

# A Case of Thwarted Professionalization: Pharmacy and Temperance in Late Nineteenth-Century Iowa

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ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1880, George H. Schafer, an ambitious young pharmacist from Fort Madison, Iowa, sent a circular to "every known drug firm in the state." He urged Iowa pharmacists to join in support of a pharmacy bill to be introduced, at his request, in the upcoming session of the Iowa General Assembly.<sup>1</sup> The Iowa State Pharmaceutical Association, founded in February of 1880, was the fruit of Schafer's organizational effort. The association's initial goal was expressly political: to support the proposed pharmacy law. The General Assembly went on to pass the Iowa Pharmacy Law of 1880, making pharmacy the first legally recognized profession in Iowa, its occupational standards and jurisdiction defined by statute and enforced by a state pharmacy commission.<sup>2</sup>

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1. *Iowa State Register*, 11 February 1880.

2. The concept of "professional jurisdiction" is taken from Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago, 1988). Recent scholarship on the professions has added new dimensions, especially political ones, to our understanding of the meaning of words such as *professional*, *professionalism*, and *professionalization*. See also Paul Starr, "The Social Origins of Professional Sovereignty," in *The Social Transformation of American Medicine: The Rise of a Sovereign Profession and the Making of a Vast Industry* (New York, 1982), 3-29; JoAnne Brown, "Professional Language: Words That Succeed," *Radical History Review* 34 (1986), 33-51; Peter Meiksins, "Professionalism and Conflict: The Case of the American Association of Engineers," *Journal of Social History* 19 (1986), 403-22; Nina Toren, "Deprofessionalization and Its Sources," *Sociology of Work and Occupations* 2 (1975), 323-37; Eliot Freidson, *Professional Powers: A Study of the Institutionalization of Formal Knowledge* (Chicago, 1986).

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In an era of rising temperance sentiment, however, the prominence of alcohol in pharmacy practice led many Iowans to view pharmacy regulation as nothing more than a temperance measure. As a result, in the decade after 1880 the development of Iowa pharmacy became hopelessly entangled with the temperance crusade, drawing the Iowa State Pharmaceutical Association and the state pharmacy commission into conflict with temperance backers. Organized pharmacy was badly overmatched in that conflict. A decade of often bitter political struggle exacerbated the natural divisions within the pharmacists' professional community and alienated growing numbers of Iowa pharmacists from their professional association. During the 1890s, political exhaustion and a dramatic decline in membership combined to transform the Iowa State Pharmaceutical Association into a largely fraternal organization and to diminish the political role of the pharmacy commission as well.

That episode is of interest not just to the history of pharmacy but also to the larger history of the professions. The substance of professional work, arbitrarily defined in specific historical contexts, is never fixed but is constantly reshaped by pressures from a variety of sources—political, economic, technological, and institutional, the last including pressures from other professions. There are, as Andrew Abbott remarks, several possible futures "for any professional present."<sup>3</sup> Much of that contingency is politically mediated; adaptation of any profession to changing circumstances requires continued expenditure of political energy, promoting professional claims in the forum of public opinion and in the arena of legislative politics. Iowa pharmacists' withdrawal from professional politics meant that they entered the twentieth century ill equipped to protect their professional status in a rapidly changing and increasingly professionalized health care marketplace.

PRIOR TO THE 1880s the Iowa health care marketplace was chaotic and oddly democratic. Iowa was home to a variety of self-professed medical practitioners, including so-called regular physicians, homeopaths, Thomsonians, eclectic, and faith

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3. Abbott, *The System of Professions*, 13.

healers. Self-help was the dominant pattern in health care, however, with the family as the chief primary care provider. The self-help tradition, reflecting economic underdevelopment, cultural biases against elitist professional monopolies, and the dismal state of medical science, drew on a wide range of family recipes and Native American traditions as well as regular and sectarian therapeutic principles. While physicians, grocers, and other merchants supplied the public with sundry medicinal products, ranging from patent remedies to morphine and associated paraphernalia, the self-help tradition elevated pharmacists, or druggists as they were commonly known, to a place of special prominence in health care.<sup>4</sup>

The nineteenth-century drug store was no more specialized than its current counterpart; a typical advertisement promoted an assortment of "Drugs, Medicines, Paints, Oils, Dye-Staffs, Varnish, Glass, Pure Liquors, Perfumery, Soaps, Tea, Tobacco."<sup>5</sup> Pharmacists were distinguished from other general merchandisers and from other vendors of health care goods and services by their advertised devotion to the labor-intensive craft of "compounding" or small-scale manufacture as well as their general knowledge of botanical and chemical medicinals. The pharmacist's professional education was commonly informal, acquired through a combination of apprenticeship and experience. The medicinal agents and simple technologies of day-to-day practice had changed little since the seventeenth century. Still, in a self-medicating era in which the adulteration of foods and drugs was a common danger, the skills of the community pharmacist were a valued resource.<sup>6</sup>

The standing of Iowa pharmacists was poised for change in the last decades of the nineteenth century, however, as the transformation of Iowa's political and economic environment posed new opportunities and dangers for all health care professionals. Iowa's population grew explosively between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the twentieth century,

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4. For the sake of convenience and consistency, I will use the slightly anachronistic term *pharmacist* throughout.

