

Wets vs Dries

Prohibition Divides America

Gentlemen, I refuse to sign any pledge. I have never been drunk, and, by the blessing of God, I never will get drunk, but I have a constitutional privilege to get drunk, and that privilege I will not sign away.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1859



While the Temperance Movement is generally associated with women, men played a vital role nationally in getting Prohibition passed. IMAGE COURTESY JOHN BINDER COLLECTION.

Since the beginning of America, there has been a pronounced rift between drinkers, the Wets, and those who believe that alcohol consumption should be tempered or altogether outlawed, the Dries. The Dries have always been more organized in their anti-liquor stance, the Wets often reacting to their latest campaign by ignoring it altogether.

The Dries usually had experts in their corner to champion their cause, such as Dr. Benjamin Rush, one of the first American physicians to write against the use of alcohol. In his 1785 *Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits Upon the Human Body and Mind*, he outlined the symptoms of drinking liquor, including "profane swearing," "immodest actions" and "temporary fits of madness."

Temperance opponents staked their claim, calling out the unconstitutional nature of Prohibition and believing that God gave them the right to "enjoy the fruits of the Earth."

From the 1870s to the 1910s, socialism, feminism, and unions were used both by the Dries and Wets to strengthen their platforms. Temperance leaders assured women they could reclaim their homes by ridding the country of alcohol, and Wet leaders argued that home life would be destroyed once personal liberties were removed through legislation.

At the start of World War I, the Temperance Movement used racist tactics to build national support for Prohibition. German-Americans, who at the time owned or controlled nearly 80% of all the saloons and breweries in the country, were cast and attacked as traitors. Temperance groups used propaganda to denounce German-Americans as the "fifth column" of the Kaiser's army. They called for an end to the production of beer and whiskey, claiming that wheat and corn would better serve the U.S. war effort.

"WET" OR "DRY"

"VOTE WET FOR MY SAKE!"



"VOTE DRY FOR MINE!"



Shall the Mothers and Children be Sacrificed to the Financial Greed of the Liquor Traffic?

IT IS UP TO YOU, VOTER, TO DECIDE

VOTE . DRY

At the turn of the century, America was generally divided into Wet or Dry factions, those who drank and those who were against drinking. PRO-DRY POSTER, c. 1920.

-F. Scott Fitzgerald

then the drink takes you.

then the drink takes a drink,

First you take a drink,

Uncle Sam's Census Figures Say—

If the money now invested in the liquor industry were invested in the average American industry—

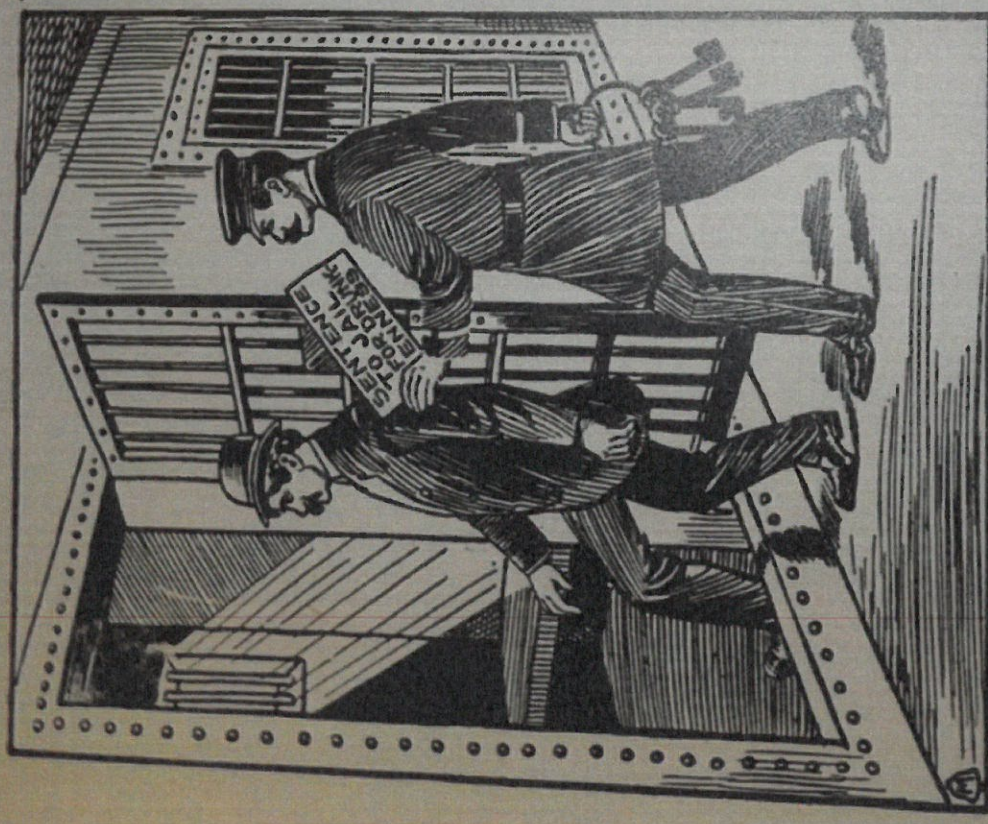
FOUR TIMES AS MANY WORKERS WOULD BE EMPLOYED.

