

The Roarin' 20s

A History of Prohibition & Organized Crime in
the 1920's

By Tory

The 18th Amendment

- ✦ The 18th Amendment was ratified on January 16, 1919, and went into effect a year from that date, January 16, 1920. It prohibited the sale, manufacturing, and transportation of alcoholic beverages or “intoxicating liquors,” and is subsequently referred to as “Prohibition.” It was put into effect in order to help prevent families from the effects of alcohol abuse. (See specifics of the 18th Amendment below)
- ✦ Amendment XVIII:
 - ✦ “Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.”
 - ✦ “Section 2. The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”
 - ✦ “Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.”



<http://home.hiwaay.net/~craig/g4c/rant-Java.htm>

Speakeasies

Despite the new laws put in place by the Prohibition, people still found ways to purchase alcohol. "Speakeasies" were underground drinking establishments, where people could purchase illegal alcohol. Alcohol was smuggled from Canada to these speakeasies. One could get into a speakeasy if they had the password. Many of the gangsters of the 1920s, such as Al Capone, made quite a large profit off of selling black market alcohol in underground establishments. Larger speakeasies, such as the Cotton Club, featured musical entertainment by famous jazz musicians of the time, like Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. They were the hotspot of the 1920s, attracting crowds made up of people from all classes and backgrounds of the time.



<http://thefreegeorge.com/thefreegeorge/shhh-its-a-speakeasy-art-in-the-public-eye-fundraiser/>

Bootleggers

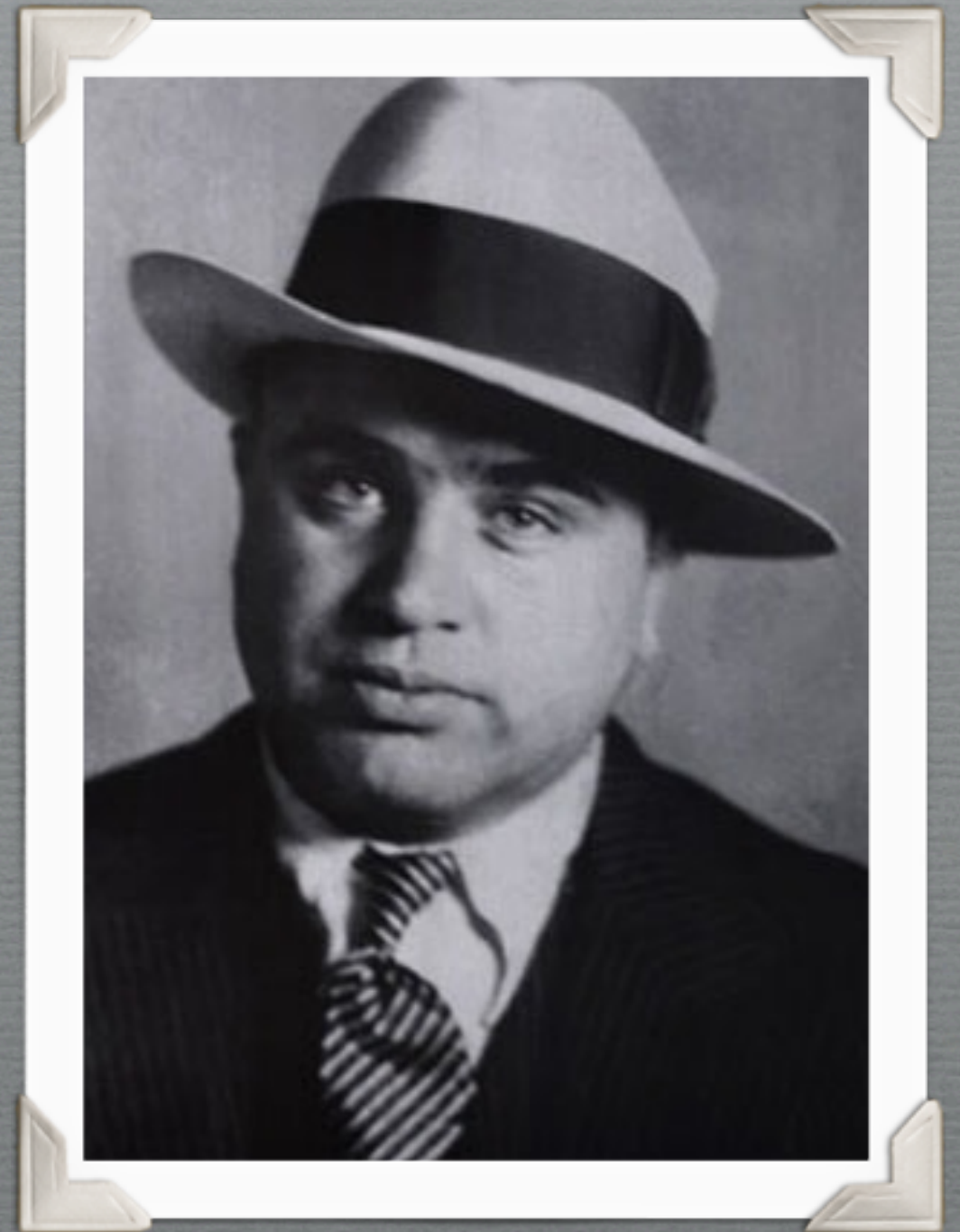
- ♦ Not only was alcohol smuggled from Canada in the 1920s, but also Mexico and the West Indies. The act of smuggling illegal alcohol was called “bootlegging,” and it was as lucrative as it was illegal. Bootlegging also involved illegal distilling and brewing of alcohol. This allowed many crime bosses and gangsters to be very successful and provided them with opportunity to make money. Bootlegging helped gangsters and mob bosses such as Al Capone and Legs Diamond to rise to the top financially and power-wise.



