

• *Guest Editors' Introduction* •

**"We Raise Our Glasses":  
Introduction to the Special Issue**

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In September 2019, the satirical press, *The Onion*, published the headline "City's Alcoholism Rebranded as Culture". Beneath the title is an almost cliché image and/or idea in the restaurant industry. An old brick building appears to have received a chic update, complete with sidewalk bistro, to draw in patrons. The picture similarly speaks to ongoing discussions of community reinvigoration or gentrification common in the process of gustatory structural reclamation, particularly for craft breweries (Barajas, Boeing, and Wartell 2017; Walker and Miller 2018). A key, subtle, detail is that this "News in Photos" story is situated in the website's "Travel" section. Tourism and the consumption of alcohol imbued with local flavor, whether *terroir*, culture, or a desire to shop local, is big business. Oregon's wine-related tourism, for example, almost tripled between 2013 and 2016, seeing \$787 million in total revenue (Oregon Wine Board 2018). Nationwide, craft breweries were a \$79.1 billion industry in 2018 (factoring in beer sales, food, and merchandise; Brewers Association 2019).

While this image and title are humorous, especially for those of us who have worked in the service industry, from a folkloristic perspective it is enough to cause ethnographic interest. Beginning to whet one's whistle is exactly what this special issue of *New Directions in Folklore* aims to do. This issue tackles the on-going discussions of how alcohol-as-craft functions as a form of expressive culture. We argue craft beverage—be it beer, cider, spirits, or wine—represents a blend of places, traditions, communities, and values. Each

pint of porter, glass of Cabernet, bottle of whiskey, or can of cider can be read as a text existing in various stages of production, distribution and performance. There is a lot of "hard thinking" to be had about the relationship between folklore and regional craft alcohol.

The idea for this special issue began fermenting in 2017 at the American Folklore Society's Annual Conference held that year in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At this gathering of folklorists, an organized panel featured five individual short papers about folklore and alcohol titled, "Hard Thinking about Hard Drinking: Community and Controversy in the Production and Consumption of Alcohol." This panel focused on "folklore- and foodways-based analysis of alcohol-related issues" geared to "reveal much about wider discussions regarding race, class, gender, religion, business, heritage, politics, and geographic and cultural identity within various communities" (AFS Program 2017:93). Organized and chaired by Jim Seaver, a contributor to the current issue, the panel "explore[d] some of those discussions that are going on today in the many places where alcoholic beverages are being produced and consumed." The individual presenters addressed topics and themes from traditional practices to commercialism and more difficult topics like racism and sexual harassment—both pervasive issues within in the service industry (Johnson and Madera 2018). The panel was well received and sparked great conversations during and after the panel, and some of the discussions held that sunny afternoon continue in the pages of this special issue; panelists included Caroline Miller, Maria Kennedy, and co-editor Jared L. Schmidt.

The interest in craft alcohol and folklore led to a second round of presentations at the Society's conference the following year in Buffalo, New York. Titled, "Beer Goggles in the Field: Who is Overlooked in the Craft Beverage Revival," the panel sought to "challenge each [folklorist] to take a more critical stance on our beloved industries and investigate who is excluded and why" (AFS Program 2018:100). Chaired by Maria Kennedy and co-editor Kim D. Stryker, this panel in many ways functioned as a counterbalance to the more celebratory discussions of craft alcohol at the previous year's session. The chairs and panelists critically discussed what (and whom) was being left out of the boom in artisanal alcoholic beverage production. Three other panelists, Erika Goergen, Anne Rappaport, and James B. Seaver, each contributed a piece to the current issue.

Recognizing the interest in the topic at hand, the *NDiF* editorial staff, with the support from individuals gathered at the business meeting in Buffalo, decided to extend these rich conversations beyond the conference rooms and bar stools and onto the pages of this academic journal. Stryker and Schmidt were approached to co-edit the current edition as each of them bring years of both ethnographic and, if you will, *applied* experience to the study of alcohol. This issue's editorial team have devoted extensive, sober, attention to the growth of craft alcohol production in contemporary American culture, and this background work makes them well suited to co-edit this volume.

Kim D. Stryker was the 2018 recipient of the Archie Green Fellowship from the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, which allowed her to document the lives of various people working in the burgeoning Virginia wine industry. Her collection "Wine Workers of Virginia" is expected to be available online in 2020, and features interviews, transcripts and photographs highlighting the work of winemakers, vineyard managers, soil scientists, sommeliers, tasting room staff, and others who work in wine. She is currently collaborating with photographer Paul D. Scott on a collection of behind-the-scenes photographs focusing on the gritty work that goes into the fine art of winemaking.