FOUR TIMES AS MUCH WAGES WOULD BE EARNED.

FOUR TIMES AS MUCH RAW MATERIAL WOULD BE REQUIRED.

How can more workers employed, more wages earned, and more raw materials required, create a labor panic?

If You Believe That the Traffic in Alcohol Does More Harm Than Good—**HELP STOP IT!**



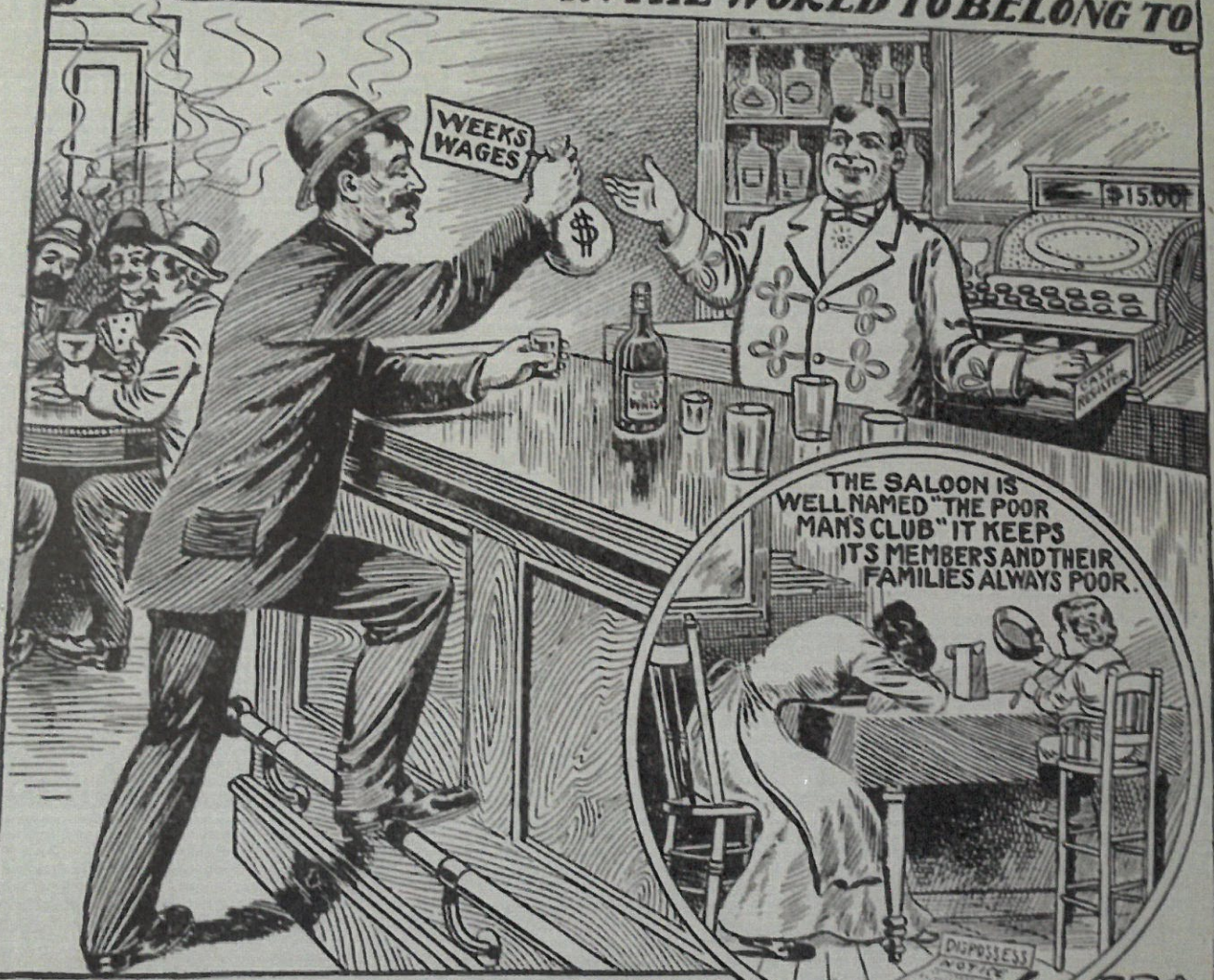
**INSTEAD OF LOCKING UP THE
MAN FOR DRINKING WOULDNT
IT BE BETTER TO —**