5. *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, 6 June 1857.

6. See Lee Anderson, *Iowa Pharmacy: An Experiment in Professionalization* (Iowa City, 1989), 10-32.

making Iowa the tenth most populous state in the union by 1890. Urbanization accompanied population growth, and Iowa's rural population began its long decline in the late nineteenth century. In addition, advancing revolutions in communication, industry, and transportation tied Iowa's economy and its intellectual and cultural life to the larger national scene. The railroads perhaps best symbolized those revolutions, as they spanned the Mississippi River during the 1860s and connected Iowa to eastern markets for both goods and ideas.<sup>7</sup>

These economic and demographic developments worked to the potential benefit of pharmacists by encouraging the movement of health care "from the household into the market."<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, associated systems of mass production and mass distribution threatened to destroy the tradition of small-scale manufacture and local distribution that were the lifeblood of nineteenth-century pharmacy. In an industrialized economy, the pharmacist might well go the way of the artisan shoemaker, making the drug store into "a free intelligence office and stamp dispensary with a side line of cigars and soda water."<sup>9</sup> Market protection, although differently construed within the pharmacists' community, was a powerful motive in the professionalization of Iowa pharmacy.

For Iowans generally, as for pharmacists and Americans elsewhere, the fast pace of development in the decades after the Civil War engendered conflicting reactions. For some it was cause for celebration; for others it created deep anxieties.<sup>10</sup> The large-scale changes associated with the Gilded Age appeared to many Iowans to threaten the existing social order by undermining traditional communities, values, and hierarchies. Increasingly those misgivings took political form, often motivated by the notion that science, in league with Christian principles,

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7. See Keach Johnson, "Iowa's Industrial Roots," *Annals of Iowa* 44 (1978), 163-90, 247-77.

8. Paul Starr, "Medicine, Economy, and Society in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Social History* 10 (1977), 588.

9. *Proceedings of the Iowa State Pharmaceutical Association* 15 (1894), 36 (hereafter cited as ISPhA, *Proceedings*).

10. For general discussions, see Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967); and Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (Baltimore, 1982).

could redeem American society. In Iowa the Republican party—the party of mainstream Anglo-American culture, mainline Protestant religious denominations, and main street business, and the dominant force in Iowa politics—embraced a variety of reform proposals meant to safeguard the public health and morals. Foremost among these proposals were those related to the issue of temperance.<sup>11</sup>

After the Civil War, temperance had become a lively and divisive issue that could produce a more predictable party-line vote than any other issue in Iowa politics, with Republicans consistently voting dry and Democrats wet. Clearly, the temperance movement was not just a quaint oddity; it was part of the larger movement to reform the public health and morals and was for a time at the cutting edge of that movement.<sup>12</sup>

Almost from the beginning, Iowa pharmacy was deeply embroiled in the unfolding debate over temperance because alcohol, in various forms, was the most common medicinal agent of the era, a favorite of both prescribing physicians and a self-medicating public, the latter including a good many advocates of temperance. Alcohol was also an essential solvent and vehicle in many pharmaceutical preparations. Moreover, pharmacists had come to play an important role in an increasingly restrictive liquor distribution system that reflected the growing political influence of the temperance movement.

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11. See John E. Briggs, *History of Social Legislation in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1915). For a broader view, see Ballard C. Campbell, *Representative Democracy: Public Policy and Midwestern Legislatures in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, 1980); William R. Brock, *Investigation and Responsibility: Public Responsibility in the United States, 1865–1900* (New York, 1984); and Richard Jensen, *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888–1896* (Chicago, 1971), especially chap. 4, "Iowa, Wet or Dry? Prohibition and the Fall of the GOP," 89–121.

12. The temperance movement was at different times allied with a variety of reform issues and groups, ranging from abolitionism and Populism to woman suffrage. See Paul Aaron and David Musto, "Temperance and Prohibition in America: A Historical Overview," in *Alcohol and Public Policy: Beyond the Shadow of Prohibition* (Washington, DC, 1981), 127–81; W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York, 1979), chap. 7, "Demon Rum," 187–222; Jack S. Blocker, *Retreat from Reform: The Prohibition Movement in the United States, 1890–1913* (Westport, CT, 1976); idem, *American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform* (Boston, 1989); and Robert Smith Bader, *Prohibition in Kansas: A History* (Lawrence, KS, 1986).

Iowa law in the 1870s specified that only holders of retail permits issued by local governments could sell distilled spirits, and then only for "mechanical, medicinal, sacramental, and culinary purposes."<sup>13</sup> As a result, pharmacies were common sources of liquor. Some pharmacists, however, used their establishments as fronts for the illegal sale of alcoholic beverages. That practice, as well as alcohol's prominence in legitimate pharmacy, made Iowa temperance enthusiasts deeply suspicious of pharmacy and pharmacists. It also made some Iowa pharmacists anxious to protect their image by imposing restrictions on the practice of pharmacy.

