

**WILD, WILD, JUNCTION
HISTORICAL MYSTERY TOUR**

By Neil Ross

*It's gonna be fierce up there,
Ten thousand men out on a tear,
CPR boys loaded for bear.
Last call before the Junction goes dry.
There's mud in the street;
Here's mud in your eye.
Great Canadian party, eh?
It's the Local Option Fling!
You hear 'Up the Rebellion'
But 'God Save the King.'*

From *Last Call (Before the Junction Goes Dry)*

It was a night of Legend, the night they closed the bars in the Junction. The newspapers claimed ten thousand men in the streets. The women weren't even counted although they'd made their voice heard. The Junction was about to embark on a dry sea of temperance: the Local Option. The hotels were closing their bars and the neighbourhood blind pigs were just thinking about opening.

These days your true historian, will pooh pooh the notion of ten thousand in the Junction, although no less a source than the New York Times will tell you that 250,000 show up annually for the Junction Arts Festival. The Toronto papers were right there, one on one on the action, and if they happened to be counting double by the end of the night, they were barely half there by the next morning so that evened things out.

We'll be making a moderate return to that night as we follow the path to temperance with what else, a pub crawl. Our fall fund raiser, **Wild, Wild, Junction, a Historical Mystery Tour** will tackle some of the great mysteries of the Junction. Chief of Police Josiah Royce (Ron Clark) will lead a group of adventurous souls from tavern to saloon as the Legends of the Junction return to regale us with tales of the wide open railway town that was. Perhaps the most intriguing mystery we'll be following is what led the Junction to ban the sale of alcohol for almost a hundred years.

We'll begin with the suspicious death that led the town to its appointment with abstinence. Once again, Chief Royce will investigate and ask **Who Killed Joe Curley?** that night outside the Subway Hotel just north of Keele and Dundas.

We'll sit wide eyed and just a little prurient as the Reverend Shore preaches his famous sermon in which he castigates the Junction as a "**Cesspool of Harlotry Iniquity and Vice.**"

We'll shudder at tales of a weekend long dispute over a prostitute (See: Harlotry, above) between cattlemen from Union Station and railway workers from the CPR that ended in the **Brawl at Heydon House.**

We'll end the night where the Local Option began as we relive **Last Call Before the Junction Goes Dry** in which all the mysteries will be solved. Or dismissed as too murky to understand.

Now, the logistics of the thing are very simple. Tickets are just \$25. and you purchase your own libations. For a ticket, just send a cheque or money order to: WTJHS, 145 Annette Street, Toronto ON, M6P 1P3. Or drop by our booth at the Junction Arts Festival, Sept 12 and 13.

Or join us at the beginning of our "wetting" at the Troubadour bar at 2:00 pm on Sunday, Oct. 25 as we begin an historical, musical, poetic, architectural and libatious tour of the town that is dry no more.

We'll be joined on the tour in protest by members of the Women's Temperance Movement who will make a strong case for reconsidering.

On the tour we will be joining various drunks who drink a case against it.

NOTE: The poem at the start of this piece can be found on video at wtjhs.ca. Just scroll down on the homepage to *Last Call (Before the Junction Goes Dry.)*

Wild, Wild Junction, an Historical Mystery Tour. 2PM, Sunday, Oct. 25, beginning at the Troubadour, 3071 Dundas West (south side just east of Quebec.)