**LOCK UP THE SALOON AND
LET THE MAN GO TO WORK
TO SUPPORT HIS FAMILY.**

TWO KINDS OF BARS

"THE POOR MAN'S CLUB"
THE MOST EXPENSIVE IN THE WORLD TO BELONG TO

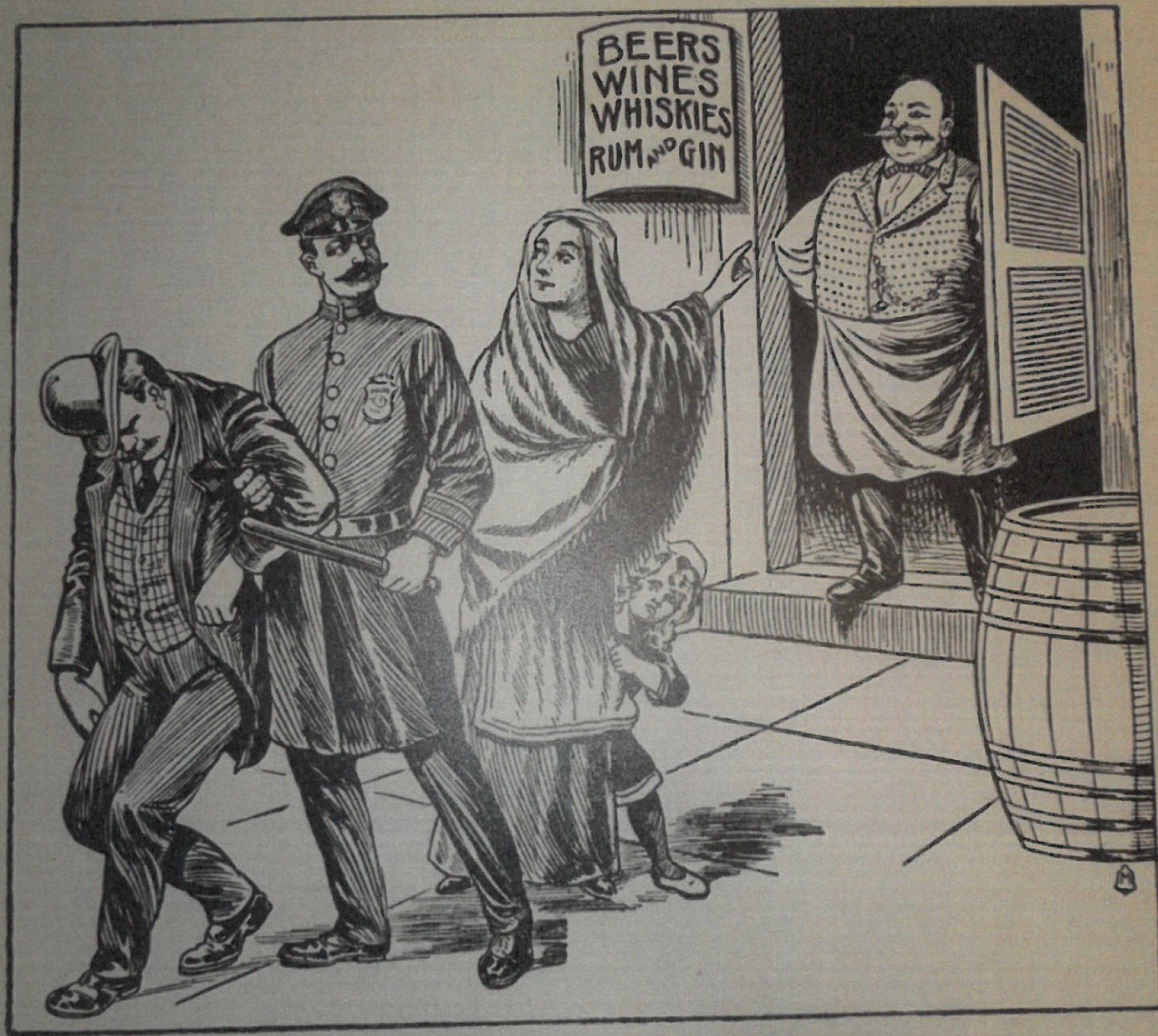


A CLUB MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING
"PAYING HIS DUES"

THE SALOON IS
WELL NAMED "THE POOR
MAN'S CLUB" IT KEEPS
ITS MEMBERS AND THEIR
FAMILIES ALWAYS POOR.