THE IOWA PHARMACY BILL OF 1880 was a product of the temporarily converging concerns of temperance forces and pharmacy professionalizers. Some 250 Iowa pharmacists responded to George Schafer's appeal in January of that year for a show of support for the bill. The response of such a sizable representation of Iowa pharmacists is evidence of considerable initial support for professionalization. Schafer already had the proposed bill in hand when he circulated his appeal, and by the time the pharmacists met in February to form the Iowa State Pharmaceutical Association, the bill had been introduced before the state legislature by J. M. Casey, a lawyer and sometime judge from Fort Madison. Some of the assembled pharmacists grumbled about Schafer's *fait accompli*, but the association proceeded to elect Schafer as president by acclamation, to sanction the group of activists who had already been working with him to secure the bill's passage as its "legislative committee," and to submit a memorial to the legislature in support of the pharmacy bill.<sup>14</sup>

The Eighteenth General Assembly of 1880, which also approved a prohibition amendment to the state constitution and created a state board of health, was receptive to arguments about promoting the public health and morals, especially through temperance legislation. Pharmacy professionalizers touted the bill

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13. See Dan Elbert Clark, "The History of Liquor Legislation in Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 6 (1908), 339-74, 501-608.

14. *Davenport Democrat*, 12 February 1880; *Iowa State Register*, 11 February 1880; ISPhA, *Proceedings* 1 (1880), 52-60.

on both counts. Given the strength of the self-help tradition, they argued, surely it was in the public interest to ensure the competency of drug suppliers; in addition, they promised, the professionalization of pharmacy would eliminate scores of illegal dealers in alcohol. According to the bill's sponsor, "Judge" Casey, the pharmacy bill aroused little opposition from any quarter in the state legislature, and it passed the House and Senate with a total of only fourteen negative votes.<sup>15</sup>

The 1880 pharmacy law, coming six years before physician licensing, was a landmark in the regulation of the modern health care occupations in Iowa. Although previous statutes had dealt in piecemeal fashion with drug adulteration and the sale of "poisons," the 1880 law was the first attempt to define by statute the pharmacist's occupational jurisdiction, vesting in licensed pharmacists the sole right "to compound or dispense the prescriptions of physicians, or to retail or dispense poisons for medical use."<sup>16</sup> The law also set standards for occupational entry and created a three-member commission of pharmacy—of which George Schafer was a member for eight years—to enforce those standards and to police the profession.

Temperance supporters, however, understood the new pharmacy law in far simpler terms; in their view the law was a means to stamp out the dram shops—those establishments that used pharmacy as a front for illegal alcohol sales—and to tighten controls over alcohol sales. J. A. Harvey, for example, a Polk County legislator and later president of the Iowa State Temperance Alliance, testified that he had supported the pharmacy bill as a "prohibitionist unconditionally."<sup>17</sup> Professionalizing pharmacists initially encouraged that view, manipulating the temperance issue in order to advance their own professional aims. George Schafer remarked that any temperance reformer "not a fanatic" could see that "the pharmacy law is a true temperance reform measure," one that would remove

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15. See ISPhA, *Proceedings* 2 (1881), 18; 1880 *Iowa House Journal* 165, 172, 356, 394–95; 1880 *Iowa Senate Journal* 274, 276, 301.

16. 1880 *Laws of Iowa*, chap. 75. Physicians were entitled to dispense medications to their patients but not to the public at large.

17. ISPhA, *Proceedings* 2 (1881), 22.

those "unprincipled dealers" who used pharmacy "as a cloak to sell liquors as a beverage."<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, pharmacy leaders were adamant in their contention that discretion in the sale of alcohol for medicinal purposes rightly fell within the jurisdiction of the licensed pharmacist; alcohol, they reasoned, was no different from morphine, chloral hydrate, and other dangerous "poisons" specifically enumerated in the pharmacy law and entrusted to pharmacists. In their view, to class pharmacists with common liquor dealers, either by making them subject to the same rules or by forcing them to assume responsibility for general liquor sales, would insult the integrity of the profession. In exchange for special status, pharmacy leaders promised to impose severe penalties on violators. As one enthusiastic pharmacist exclaimed, "No matter who he may be, when he violates his trust, bounce him."<sup>19</sup>

The new pharmacy law embodied those requirements. Section eight of the law stipulated that licensed pharmacists were entitled to "keep and sell . . . all medicines and poisons" recognized in the *United States Pharmacopeia* or *United States Dispensatory*. Accordingly, Iowa Attorney General Smith McPherson ruled that licensed pharmacists, unlike other liquor dealers, were entitled to sell alcohol for medicinal use without obtaining liquor permits or complying with reporting and bonding requirements specified in the liquor statutes. At the same time, the pharmacy law mandated license revocation for "repeated violations" of the liquor laws, a phrase interpreted to mean multiple violations charged in a single indictment.<sup>20</sup>

George Schafer, a canny political operator with a taste for the rough-and-tumble of professional politics, surely had anticipated the attorney general's ruling liberating pharmacists from the strict provisions of the liquor permit system. Just as surely, however, temperance supporters had not anticipated that outcome. The latter were outraged at the attorney general's opin-

18. *The Druggist* 3 (1881), 74; ISPhA, *Proceedings* 1 (1880), 4.

