

Lesson 6.2

THE RECENT TRAGEDY AT HARRY COLE'S RUM SALOON*

Objective: Students will examine the document "The Recent Tragedy at Harry Cole's Rum Saloon" and judge whether they agree with Mrs. Jere Swett's actions.

Materials:

- **Sheet 6.2:** Harry Cole's Saloon Student Worksheet
- **Doc 6.2:** "The Recent Tragedy at Harry Cole's Rum Saloon"

Timing: One to two class periods

Background Reading and Information:

- Chapter Six, Section One
- Mrs. Carry Nation's physical attacks on bars were controversial in the national temperance movement. Portland produced its own version of Carry Nation: Mrs. Jere Swett. On April 7, 1849, Jere Swett was drinking at Harrison G. Cole's saloon. Swett's wife, fed-up with his habitual drinking, removed him from the saloon, then returned to destroy Harry Cole's bar. The Portland Transcript reported that Mrs. Swett "demolished the weapons of the enemy that steals men's brains away, and the way glass rattled and the liquor flowed was a caution to rumsellers. Decanters, tumblers and windows all fell victim to the assault and thus was one of King Alchy's strongholds stormed by a woman."

Procedure:

1. Review Chapter Six, Section One with students, discussing the differing points of view about temperance. Tell them the story of Mrs. Jere Swett and her attack on Harry Cole's saloon.
2. Hand the document out to students. Go over a few key terms with them before they read it on their own:
 - moral suasion:** persuading people to do something on moral or ethical grounds
 - lynch law:** vigilante justice; punishment without due process
 - espouse:** support, defend
3. As a class, sing the song a few times together. Use the tune of *Yankee Doodle*.
4. After the students have become familiar with the song, have them study it on their own, filling in the worksheets.
5. After they have completed their worksheets, come back together as a large group. Take a classroom survey: how many people agree with what Mrs. Swett did? How many do not? Discuss why students feel the way they do. Ask questions like the following:
 - Do you think what Mrs. Swett did would be received in the same way today? Why or why not?

- Can you think of any issues today that might be comparable to the temperance issue in the 1800s?
- How do people work to fix problems they see in today's society? By moral suasion, lynch law, legislation, or by other means?

Evaluation: Grade student worksheets based on thoughtfulness and thoroughness.

Follow-up Activity:

- Portfolio option: Have students write their own song set to a familiar tune about a present-day political or local issue. Have a song day in class when students perform their songs.

***Note:** This lesson is based on the research and discussion questions accompanying this document in Maine Historical Society's 1998 exhibit "Rum, Riot and Reform: Maine and the History of American Drinking"

Alignment with Learning Results:

Grade Level: **6th-8th**

Content Area: Social Studies: **APPLICATIONS**

Standard: **Researching and Developing Positions on Current Social Studies Issues**

Students research, select, and present a position on a current social studies issue by proposing and revising research questions, and locating and selecting information from multiple and varied sources.

Descriptors **A1c, e, f** : Locate and access relevant information that includes multiple perspectives from varied sources, distinguish between primary and secondary sources, and evaluate and verify the credibility of the information found in print and non-print sources.

Grade Level: **6th-8th**

Content Area: Visual and Performing Arts: **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CONNECTIONS**

Standard: **The Arts and History and World Cultures**

Performance Indicator **E1**: Students compare products of the visual/performing arts to understand history and/or world cultures.

Name: _____

Date: _____

**HARRY COLE'S SALOON
STUDENT WORKSHEET***

The abuse of alcohol inspired some people to extreme actions. Read "The Recent Tragedy at Harry Cole's Rum Saloon" and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences.

1. Summarize the story of what happened at Harry Cole's Saloon in your own words.

2. Why does the writer of the song consider what Mrs. Swett did to be "lynch law"? _____

3. Does the writer approve or disapprove of what Mrs. Swett did? How can you tell?

4. Summarize stanza 2 in your own words. Why do you think moral suasion failed?

5. What is the significance of setting the song to the tune of "Yankee Doodle Dandy"?

6. Do you agree with what Mrs. Swett did? Why or why not? _____

*Note: This lesson is based on the research and discussion questions accompanying this document in Maine Historical Society's 1998 exhibit "Rum, Riot and Reform: Maine and the History of American Drinking"

THE RECENT TRAGEDY

At Harry Cole's Rum Saloon, Exchange Street, Portland.

TUNE—YANKEE DOODLE.

While the liquor-drinker is daily spending his money for that which will only do him an injury, see the liquor-seller counting out his bills and calculating upon his clear profits.



Come, all who love a merry song,
And listen to my ditty,
I'll tell you how we get along
With Rum-holes in our city.

Chorus—Temp'rance men then keep it up,
And RAM it down completely,
'Till all shall leave the accursed cup,
Which soakers love so sweetly.

Sometimes we have to put the screws
Right on to Rum-retailer,
For moral suasion they abuse,
And that has proved a failure.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

Sometimes our people take lynch law,
When nothing else will cure it;
Although we own it is not fair,
Yet how can we endure it?

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

For Rum destroys the happiness
Of families around us,
And such hell-holes as Harry Cole's,
With others, will confound us.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

A married lady, in this place,
Whose husband lov'd the critter,
Has been abused in a law case,
Which we think rather bitter.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

Her husband, down to Harry's store,
Too often would be going,
While she his case would oft deplore,
The consequences knowing.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

At length she went to Harry's store,
And there commenced the battle.
But she did nothing, less or more,
Than make Rum-bottles rattle!

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

Good many there who saw the fun,
And thought it was quite merry,
Who stood and saw the whole work done,
Could say, now go it, Jerry.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

And we do think this woman should
Have the reward of merit,
For in the Temp'rance cause she stood,
Which we should all inherit.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

The Temp'rance cause which we've espoused,
We love it as our life, sir,
And we wish all, both great and small,
Were good as Jerry's wife, sir.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

Although we are against lynch laws,
In our good land of freedom,
But her's we think a righteous cause,
And sometimes here we need 'em.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

If every woman in this place,
Whose husbands there assemble,
Were like Mrs. Swett, then I would bet
That Rum-hells all would tremble.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

We end our ditty, and would say
To every thirsty soul, sir,
From every Rum-hole keep away,
Remember Harry Cole, sir.

Chorus—Temp'rance men, &c.

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