In the course of her documentation, Stryker was pleasantly surprised by how hands-on Virginia vineyard owners were in the winemaking processes. Retired business moguls can be found rolling up their sleeves to prune vines, do punch downs in the cellars, or test sugar levels in the grapes. However, Stryker also noted that the mostly Mexican pickers brought in for harvest, while appreciated, were largely unrecognized for their role in the most physical aspect of the work. For the most part, the esteem, ribbons, and prestige that come from winemaking were not shared with the unnamed immigrant laborers. Still, these winemakers are to be commended for their hard work, willingness to take risks, and their (some might say) Quixotian dedication to creating delicious wines, against the challenges of Virginia's humidity, fungal diseases, and high land costs.

As an emerging wine region, Virginia's winemakers and growers have been able to experiment with new techniques, grape varieties, and blends. They are not as tradition-bound as makers producing in long established terroirs. Vineyards have become a part of life for many suburban Virginians who spend their weekends touring wineries or hanging out all day at their favorite vineyard, sipping locally made wine and taking in the scenic

countryside with kids and dogs. At almost 300 independent wineries across the state, Virginia wine is booming, and other regions are following suit, making this a growing topic of interest for folklorists around the country to pursue, interrogate, and document.

Jared L. Schmidt, meanwhile, has engaged in several fieldwork projects about craft beer in Wisconsin, a state known for its love of a cold brew regardless of the temperature outside. His beer-related work primarily centers on the interconnectedness between heritage, identity, and community. In addition to his ethnographic experiences, Schmidt worked in the service industry as a bartender and server for almost a decade. Working to pay for school in establishments ranging from small, hometown bars in rural Minnesota, to an international restaurant chain, and a craft brewery, he approaches these experiences as forms of participant-observation. Most recently, Schmidt was a bartender and shift manager at Rockhound Brewing Company in Madison, Wisconsin. He was part of the original staff when the brewery opened in 2016 and actively participated in the growth of this establishment and its occupational folklife. Schmidt applies the lessons he gained from working on both sides of the bar to inform his understanding of alcohol, tradition, and notions of craft. He is currently a PhD candidate in Folklore Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and serves as *NDiF*'s assistant editor.

Folklore is the expressive culture of everyday people and the craft beverage revival has demonstrated explosive growth by taking these handcrafted skills of distilling, brewing, fermenting, and winemaking back from global mega-producers and reviving these hyper local, artisanal traditions on a micro scale. As Lucy Long (2004) explored in her oft-referenced article, "Culinary Tourism," consumers today are looking for an experience along with enjoyable consumption. Visiting a vineyard on the weekend with friends or suggesting a cool downtown brewery for Happy Hour can reflect back on the person heightening their social profile as someone in the know, with discerning tastes, and niche knowledge of a place. Living history museums are even recognizing the economic and educational potential of alcohol production. Old World Wisconsin, in collaboration with the Museum of Beer and Brewing, hosts historic brewing demonstrations during select summer weekends. Guests can even sample 19th century porters made by brewers in period-costume as they learn how immigrants brought traditional brewing know-how with them to America (Figure 1.1).

Deeply connected to the experience of consuming craft alcohol is the search for authenticity as individuals seek to "drink in" the culture, or flavor, of a place. The authentic, as Regina Bendix (1992:104) reminds us, is a "plastic word." The authentic, and the search for it, can be shaped to meet whatever is needed, and it is increasingly inseparable from capitalism. Tourists travel near and far to visit establishments to imbibe a perceived or real sense of place and people, whether that be the rugged mountain communities of Montana, the flourishing vineyards of Oregon's Rogue Valley, or the distillers of Appalachia. Tourists and newcomers appear to express interest in seeking out places where locals hang out in order to taste what a place has to offer. American consumers are savvier than ever, and the market is shifting to accommodate the demand for niche foodways. The rise in locally crafted alcoholic beverages has paired a sense of community identity with regional beverage makers. People seem to like supporting locally made drinks and in return these breweries, wineries, distilleries, and cideries give communities something to brag about that is hyper local. There is a pride of place that comes from being able to take visitors to your local drink maker: we make this, this is us. Much like the way we celebrated regional agricultural production in the past century with Garlic Festivals and crowning Corn Queens, the production of locally crafted alcohol reinforces, perpetuates, and displays ideas of local and regional identity to the world.