19. Commissioners of Pharmacy of the State of Iowa, *First Biennial Report* (1881), 13 (hereafter cited as *Report*). The commissioners' reports were published separately and reprinted in *Iowa Legislative Documents*.

20. 1880 *Laws of Iowa*, chap. 75; ISPhA, *Proceedings* 2 (1881), 75.



ion, charging that they had been duped by Schafer and his supporters. They may well have been correct. Whatever the case, the brief and uneasy marriage between professional pharmacy and the temperance movement dissolved in a flood of recrimination only weeks after passage of the pharmacy law.

A DECADE-LONG SKIRMISH followed, pitting organized pharmacy, represented by the Iowa State Pharmaceutical Association (ISPhA) and the state commission of pharmacy, against a well-organized and comparatively well-financed temperance movement. Supporters of a strict temperance regimen stubbornly insisted that the pharmacy law and later amendments were the heart of a complex of "pharmaco-liquor laws," a connection one pharmacist called "the skeleton in our closet."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the subsequent tightening of controls on alcohol sales through the 1880s burdened licensed pharmacists with more and more responsibility for the success or failure of the attempt to legislate prohibition. That outcome was not only unwelcome to most pharmacists; it was also ironic in light of the skepticism of temperance supporters toward pharmacy and pharmacists:

When the Nineteenth General Assembly met in 1882, temperance supporters were ready to plug the loophole in the 1880 law created by the attorney general's ruling exempting pharmacists from the more onerous requirements of liquor regulation. The temperance forces were unmoved by assurances that the pharmacy law had "weeded out forty percent of the so-called druggists who were . . . using the drug business as a cover to sell intoxicating liquors." Instead, they charged that the ISPhA had raised a "corruption fund" to oppose changes in the pharmacy law. Legislators responded by passing a measure requiring pharmacists, like all other liquor dealers, to obtain retail liquor permits, post substantial bonds, and submit monthly reports of sales.<sup>22</sup>

Republican Governor Buren R. Sherman received the bill after the legislature adjourned. He did not sign it but simply returned it to the secretary of state without comment, assuming

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21. ISPhA, *Proceedings* 6 (1885), 12.

22. *Report* (1883), 25; *Proceedings* 3 (1882), 65; 1882 *Laws of Iowa*, 184-85.

that it would then become law without his signature. But the state constitution required that the governor either return bills "with his approval, if approved by him" or "with his objections, if he disapprove thereof." Since Governor Sherman had done neither, the legal status of the bill—which came to be known as the doubtful substitute—was an open question. It appeared at the end of the 1882 *Laws of Iowa* with no chapter designation, accompanied by an explanation of its ambiguous status.<sup>23</sup>

Even some temperance backers questioned the validity of the doubtful substitute. Some of them also doubted the wisdom of its designers. For example, the editors of the *Iowa State Register*, a staunch temperance paper, labeled the new law, if such it was, a "strange mongrel." The *Register* noted that pharmacists forced to obtain liquor permits could then sell alcohol not just for medicinal purposes but for sacramental, culinary, and mechanical purposes as well. According to the *Register*, the bill was a dubious temperance measure; indeed, it was "better legislation for liquor dealers than they would hardly dared to have asked for." For their part, the commissioners of pharmacy agreed that the doubtful substitute made the liquor laws "less restrictive but more obnoxious."<sup>24</sup>

Attorney General Smith McPherson, however, saw nothing doubtful about the doubtful substitute. Ruling this time against the pharmacists, he stated that "the bill is a valid statute." Under its provisions, he continued, pharmacists could not sell liquor, "whether for medicinal or other purposes, without first getting a permit."<sup>25</sup> Despite McPherson's opinion, controversy over the doubtful substitute raged on through 1882 and 1883. By the time the Twentieth General Assembly met in early 1884, the weight of learned opinion was solidly against it. Even the attorney general had changed his mind, admitting, "Now I have but little doubt that it is not a law." That change of heart provoked J. H. Harrison, president of the ISPhA, to comment

23. Constitution of the State of Iowa, Article III, Section 16; 1882 *Laws of Iowa*, 184-85. The bill was also known as the "Fourth of July Amendment," because its effective date was July 4, 1882.

24. *Iowa State Register*, 29 May 1882; *Report* (1883), 25.