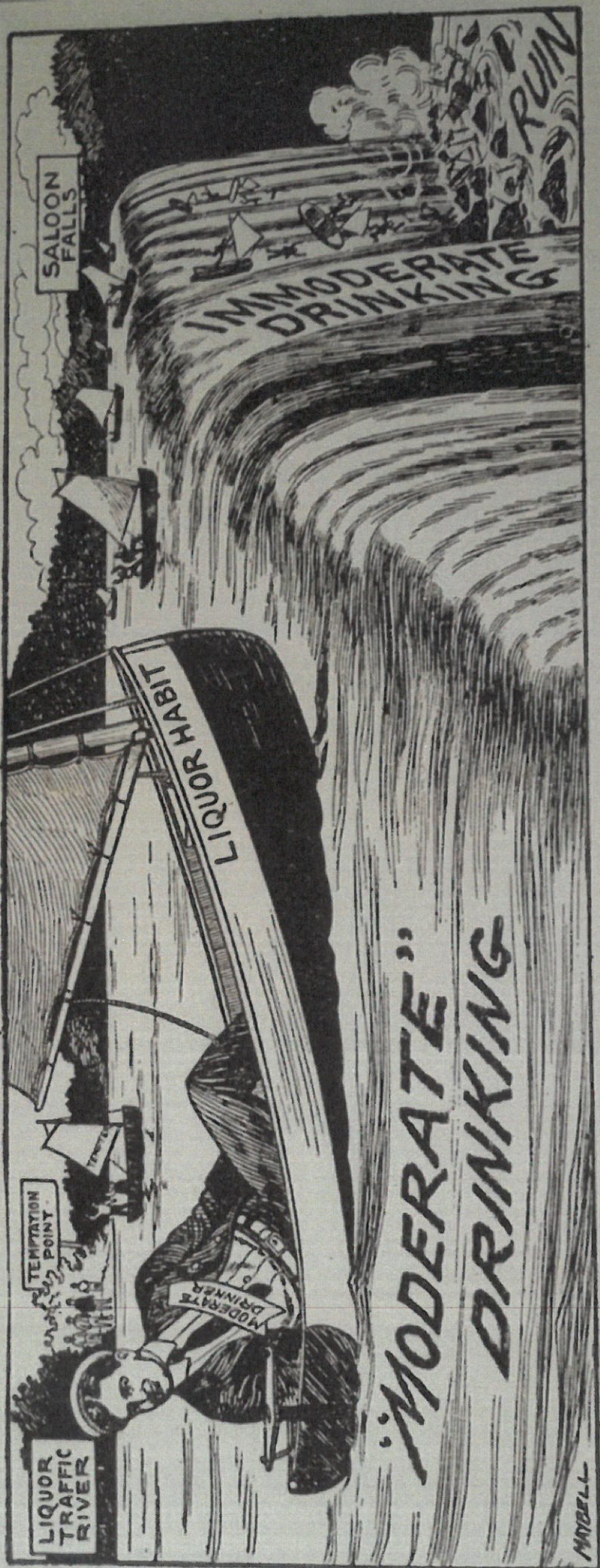
SLAVES OF THE SALOON

6



THE WRONG MAN ARRESTED

7



ALCOHOL IS A DECEIVER

"For myself, if booze ever comes back to the United States, I am through with manufacturing. I wouldn't be interested in putting automobiles into the hands of a generation soggy with drink."

— Henry Ford, Ford Motor Co.



"MR. BOTTLE, YOU ARE MY STRONGEST ALLY"




Sugar Girls, June 23, 1917

Children carry banners at a Prohibition rally. The banners read *Do Right and Fear Not* and *We Children Want Sugar Don't Waste it On Beer*, in reference to the sugar that was used for liquor manufacturing rather than candy.

Image courtesy Hulton Archive, Getty Images

HELP ME to keep Him
PURE



**PLEASE
VOTE
NO LICEN**

When the OTHER Man Drinks:

It lowers YOUR wages—
because boozers decrease average wage paid.

It increases YOUR taxes—
because the state cares for liquor's wreckage.

It boosts YOUR grocery bill—
because store-keepers increase prices to make up unpaid bills of drunkards.

It increases YOUR life insurance premiums—
because shortened lives of boozers raise average expense of life insurance.

Isn't it YOUR business if OTHER men drink?

If You Believe That the Traffic in Alcohol Does More Harm Than Good—HELP STOP IT!

Prohibition will work great injury to the cause of Temperance. It is a species of intemperance within itself, for it goes beyond the bounds of reason in that it attempts to control a man's appetite by legislation and makes a crime out of things that are not crimes. A prohibition law strikes a blow at the very principles upon which our government was founded.

Abraham Lincoln,
December 18, 1840

**"Prohibition only drives drunkenness
behind doors and into dark places, and
does not cure it or even diminish it."**

~ Mark Twain

