

PROHIBITION & ORGANIZED CRIME

By: Paige

SPEAKEASIES:

- Speakeasies were underground establishments where people could go to drink and party without the worry or hassle of law enforcement.
- By the middle of the 1920's there was thought to be about 100,000 speakeasies in New York city alone. In order to obtain the illegal alcohol at these establishments, you first needed to know where to go and you needed to know the password.

SPEAKEASIES, CONTINUED:

- In some speakeasies, owners had alarm buttons to push if there ever was a raid. The owner or the doorman could hit the button and make the secret caches of liquor close so that the police could not arrest them. These alarm systems were cheaper than bribery.

BOOTLEGGERS:

- The term bootleggers refers to people who illegally buy or distribute alcohol.
- Girls who bootlegged were often Flappers, but men were popular for this illegal act. Al Capone was one of the biggest bootleggers known to date, grossing \$100 million per year.
- The alcohol was sometimes smuggled by putting it in small canisters in disguise, Like stuffed animals, and books.
- Bootlegging became a thing of the past in 1933, when the 18th amendment was repealed.

AL CAPONE:

YOUNG LIFE:

- Al Capone is America's most notorious gangster from the 1920's. He was the single greatest symbol of law in the US prohibition era. Lending Chicago its reputation as "the lawless city," Capone had the leading role in illegal actions.
- Capone was born on January 17, 1899, in Brooklyn, New York. Baptized "Alphonsus Capone" grew up in a rough neighborhood. Although he was bright, he was a member of two kid gangs; the Brooklyn Rippers and the Forty Thieves Juniors; and quit school in the sixth grade at age 14.
- Between 'scams' Capone held fair jobs, such as being a clerk in a candy store, a pin-boy in a bowling alley and a cutter in a book bindery. While working at the Harvard Inn as a bouncer and a bartender, Capone received his infamous facial scars and henceforth the name Scarface.

MAE:



- Capone met an Irish girl named Mary “Mae” Coughlin in 1918, the following December she gave birth to his first son, Albert “Sonny” Francis on the 4th, 1918. Capone and Mae got married 26 days later on December 30th.

TORRIO:

- While working for Frankie Yale, Capone hospitalized a rival gang member. Yale sent him to Chicago to wait until things cooled off. Capone moved his family to Chicago. Capone arrived in 1919 and started off work for Yale's old mentor, John Torrio.
- Capone was seen for his true potential and helped Torrio manage his bootlegging business. By mid-1922 Capone rose to Torrio's number two man, and eventually he became a full partner in the saloons, gambling houses, and brothels.
- Torrio was shot by two rival gang members and decided to flee Chicago, leaving Capone to inherit the "outfit" and become "The Big Fellow." Capone quickly showed the outfit's men that he was better at organization than Torrio, expanding the city's vice industry. Capone had his hand in a little of everything from Speakeasies to nightclubs, and breweries, grossing approximately \$100,000,000 a year.

FLORIDA:

- Chicago mayor William “Big Bill” Hale Thompson, Jr. decided that Capone was bad for his political image, and hired a new police chief to run him out of Chicago. In 1928, Capone found out that he wasn’t very popular in much of the country, and he finally decided on estate in Florida.
- Moving to Florida didn’t keep Capone or his influence out of Chicago permanently. On February 14, 1929 four of Capone’s men gunned down 6 rival gang members and a mechanic in what swept the nation in newspapers as The St. Valentine’s Day Massacre. Capone couldn’t be charged for he had an alibi and was in Florida during the Massacre.

CAPONE AT HEART:

- Capone ordered dozens of deaths and killed many with his own hands. But more often than not he treated people fairly and generously. Equally known for his violent temper, he had a strong sense of loyalty and honor.
- After the stock market crash in 1929, Capone was the first to open soup kitchens. He also ordered merchants to give clothes and food to the needy at his own expense.

1930'S

- In 1931, Capone was indicted for income tax evasion for the years 1925 to 1929. Also charged with a misdemeanor of failing to file tax returns for the years 1928 and 1929. The government charged Capone \$215,080.48 in taxes alone from his gambling profits, and all because Frank Wilson from the IRS's Special Intelligence Unit accidentally found a cash receipt ledger that contained Capone's name.
- A third indictment was added, and they charged Capone with conspiracy to violate Prohibition laws from 1922 to 1931. All of which lead to Capone spending 10 years in federal prison, and 1 year in county jail. He also had to pay a total of \$57,692.29 in fines and prosecution costs.
- While in prison he was the ideal prisoner. While at Alcatraz, Capone showed signs of syphilitic dementia.
- Capone died January 25, 1947 when pneumonia set in after a stroke that almost took his life on it's own.



AL CAPONE

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE:

- On February 14, 1929, five of Capone's men gunned down six Moran's gang members and a mechanic in a garage at 2122N. Clark Street. The building was the main liquor headquarters of bootlegger George "Bugs" Moran's North Side gang. Because two of Capone's men were dressed in police uniform, the victim's thought it was a police raid. They dropped their guns and put their hands against the wall. Firing more than 150 bullets into the victim's, Capone's men used two shotguns and three machine guns.
- Six of the victim's were members of the rival gang, the seventh victim, John May, was a mechanic and an unlucky friend of Moran. Moran, most likely the target was across the street when Capone's men showed up.
- Capone of course had an alibi and was never really charged with the crime.



ST. VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

ELIOT NESS:

UNTOUCHABLES:

- The U.S. Justice Department organized a new force to enforce prohibition in Chicago. A group of men working under Eliot Ness, were known as the Untouchables because they were believed to be untouched by corruption. One of the first agents assigned to the team was Al Wolff.

TOUCHABLE AT LAST:

- Organized crime infiltrated the ranks of federal agents and local police. Law official's were underpaid and overworked, making resisting temptation and pressure of wealth hard.
- Al Wolff recalled many times when the team would set up a "hit" and when they got there the place would be empty. He felt that there were leaks among the Untouchables, and that corrupt informers would warned the gang's about raids.



THE UNTOUCHABLES

TEXAS GUINAN:

MARY LOUISE CECILIA GUINAN:

- Mary was born on January 12, 1884 in Waco, Texas to Michael Guinan and Bessie Duffy, who emigrated from Quebec, Canada.
- In 1917 Mary became a silent film actress in western based productions. Her first film appearance was in The Wildcat. Guinan's first big role was in The fuel of life.
- It wasn't until the 1920's that Guinan became a legendary figure of the prohibition era.

- For violations of the Prohibition laws, Guinan was arrested in 1927. Guinan had never drank a day in her life, but she bought and sold alcohol in her nightclub. Eventually the police let her go with no sufficient evidence to keep her.
- For years to come after the prohibition era, Guinan was still talked about and had movies made about her.

IZZY AND MOE:

- Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith, Two federal prohibition agents famous for their devotion to enforcing the law. They were similar in appearance as well, they were both short men, each weighed over 200 pounds. Despite being well known they still caught many bootleggers and bar owners by disguising themselves. They dressed up as gravediggers, musicians, and truck drivers.
- For example, on one occasion Izzy, Moe, and 10 other agents dressed up as a football team and barged into a speakeasy in the bronx. When they ordered up their drinks, the bartender served them and was arrested.
- Even famous for their humor and effectiveness, they were responsible for more than 20% of the arrests in New York City.
- Izzy once spoke of a battered Ford being responsible for one arrest. Making a deal with the owner of the Ford and then wanting to celebrate over the closed deal. He got the bartender to serve them drinks which landed him in jail.



IZZY AND MOE