25. *Report* (1883), 11-17.

sarcastically that pharmacists had begun "to lose faith in the opinion of Honorable Smith McPherson."<sup>26</sup>

Temperance adherents were stung by the demise of the doubtful substitute. The Iowa Supreme Court added insult to injury by striking down the prohibition amendment to the state constitution, an amendment that had received final approval in 1882. The direct result of those defeats was a stringent temperance law passed by the state legislature in 1884 despite vigorous opposition from organized pharmacy. The new law mandated closing Iowa's remaining saloons by bringing wine and beer under the provisions of the liquor permit system. In addition, licensed pharmacists came unequivocally under the jurisdiction of the general liquor laws. The law also specified that common carriers could deliver liquor to dealers only on presentation of delivery certificates issued by county auditors. Finally, half of the fines collected in liquor-related court cases would be paid to informants.<sup>27</sup>

Many pharmacists saw this legislation, like the doubtful substitute, as an affront and refused to apply for retail liquor permits. This raised the prospect of total prohibition in some communities. Even temperance advocates found that prospect unsettling; after all, nearly everyone agreed that alcohol had legitimate uses. The president of the ISPhA remarked, no doubt with some satisfaction, that "temperance people in several towns began to circulate petitions praying that one of their number be appointed to sell liquors under the law." There was, he thought, a certain ironic justice when "temperance men seek to sell whiskey."<sup>28</sup> The pharmacists' spontaneous permit strike was short-lived, but it indicated the deep resentment stirred by the imposition of temperance precepts on professional pharmacy.

Having failed in the legislative arena, the commissioners of pharmacy mounted an impassioned attack on the new law in their 1885 report. Meanwhile, the executive committee of the ISPhA seized "in pure desperation," as members put it, on a court test of the new liquor law. In arguments before the Iowa

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26. *Report* (1885), 27-29.

27. 1884 *Laws of Iowa*, chap. 143.

28. Quoted in *Report* (1885), 35-36.

Supreme Court, the association's lawyer held that pharmacists retained their prerogative in the sale of alcohol under the provisions of the pharmacy law of 1880, a view opposed by Attorney General McPherson and by attorneys retained by the Iowa State Temperance Alliance. The court ruled against the association; under the legislation of 1884, the court concluded, the status of pharmacists was no different from that of other liquor dealers.<sup>29</sup>

Yet the effect of the new liquor law was not what supporters of temperance had hoped. For example, one correspondent complained to the *Iowa State Register* that judging from all the whiskey sold for medical uses "there must be a fearful amount of sickness." Another marveled at Cass County officials who issued a permit allowing a local brewery to produce beer for "medicinal purposes." Why, the writer wondered, had temperance forces spent "so much time and hard labor to get a prohibitory law that don't prohibit at all?" Similarly, the *Mount Vernon Hawkeye* complained that "Iowa brewers have made arrangements to send teams [that is, horse-drawn wagons] out all through the state to deliver beer . . . to counteract the action of railroads which refuse to carry the articles."<sup>30</sup>

As these complaints suggest, compliance with the stringent law of 1884, as with all liquor laws, depended on personal sentiment and the considerable variation in law enforcement from one community to another. In some counties local authorities ignored the spirit and often the letter of the law, allowing saloons and dram shops to continue operation. Many Mississippi and Missouri River counties were notorious in that regard, as were heavily Catholic counties such as Dubuque and Carroll. Since the commission of pharmacy ultimately depended on local governments and especially local prosecutors to enforce the law against wayward pharmacists, its image suffered accordingly.

The predictable, if illogical, response of lawmakers to the uneven observance of the liquor laws was to devise ever more

29. *Ibid.*, 13-59; ISPhA, *Proceedings* 6 (1885), 7-10, 22-23; *State v. Bissell et al.*, in *Iowa Reports* 67 (1885), 616-19.

30. *Iowa State Register*, 22 August 1885, 24 July 1885; *Mount Vernon Hawkeye*, 5 September 1884.

restrictive regulations. The Twenty-first General Assembly of 1886 restricted sales of alcohol for medicinal purposes to licensed pharmacists, extended the liquor laws to cover patent remedies, and tightened application procedures for liquor permits.<sup>31</sup> To make matters worse, from the pharmacists' point of view, legislators ignored pharmacists' pleas to prescribe penalties for misrepresentation by buyers of alcohol. Buyers were commonly the principal witnesses in court proceedings against liquor retailers; besides, it was a favorite publicity stunt of Republican politicians and newspaper editors to buy liquor under false pretenses.

The Twenty-second General Assembly of 1888, in the face of fierce opposition from both the commission of pharmacy and the ISPhA committee on legislation, approved a bill restricting sales of alcohol for all purposes to licensed pharmacists, thus integrating pharmacy more firmly into the temperance crusade. The new statute also took responsibility for issuing liquor permits away from county supervisors, who sometimes winked at the law, and vested it in the county courts. Finally, the law of 1888 mandated that buyers of liquor fill out numbered request forms at the time of purchase; dealers then filed the completed forms with county auditors on a monthly basis.<sup>32</sup>

"This law," George Schafer complained, "seems to have been specially prepared to catch every one of us." Not only had the legislature pushed total responsibility for liquor sales on pharmacists while intensifying the already elaborate system of surveillance; the House Committee on Suppression of Intemperance had further inflamed matters by refusing to hear testimony from either the ISPhA's attorneys or the members of its legislative committee.<sup>33</sup> The legislation of 1888 was a bitter pill indeed for most pharmacists, the final chapter in a decade of political frustration.