In assembling this journal, the editorial team is excited to include essays touching on cider, beer, spirits, and wine. We recognize that these are not the only forms of craft alcohol and view this special issue as part of a larger, on-going conversation. This issue leads off with a research note from Erika Goergen, bringing attention to the nature of apprenticeship in the craft beer community and how tradition, education, and modern science merge into a trade driven by a love of and dedication to beer. Traditional learning techniques are of great interest to folklorists and brewing provides an excellent opportunity to view folklore's twin laws in action as the teacher/brewer passes the literal and metaphorical brewer's stir paddle to the next generation who will expand and explore beer's traditional roots and develop potential breakthroughs.

The influence of women in craft beverage production is of particular interest to Maria Kennedy, who focuses in this issue on the rise of women in craft hard cider production. Kennedy spent several years studying the revival of craft hard cider both in the

United Kingdom and here in the States and her article explores how cider's initial obscurity in the world of hard beverages allowed more women to get a foothold in the industry at the beginning and to rise with its growth. Prior to her current position at Rutgers University she was the Folk Arts Coordinator for the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. There she was able to work on a Cider Festival and did extensive documentation and fieldwork amongst the orchards of the region with the men and women who were bringing cider back in popularity. Kennedy reflexively looks at the rise of women artisans in hard cider production and how they have developed structures to better support each other and make room at the table for more women.

Rather than relying on a sense of homegrown production for ingredients, a good number of craft breweries creatively and pragmatically blend local and regional identities and folklore with marketing strategies. This special issue includes two contributions exploring these techniques from both sides of the U.S.-Canada border. We begin by heading north to Newfoundland where Natalie Dignam examines how this province's burgeoning craft beer scene draws upon and celebrates its rich folklife traditions. Dignam notes how vernacular phrases, locations, regional practices, and foodways are increasingly incorporated into provincial brewers' marketing. Her passion for researching Newfoundland's craft beer developed into a master's thesis, podcast, and won her *NDiF*'s Bill Ellis Award in 2018.

Traveling to upstate New York, Anne Rappaport continues this important ethnographic conversation on craft beer and sense of place. In her article, Rappaport engages how craft brewing upstate draws upon and perpetuates a regional identity rooted in a nostalgic Adirondack aesthetic. She demonstrates how craft beers can simultaneously embody a region while reinforcing ideas and images that also promote a sense of unity amongst brewers despite the capitalist nature of an area heavily driven by tourism. While it may appear as though brewers are profiting off their culture through the use of regional and local iconography and performances, craft beers can serve as markers of esoteric and exoteric identities and pride in place.

When discussing notions of identity and place as it concerns alcohol, the concept of heritage is likely not far behind. Heritage, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998:149) observes, is a process wherein the past is given a "second life" through exhibition and is an

act which "produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past." For heritage to succeed, heritage transforms locations into a destination drawing visitors to the experience of a place (1998:153). What better way to explore this process than through a beverage distilled with an all-American spirit—moonshine? In her study, Caroline Hundley Miller looks at how Bear's Wallow Distillery in Gnaw Bone, Indiana, embraces the county's lawless past by safely re-packaging its product for appropriate tourism and lawful consumption. Bear's Wallow plays with the scandalous past to create a product and destination that consumers seek out.

Discussing and sharing one's fondness for the bounties of Bacchus has in recent years made the leap to the digital realm, going from barstools to memes. Folklore scholarship has greatly expanded into exploring how the internet creates and transmits vernacular culture (Blank 2013 and 2009; Howard 2011) and James B. Seaver rounds out this special issue by looking at the web-based expressive culture that has proliferated around "wine moms." Through jokes, references, memetic discourse, and parenting blogs, women are sharing complicated and stressful narratives about motherhood in the 21st century and the role drinking wine plays. Seaver's research presents an online community filled with rich, and often dark, humor. He critically observes using wine as a coping technique may signal a larger, systemic public health concern underlying the contemporary (and some might say impossible) challenge of balancing motherhood, career, family, and individual identity.