"Does anyone really believe it is the function of Government to regulate the habits and appetites of the people rather than provide them with jobs."

- Danish Times

DESTRUCTION \$150000 OF WHISKEY, GIRARD, ALA.

3960-10



Last Call for Alcohol

The 18th Amendment Bars the Bars

*The prohibitionists say that the liquor issue is as dead as slavery.
The wet people say that liquor can be obtained anywhere. You'd think they'd both be satisfied.*

—MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS, OCTOBER 7, 1920, MIAMI HERALD



Just prior to Prohibition taking effect, liquor stores across the nation sold their stock for pennies on the dollar to a frenzy of buyers, including these citizens of Detroit heading a last call in January 1920. IMAGE COURTESY WALTER P. REUTHER LIBRARY.

The passage of Prohibition was celebrated by Temperance groups as a victory one hundred years in the making. For others, the 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution marked a radical turn in American life. For the first time since colonial rule, the federal government had voted to restrict the civil rights of American citizens everywhere.

On the eve of January 17, 1920, the day Prohibition took effect, hundreds of Temperance movement supporters gathered in Washington D.C. to celebrate their triumph.

The liquor industry, the fifth largest in the country, was now illegal, but not altogether dead. Most Americans did their



Prohibition agency official closes a bar in January 1920.



The beginning of the end for booze was the states' ratification of the 18th amendment that set the stage for national Prohibition. THE AMERICAN ISSUE, JANUARY 25, 1919.

best to obey Prohibition laws in the beginning, but this didn't last long. From the very beginning, enforcing Prohibition was a monumental challenge. Even so, the Temperance community remained optimistic.