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31. 1886 *Laws of Iowa*, chap. 83.

32. 1888 *Laws of Iowa*, chap. 71. The idea behind the numbered forms, as George Schafer noted, was to ensure that they were not "consigned to the wastebasket," as often happened with the older forms.

33. ISPhA, *Proceedings* 9 (1888), 39-40.

By the end of the decade, temperance sentiment in Iowa had crested, for the moment at least. Iowa voters elected a Democratic governor in 1889, the first since the formation of the Republican party. Many Republican party leaders, shocked at the loss of their long hold on state government, argued that the party's decline was a consequence of temperance politics and began to back away from unconditional support for prohibition. At the same time, the ISPhA gave up its long struggle to differentiate pharmacists from other liquor dealers; instead, the association petitioned the General Assembly in 1890 for a local-option measure that would allow communities to license saloons, thus shifting some of the demand for alcohol—and temperance scrutiny as well—away from pharmacists.<sup>34</sup>

In 1894 the Twenty-fifth General Assembly, prompted by an incoming Republican governor, enacted the "mulct law," which authorized local communities to tax illegal liquor dealers rather than try to eliminate them. Although it was not "to be construed in any manner or form as a license," the tax constituted "a bar to proceedings under the statute prohibiting such business."<sup>35</sup> Despite the disclaimer, the mulct law was—in the language of the time—a "high license" local option measure; it was also a tacit admission that the attempt to legislate statewide prohibition had failed. Still, in more than half of Iowa's counties, where local voters did not approve mulct saloons, pharmacists remained the only legal sources of alcohol through the 1890s, and the liquor permit system still governed alcohol sales by all Iowa pharmacists except for those who had the option of paying the mulct tax.

THE TEMPERANCE CRUSADE failed to change established behaviors by legislative fiat, but it did leave a lasting impression on Iowa pharmacy. One result was the negative effect on the image of pharmacy. Not only were pharmacists and the public continually reminded of pharmacy's dram-shop past, but, as an observer warned in 1886, pharmacists' growing responsibility

34. *Ibid.* 11 (1890), 74–106.

35. 1894 *Laws of Iowa*, chap. 62.

for legal alcohol sales meant that "every violation of the liquor law will be charged to your account."<sup>36</sup>

A second result was the deadening effect on Iowa pharmacists' appetite for professional politics, an effect reflected in their increasing alienation from the ISPhA. The enthusiasm generated in 1880 had fueled an initial modest expansion of the association. In the last half of the decade, however, a period of drastic contraction set in. A declining participation rate, a high turnover rate, and a marked shrinkage in the association's geographical base were all products of the ceaseless temperance debate.

The 345 pharmacists who joined the ISPhA in its first year represented some 16 percent of all licensed pharmacists, nearly all of them licensed without examination under the "grandfather clause" in the new pharmacy law. By 1884, the association showed encouraging growth, claiming 639 members, or nearly one-third of all licensed pharmacists in Iowa. Almost 70 percent of association members in 1884 came from that 1880-81 cohort first licensed without examination, and the distribution of association members roughly reflected the distribution of population in the state.<sup>37</sup>

In 1886, however, with the membership roll standing near seven hundred, ISPhA president C. R. Wallace complained that "only about 75 percent" of the listed membership was "in good and regular standing." A good many supposed members, he charged, were either deceased or "might as well be for all the benefit they are to the Association." Active members then dropped from membership all those whose dues were twelve months or more in arrears, trimming membership to 456.<sup>38</sup>

In subsequent years, the membership base of the ISPhA displayed extraordinary volatility. Membership continued to slide, dropping to 373 in 1890 and to 278 in 1894, the latter figure representing just 13 percent of Iowa's licensed pharmacists. Moreover, some 400 pharmacists first licensed in 1880-81 without examination had dropped their memberships between 1884 and 1894; of that 1880-81 cohort of more than 600 still in

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36. ISPhA, *Proceedings* 7 (1886), 93.

37. *Ibid.* 1 (1880), 52-60; *ibid.* 5 (1884), 144-58.

38. *Ibid.* 7 (1886), 52, 129-30, 144-47.

active practice, only 109 were members in 1894, and only 70 of those had been members in 1884. In addition, there was a striking geographic contraction in the association's membership, as contingents from Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, and Dubuque accounted for 20 percent of total membership in 1894, up from just 10 percent in 1884.<sup>39</sup>

The tensions sparked by temperance politics contributed directly to Iowa pharmacists' growing indifference or hostility to the ISPhA. George Schafer and other architects of professionalization maintained their hold on leadership positions and their absorption in professional politics into the 1890s, but a growing proportion of Iowa pharmacists grew tired of political action. This was true even of the surviving members of the 1880 generation who, as the chief beneficiaries of professionalization, had been the backbone of the association in its early years.