<http://www.drugrehabilitationtoday.com/evolution-of-treatment-for-addiction/responses-to-prohibition/>

Al Capone

Al Capone joined mob boss, Johnny Torrio in Chicago in 1920 as part of the Colosimo mob. After Torrio was wounded in by an attempt on his life in 1925, Capone succeeded him as mob boss. He began bringing \$100,000,000 a year to the through speakeasies, bootlegging, race tracks, brothels, nightclubs and other businesses. He was known for killing his enemies when they came to power but he never failed to have an alibi. He was behind the St. Valentine's Day Massacre, which occurred on, you guessed it, February 14, 1929. Seven men, 6 of them being part of Capone's rival's gang were killed with shotguns and machine guns by Capone's men. Capone was never convicted for this crime, as he was in Florida when it happened. Capone was a very powerful man in the 1920s and is still very well known today as one of the most powerful mob bosses in history.



<http://enosburgreading.pbworks.com/w/page/31654384/Al-Capone-Does-My-Shirts>

St. Valentine's Day Massacre

- ♦ The Saint Valentine's Day Massacre occurred on February 14, 1929. Four of Capone's men, two dressed as police officers, burst into Capone's business enemy, Moran's warehouse in Chicago. They told the seven men inside (6 being Moran's men, 1 unlucky passerby) that they were conducting a routine raid, and had them stand against the wall. Capone's men killed the seven men by shooting them to death with machine guns. Capone was not charged because he was conveniently in Miami when this occurred. This was an extremely large scandal in the 1920s, and one that got even more people against mob boss, Capone.



<http://www.myalcaponemuseum.com/id27.htm>

Eliot Ness

- ♦ Eliot Ness became part of law enforcement in the 1920s. He got a job in the Prohibition Bureau with the aid of Officer Alexander Jamie, his influential brother-in-law. He helped convict the criminals in the vast bootlegging industry of the time. In 1929, President Hoover insisted that the FBI put an end to Al Capone's bootlegging operations, and Eliot Ness began to lead a team that helped do just that. He assembled a team that sought to take down Capone's breweries and hard liquor operations. Ness and his men shut down Capone's breweries through raids, one by one, making several arrests of Capone's workers. Since Capone needed these raids to stop but wasn't about to kill federal agents, he offered Ness and his men \$2000 a week to leave him alone. Ness and his men, who only made \$2,800 a year turned him down. Ness made this public to show Chicago and the mobsters that there were still police with integrity left. Due to this move, the team became known as "The Untouchables," which was the title of the book that Ness wrote about hunting down Al Capone and his gang, years later. Al Capone and his gang made several attempts on Ness' life, after Ness continued to work against Capone. In 1931, Capone was finally convicted on tax evasion.



<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~1930s2/time/1929/1929fr.html>

Texas Guinan

Texas Guinan was a flashy singer, actress and a speakeasy hostess in the 1920s. She was born in Texas but moved to New York around 1920. She played several starring roles on Broadway and worked as a hostess and an MC in speakeasies. She joined forces with mobster, Larry Fay, to work as a hostess at his nightclub, El Fay. She had bleach blonde hair, and wore shiny outfits and outlandish hats. She attracted many customers with her sharp wit and spunky personality. Fay gave her a line of 40 chorus girls to work with and they attracted all kinds of people to El Fay. She was arrested many times for working at a speakeasy, and these arrests along with her reputation as a hostess made her very famous in the 20s.



<http://media.photobucket.com/image/texas%20guinan/Kuriozidee/Mob/TexasGuinan.jpg>

Izzy & Moe

- ♦ Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith were famous Prohibition agents in the early 1920s. Unlike most officers who enforced prohibition, they were well liked by the public because of their undeniable charisma. Moe was a more serious officer, and the only one out of the two of them who carried a gun. Izzy was infamous for his plethora of disguises which he used to get bartenders to serve him drinks so he could arrest them. He posed as characters such as a football player, a doctor, an extra in a movie, a rabbi, a lawyer, an unemployed man, etc. Together they made over 4,000 arrests of speakeasy owners, bootleggers and bartenders. They were hypocritical in that, they too drank illegal alcohol on a regular basis. They were friendly with newspeople who wrote about their shenanigans, which people loved to follow. They got a lot of publicity which tended to make other distinguished Prohibition officers angry. They were discharged in 1925 for not being dignified enough for the service.



The End