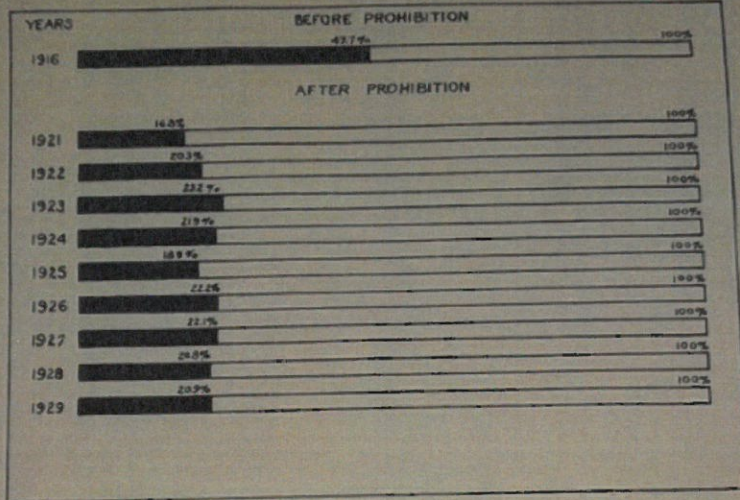
The slums will
soon be only a memory. We will turn our
prisons into factories and our jails into
storehouses and corn cribs. Men will walk
upright now, women will smile and the children
will laugh. Hell will be forever for rent.

— Billy Sunday, Jan. 16, 1920
hours before Prohibition passed

Prohibition Helps Children

Reduces Cruelty, Due to Intemperance, 50%

Experience of Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.



Black sections show the percentage of cases in which "serious intemperance" was the cause of the abuse or neglect of children, before and after prohibition.

What the Society's Secretary Says

"At all times since National Prohibition, intemperance, as it affects our work, has been reduced to less than half of what it was before.

"National Prohibition, poorly enforced as it may be in Massachusetts, has by so much reduced child abuse and neglect caused by intemperance as seen in our work, and has contributed greatly to the peace, comfort and happiness of mothers and children.

"These are benefits which cannot be ignored."

General Secretary's Annual Report, 1928.

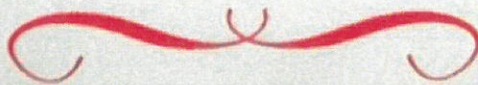
Official statistics of Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Annual Report, 1928.

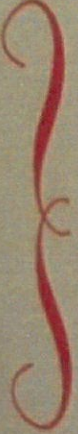
Prepared by the Scientific Temperance Federation. Distributed by the Constitution Defense Committee, 344 Tremont Building, Boston.

Whiskey Doctors

The American Medical Association aligned itself with the Temperance movement by 1917, claiming alcoholic tonics had no scientific value.

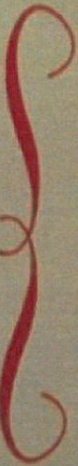
Nevertheless, when Congress enacted Prohibition two years later, the law made an exception for medical use. Suddenly, doctors across the country were treating an array of minor conditions and mystery ailments. Licensed physicians armed with pads of government-issued prescription forms directed patients to take doses of medicinal booze to treat everything from sprained ankles to old age. Many distilleries shuttered by Prohibition converted their operations to produce federally approved medicinal liquor.





Big Breweries Survive Prohibition

America's big breweries prepared for Prohibition by flipping their business models to make brand new products with little modification to their factory machinery. Budweiser produced frozen egg products, Pabst made cheese, Coors manufactured malted milk, Yuengling made ice cream, Stroh's, Schlitz and Blue Ribbon produced malted syrup (critical for home brewing), and Anheuser-Busch brewed Bevo and Du Bois, popular near-beer beverages.