Ambivalence toward political activism was evident early in the association's history. For example, when association leaders made special appeals for contributions in 1882 and 1884 to support legislative and legal work, expenses far exceeded donations, draining the association's treasury and delaying publication of the proceedings. Similarly, only a special subscription among members at the 1888 convention finally settled the association's debt to its Des Moines lawyer for his work in the test case of the 1884 liquor law. The same ambivalence was manifested in members' decision in 1885 to hold February conventions in Des Moines in even-numbered years to coincide with sessions of the Iowa General Assembly, but to restrict discussion of political affairs to a single day in order to allow time for other matters.<sup>40</sup>

As the temperance debate grew more heated, however, Schafer and other leaders only became more determined in their political activism. In 1887, for example, Schafer single-handedly crushed suggestions that the association petition the legislature

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39. *Ibid.* 11 (1890), 121; *ibid.* 15 (1894), 59-62. In 1896 participation rates in other states ranged from 13.9 percent in Pennsylvania and 16.4 percent in New York to 30 percent in Illinois and 36 percent in Minnesota. *Pharmaceutical Era* 16 (1896), 895.

40. *Ibid.* 3 (1882), 17; *ibid.* 6 (1885), 22, 29; *ibid.* 7 (1886), 55-56, 66; *ibid.* 9 (1888), 15.



to relieve pharmacists entirely of their responsibilities for alcohol sales. The proposal, Schafer thundered, was a shabby retreat from principle, "a destructive blow at the integrity of every honorable member of this Association."<sup>41</sup> With Schafer and his circle of supporters standing firm, political affairs dominated the annual conventions throughout the 1880s.

Meanwhile, however, flagging rank-and-file enthusiasm for political action stirred tempers on both sides. After the legislative confrontation of 1888, one member of the association's committee on legislation exploded, "The Temperance Alliance kept men here [at the capitol] right along; they had \$5,000 and you sent men there without five cents." Similarly, in 1894 a tired voice warned Iowa pharmacists that "at almost every meeting of our legislature some member goes gunning for you," but, he lamented, Iowa pharmacists "are not loyal enough to our organization" to stand together and confront those challenges. On the other hand, a self-professed "old time member," voicing widely held sentiment, countered in 1894 that he had not attended a meeting since 1888 because of the leadership's preoccupation with political matters. The last straw, he complained, had been the special appeal for donations to settle the association's debt over the 1884 test case, a case the executive council had undertaken without approval from the membership.<sup>42</sup>

Most of the initial opposition to the association's political emphasis came from Iowa's small-town pharmacists. During the 1880s and 1890s, these small-town pharmacists were gradually incorporated into a profession largely conceived and led by urban members. For many of them, the chief attractions of the ISPhA were the professional recognition and fraternity it afforded. Although they had shown initial interest in the association, and would do so again at the turn of the century, they were among the most alienated by the decade-long clash of temperance politics. By 1894 many of them had deserted the association altogether.<sup>43</sup>

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41. ISPhA, *Proceedings* 8 (1887), 9, 23-26, 35-40.

42. *Ibid.* 9 (1888), 29, 33; *ibid.* 15 (1894), 36, 37.

43. See the membership lists in *ibid.* 5 (1884), 144-58; and *ibid.* 15 (1894), 59-62.

In addition, through the 1880s more and more urban pharmacists joined their voices to the chorus of dissent. Restive over business problems, most notably price-cutting competition from department stores and other outlets in the sundries and patent remedies markets, business interests within the profession, like fraternal interests, were frustrated by the political preoccupations of the association's leaders. At the 1890 convention, members of the committee on trade interests pleaded with the leadership to set aside "visionary theories" and "utopian ideas." They argued instead that "this session of our association should be business." Similarly, in 1894 a member charged that politically oriented leaders did not see pressing business problems as "of sufficient importance to occupy their attention."<sup>44</sup>

Motivated by such sentiments, urban pharmacists, who for fifteen years had been the core of the ISPhA, began to desert the association. A trickle in the late 1880s became a flood in the 1890s. In Iowa, as elsewhere, business-minded pharmacists abandoned existing professional associations in favor of business-oriented alternatives. The most important of the new associations proved to be the National Association of Retail Druggists (NARD), an organization founded in 1898. By the turn of the century, Iowa members of NARD's local affiliates outnumbered members of the ISPhA.<sup>45</sup>

The alienation of significant segments of the professional community, first rural and then urban, eventually undermined the association's political function, silencing or exhausting even the most energetic political activists. In 1888 organized pharmacy mobilized all its resources in one last defense of its stand on the alcohol issue. The association even called on Iowa pharmacists, with some temporary success, to boycott the liquor permit system. By 1890, however, George Schafer's own assessment of "the sense of the association" forced pharmacists to surrender their claim to special status under the liquor laws. Even more striking, at the association's 1894 convention, president Milo W. Ward sadly concluded that, whatever the legitimacy of pharmacists' grievances against the liquor laws, "we have never been trusted to try our hand" at making appropriate changes;

44. *Ibid.* 11 (1890), 13; *ibid.* 15 (1894), 28.

