting out the vote").

194. *See id.* at 120.

195. *See Lee, supra* note 28, at 366-69.