The discussions that follow are but a mere taste of the potential research folklorists can, and should, undertake with respect to craft alcohol consumption and production. There are so many topics that we would love to see colleagues explore, such as forms of play through drinking games which are rich folkloristic texts with a potential treasure trove of variation blending the institution and the vernacular. Festivals, for example, can, and often do, play important roles in the success of craft alcohol producers. The Great Tastes of the Midwest, hosted in Madison, Wisconsin, is anticipating hosting over 190 individual breweries from the region in 2020 (Great Taste of the Midwest 2019). Looking at these celebratory spaces can tell a lot about what sorts of identity is being marketed, who is and is not participating (or for that matter, invited), and how these events function. Challenge yourself to study your local Oktoberfest or beer competition.

Folklorists also need to be ever mindful of the voices that are not being heard, the narratives behind each grape, apple, grain, and hop harvested. Our discipline often situates itself in the trenches alongside those seeking workers' rights. The world of craft alcohol is no different, and we need to be prepared to join in these discussions as advocates when we can. Folklorists also can play a vital role in examining narratives and practices of physical and mental and behavioral health (Goldstein 2004; Kitta 2019). Here we can greatly influence policy and potentially save lives. There are so many fascinating and important topics to tap into, and the editorial team cannot wait to see what bubbles up in response to this special edition.

We hope the following research inspires you to carefully consider the traditions undertaken in your next happy hour, drink with a friend or loved one, or time unwinding at home. A lot of creative work is swirling around in that glass, connecting you to stories, people, and places. And please, remember to tip your bartenders and servers.

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*Kim D. Stryker is an independent folklorist with a BA in Anthropology and MAIS in Folklore Studies from George Mason University. She was honored as an "Outstanding Alumni" by GMU CHSS in 2017 and was awarded the Archie Green Fellowship in 2017-2018 for her documentation project "Winery Workers of Virginia" from the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Kim has worked extensively with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and organized the grassroots campaign "Save the Smithsonian Folklife Festival." Her research focus has been on agricultural production and agritainment. She is currently adjunct faculty teaching "Introduction to Folklore and Folklife" and "Food and Folklore" at GMU. Kim is also a*



*frequent public lecturer on folklore topics such as calendar traditions, Mardi Gras, and rabbits. She lives in Falls Church, Virginia.*

*Jared L. Schmidt is a PhD Candidate in Folklore Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He holds two master's degrees, one in Applied Anthropology from Minnesota State University, Mankato, and a second in Comparative Literature and Folklore Studies (Folklore Option) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He also holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. His research interests include heritage, museum studies, foodways, and digital folklore. Jared's dissertation focuses on the occupational folklife of costumed third-person interpreters at a living history farm, Old World Wisconsin. He currently lives in Oregon.*

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## Figures



Fig. 1.1—Historic brewers conducting a demonstration at Old World Wisconsin. It should be noted that the brewers are situated in the "Life on the Farms" area of the museum, a space which features three recreated German and one Polish immigrant farmsteads comprised of relocated vernacular structures.  
(Photo credit Old World Wisconsin.)





Fig. 1.2—(Left to Right) Nate Warnke, owner and brewer, Jaimie Fairbanks, Front of House Manager, and Chuck Benedict, shift lead, bartender, and bowtie aficionado, prepare to pour beer at Oktoberfest in Madison, Wisconsin, (Photo credit Rockhound Brewing Co., 2019.)





Fig. 1.3—Brewery stickers are a popular and easy souvenir and marketing device used by craft breweries. Brewery staff may also exchange stickers with other establishments for display. Rockhound Brewing Company places the stickers collected by staff on the door to the walk-in cooler located in the brewery.

(Rockhound Brewing Company, 2017. Photo Credit: Jared L. Schmidt.)



Fig. 1.4—Eric Botts and Meg Sipos tasting wines at Rappahannock Cellars in Huntly, Virginia.  
(Photo credit Kim D. Stryker, 2017.)





Fig. 1.5—Display of wine competition medals at Revalation Vineyards tasting room in Madison, Virginia.  
(Photo credit Kim D. Stryker, 2017.)



Fig. 1.6—Wayfinding sign connecting traditional wine growing regions to Virginia at Rappahanock Cellars, Huntly, Virginia.  
(Photo credit Kim D. Stryker, 2017.)





Fig. 1.7—Merchandise for sale at the Naked Mountain Winery and Vineyards in Markham, Virginia, demonstrating clever wordplay with local landmarks.  
(Photo credit Kim D. Stryker, 2017.)



Fig. 1.8—The upscale tasting room at Greenhill Winery & Vineyards in posh Middleburg, Virginia. Middleburg is known for wealthy estates and English style equestrian culture. (Photo credit Kim D. Stryker, 2017.)