45. See *St. Louis Druggist* 28 (Oct. 1898), 375; *ibid.* 31 (Nov. 1901), 352.

therefore, Ward ruled, "all discussion of that question is out of order."<sup>46</sup>

When the alcohol issue disappeared from the ISPhA's agenda, it took all manner of political activity with it. In the late 1890s, in an attempt to win back lost members, the association moved its annual conventions from winter to summer and from Des Moines to popular vacation resorts such as Clear Lake, and members came to the meetings rightly expecting little serious business. The association's committee on sports eclipsed the committee on legislation. It organized a variety of activities, ranging from the ladies' potato throw to the fat men's race, to entertain members and their families. George Schafer was no doubt surprised to find that the first item on the convention agenda in 1898 was a fishing contest.<sup>47</sup>

A similar transformation also overtook the commission of pharmacy. Led by George Schafer and fired by an expansive vision of professionalism, the commission had been an active and visible defender of professional pharmacy in the 1880s. Commissioners used their office to lobby legislators and to promote the virtues of professional pharmacy to the public, and the commission's official reports were unabashedly political instruments. The reports contained extracts from newspapers, professional journals, and the ISPhA's *Proceedings* along with a good deal of the commissioners' own editorial comment. In the face of waning political enthusiasm among Iowa pharmacists, however, the commission became much less passionate, much less partisan, and much more bureaucratic in its functions. By the turn of the century, its official reports were slim volumes entirely devoid of editorial content, the political equivalent of the association's Clear Lake conventions.

IOWA PHARMACY, then, entered the twentieth century substantially changed from the 1880s. In 1880, at a moment when a constellation of factors made professionalization seem both possible and desirable, Iowa pharmacists had enlisted the police power of the state to defend a chosen occupational role. In doing so, however, they unwittingly created a system in

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46. ISPhA, *Proceedings* 15 (1894), 14, 17.

47. *Ibid.* 16 (1895), 39.

which pharmacists were forced into service at the cutting edge of the temperance crusade. George Schafer and other leaders, through the ISPhA and the commission of pharmacy, continued to fight desperately to defend the pharmacists' professional jurisdiction. But by the turn of the century, the expansive professional hopes sparked by passage of the pharmacy law in 1880 had dissipated, in no small measure because of the bitter political struggle to extricate professional pharmacy from the temperance crusade.

Declining interest in professional politics lent a surface calm to Iowa pharmacy at the turn of the century. One result was a revival of the ISPhA, its membership surpassing four hundred in 1905. However, the pharmacists' professional community was still torn by internal conflict, and the association's membership in 1905 included just 16 percent of Iowa's active pharmacists, the great majority of those from small towns. The four urban centers—Des Moines, Davenport, Dubuque, and Cedar Rapids—that had contributed over 20 percent of association members in 1894 accounted for just 5 percent (twenty-one members) in 1905, with a participation rate of barely 8 percent. In comparison, three unassuming western Iowa towns—Red Oak, Atlantic, and Audubon—likewise claimed a total of twenty-one members, with a participation rate of over 55 percent.

Did those changes, including especially the decline in political activism, make turn-of-the-century Iowa pharmacy more or less professional than it had been in the 1880s? Some might argue that the ISPhA and the commission of pharmacy, by curtailing their political roles, had become *more* "professional" and that the general decline in political activity marked a kind of professional maturity. Perhaps in some ideal sense that is true, particularly if one accepts at face value the altruistic claims that professionals often make for themselves. Certainly it would be true if professions existed in a world in which technologies and economies were static, in which professional groups did not compete with one another for professional turf, and in which political currents did not intrude into professional work. In the real world, however, none of those conditions is true.

Professionalism was, and to a significant extent still is, a mode of occupational control defined at the state level. The American Pharmaceutical Association, for example, largely relegated political and business issues to state associations. Thus pharmacy, like most other professions in American society, was built at the state level, with legislatures such as Iowa's sketching its outline.

But just as Iowa pharmacy withdrew from the political fray at the turn of the century, it faced a series of new challenges to its professional standing: scientific medicine challenged the eclectic empiricism of the self-help tradition and most of the therapeutic approaches on which it was based; organized medicine began its long ascent to dominance in American health care and took command of dangerous "poisons" once entrusted to pharmacists; and large corporate enterprises seized increasing control of drug manufacture and distribution. The experience of organized pharmacy in Iowa in the last two decades of the nineteenth century left it ill equipped to compete with physicians and other interest groups for attention and resources in the early years of the twentieth century.

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