The Cost of Prohibition

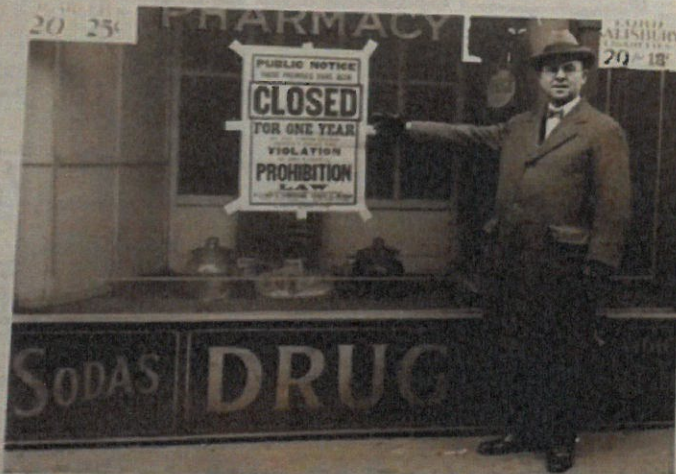
At least a billion dollars a year is lost to the National Government and the several States and counties in excise taxes. The liquor traffic is going on just the same. This amount goes into the pockets of bootleggers and in the pockets of the public officials in the shape of graft.

—FIORELLA H. LAGUARDIA, 1926, U.S. CONGRESSMAN, NEW YORK, CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON PROHIBITION

The 18th Amendment brought false promises to the nation. Leading up to its passage, Temperance leaders and government officials had assured the country that Prohibition would create an economic boom for the nation, but instead the impact was immediately negative.

Barrel and bottle makers, wheat and corn growers, hops and barley farmers, waitresses, truck drivers, warehouse owners and hoteliers all stood to lose millions. The closing of breweries, distilleries and wineries across the country practically shuttered the liquor industry overnight. There was loss of family pride, too - breweries and distilleries were largely run by immigrant families, the only occupation they knew. Thousands were forced to find new ways to make a living.

Restaurants went under because profit sales floundered without liquor on the menu. People simply didn't go out to dinner, but rather hosted home parties where alcohol was served privately. Theaters expected an upsurge in business from



A drugstore in New York is shuttered for violating Prohibition laws. IMAGE COURTESY GETTY IMAGES.

people looking for things to do other than drink, but moviegoers dropped off significantly. Household products, clothing and the real estate market all saw a decline in profits.


Before the 18th Amendment was passed, many State governments relied on alcohol excise taxes. After 1920, this revenue was entirely lost. States where large breweries and distilleries operated, like New Jersey, Illinois and Wisconsin, saw their operating budgets gutted. New York's budget was practically built on liquor taxes, making up some 75% of the total revenue.



A liquor import store in Ohio closing its doors in 1918, in anticipation of Prohibition. IMAGE COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



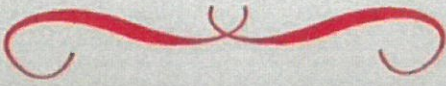
Police and Prohibition agents dump beer into a manhole. The contents of hundreds of breweries were destroyed at the onset of Prohibition. IMAGE COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

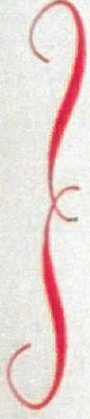


Prohibition Beverages

Several American beverages were born out of the Temperance Movement, while others used Prohibition to elevate their stock. Coca-Cola was advertised in the early 1900s as the "Temperance Drink." Welch's Grape Juice began as non-alcoholic sacramental wine called "Purple Temperance" and was later marketed to consumers as a healthy substitute to wine.

Ginger Ale was the perfect, palatable mixer for bootleg liquor. The marriage of soda and alcohol during Prohibition changed American drinking habits forever. Ginger Ale became so big during Prohibition that even the notorious gangster Al Capone got in on the act, setting up ginger ale and club soda bottling plants so that he could monopolize the mixer market in Chicago.






Walgreen's Drugstore

It has been said that Prohibition made Walgreen's. The company began with a single drug store in 1901 and grew to 20 stores in Chicago in 1919. By the end of Prohibition, Walgreen's had over 525 outlets nationwide. The rampant growth has been attributed to Walgreen's capitalizing on its prescription whiskey business. During Prohibition, the drugstore filled more prescriptions for medicinal liquor than any other outlet. By 1921, pharmacists withdrew more than eight million gallons of medicinal whiskey from federal warehouses.





Homemade Booze

Prohibition caused an explosion in home brewing and distilling, fueled by opportunistic companies who sold malt extracts. Stores like Woolworth's and Kroger sold home brewing equipment for quick set-ups. For stronger spirits, stills were set up in kitchens, basements and bathrooms. With small stovetop stills, moonshine could be produced in large quantities in multiple batches. It was an easy way to make money during Prohibition.

