
The Origin Of The United State's Prohibition Era

Prohibition

The purpose of this paper is to tell about Prohibition, tell about early prohibition, and about the 18th Amendment. I'll also tell about the mob involvement in Prohibition and the steps towards repeal.

Prohibition started before it even started. Prior to the Civil War, most states enacted in prohibition laws, but most of them were repealed before 1865. Then in 1900, Maine, Kansas, and North Dakota adopted a firm prohibition law. Then in 1907, Georgia adopted one. In 1908, in Oklahoma, and in 1909 Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee did adopt one too.

Andrew Volstead of Minnesota introduced the act in 1919 to Congress and forever after was called the Volstead Act. The law defined as it prohibited "intoxicating liquors" as those with an alcoholic content of more than 0.5 percent, although it made concessions for liquors sold for medical and industrial purpose, and for fruit and grape drinks prepared in homes for personal use. The hope of the Volstead Act was the reduce public drunkness and of alcohol-related crime, imprisonments, and hospitalizations.

To enforce this law the government hired federal agents to enforce different areas of the Unites States. The agents had the power to take the police on a raid of a suspected "speakeasy" (an illegal bar) or a suspected warehouse. Officially at midnight on January 16, 1920, America went dry. "Prohibition is better than no liquor at all." as Will Rogers

Then came along the people to fill in the large demand for liquor and the Mob looked at this as a big step for them. A lot of the big names began when they were very young. Sherman Billingsley began when he was twelve years old. He sold bootleg liquor out of a drugstore. He was arrested first in Seattle for breaking liquor laws. By the age of 17, he ran bootleg liquor from Canada to three speakeasies that he was running. Then at age 19, he went back to selling medical liquor, but now on the Bronx.

From there Sherman Billingsley made another step. He became the owner and founder of the Stock Club, located in New York. The Stock Club was the most famous speakeasy in America. People from all around tried to get into Billingsley's club.

Another man who was very big at this time was George Remus. He never graduated from high

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school, but he became one of the richest men of the time. He went to night school and studied law, while running two drugstores, and acting as an unlicensed doctor and also raising a family. At the age of 24, he admitted himself to the Illinois bar and started his own business. One of Remus's clients was Johnny Touris, one of Chicago's first bootleggers and speakeasy king. When Johnny and one of his men got into trouble Remus tried to get them off. After about a year Remus realized how big the market was. Because Remus saw how big the market was he moved to Cleveland and started buying all the distilleries that he could find throughout America.

Of all the distilleries that Remus bought were the Fleischmann, Old Lexington Club, Rugby, Glendale, and the Squibb, which was the largest in the country. The Fleischmann cost him \$197,000, but it came with thirty-one hundred barrels. "We never poisoned anybody. We sold good liquor and we didn't cut it." George Remus said to one of his workers in the large number of alcohol poisoning related deaths. By 1922 George Remus had a monopoly on whiskey. The only downfall of George Remus was his over-confidence and his excessive greed. And because of this he went to Atlanta for two years for bootlegging.

During prohibition the mobsters fought to control the market. In Chicago, the fight was between Dion O'Banion and highly respected Al Capone. The biggest battle between the two superpowers was the St. Valentine Day Massacre. In Chicago alone there were over 500 murders during prohibition.

For the mobsters to stay in business they had to pay off cops to stay out of their business activities. They's pay them less than three thousand a year, but during the time that was plenty for the cops. And come of the mobsters payed off district attorneys and other people high in command anywhere from \$40,000 to \$50,000 to wear "blindens".

But there was some law in the United Stated. Two federal agents from New York, named Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith, made over 4,000 arrests.

As whiskey was coming from Canada there was rum coming from the Caribbean. The king of the Rum runners was named Bill McCoy. McCoy's operation was to take the loaded boat from the Caribbean up to the New York area and then a bunch of smell boats would come out to his boat and unload the run and within hours, it was sold.

Just as fast as prohibition became a law, when time came for repeal, it was repealed just as fast. Groups like the Anti-Saloon League (ASL) and the Association Against the Prohibition

Amendment (AAPA) succeed with the repeal vote, with seventy-three percent in favor of the 21st Amendment. On December 5, 1933, President Roosevelt signed the proclamation ending prohibition. The "Noble" experiment didn't end with a band, but rather the sound of corks

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popping and glasses clinking.

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