The bootleg business was often a family affair. While mom and dad cooked liquor inside the home, their children kept an eye out for law enforcement and made deliveries. Many "law-abiding" citizens ran liquor-making operations cleverly disguised as laundry businesses, seamstress shops, bakeries and produce stands. Countless women became bootleggers and made moonshine in their homes to support their families. Mothers were hired to "stroll" whiskey from basement stills to Speakeasies in secret compartments in baby carriages with their infants sleeping on top of the liquor stashes.



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Daily Specials Menu



Pretzel Flask, c. 1925, porcelain flasks filled with liquor were sold at bakeries and street stands

Camera Flasks, c. 1930, filled with booze not film



Four Swallows Book, c. 1920, Pressure released secret compartment held four perfect "swallows" of liquor

Lipstick Flask, c. 1920, small flasks like this fit comfortably in women's purses

Elephant Decanter, c. 1920, hollow booze-filled bronze figurines like this decorated homes across America

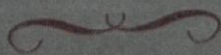


Faux Teapot, c. 1925, for the secret kitchen stash

Porcelain Cornish Hen Flask, c. 1920, butchers wrapped these whiskey-filled flasks in greasy newspaper to look like the real thing



Whiskey Eggs, real eggs filled with liquor and sealed with wax were sold by the thousands



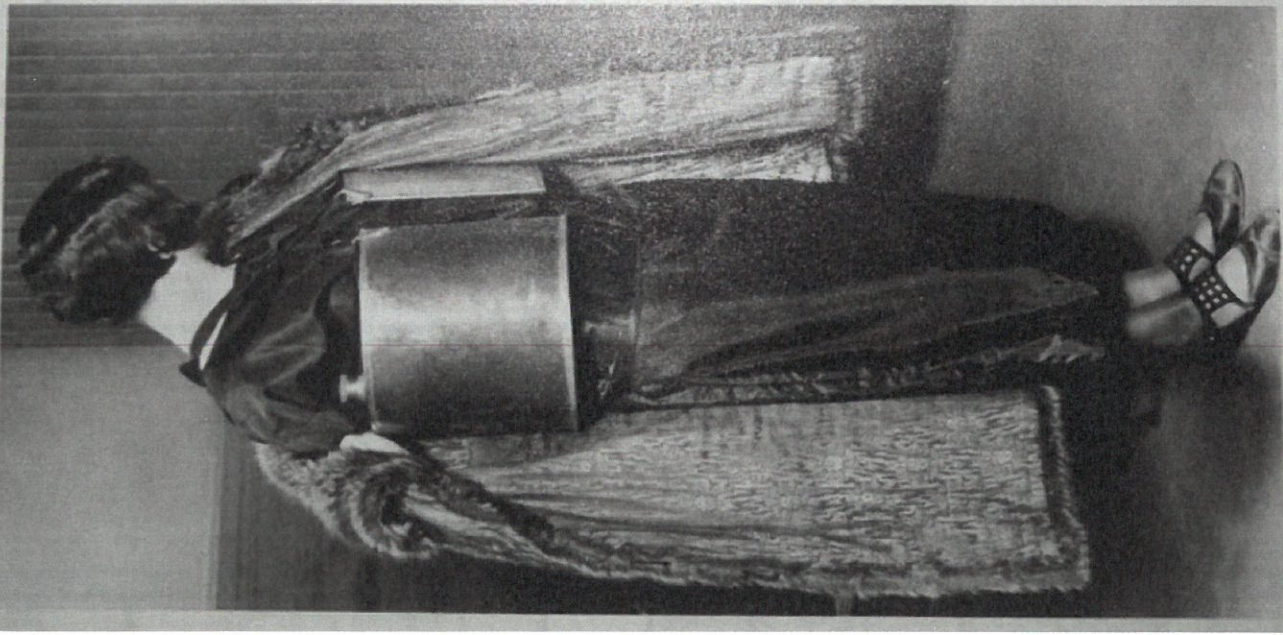
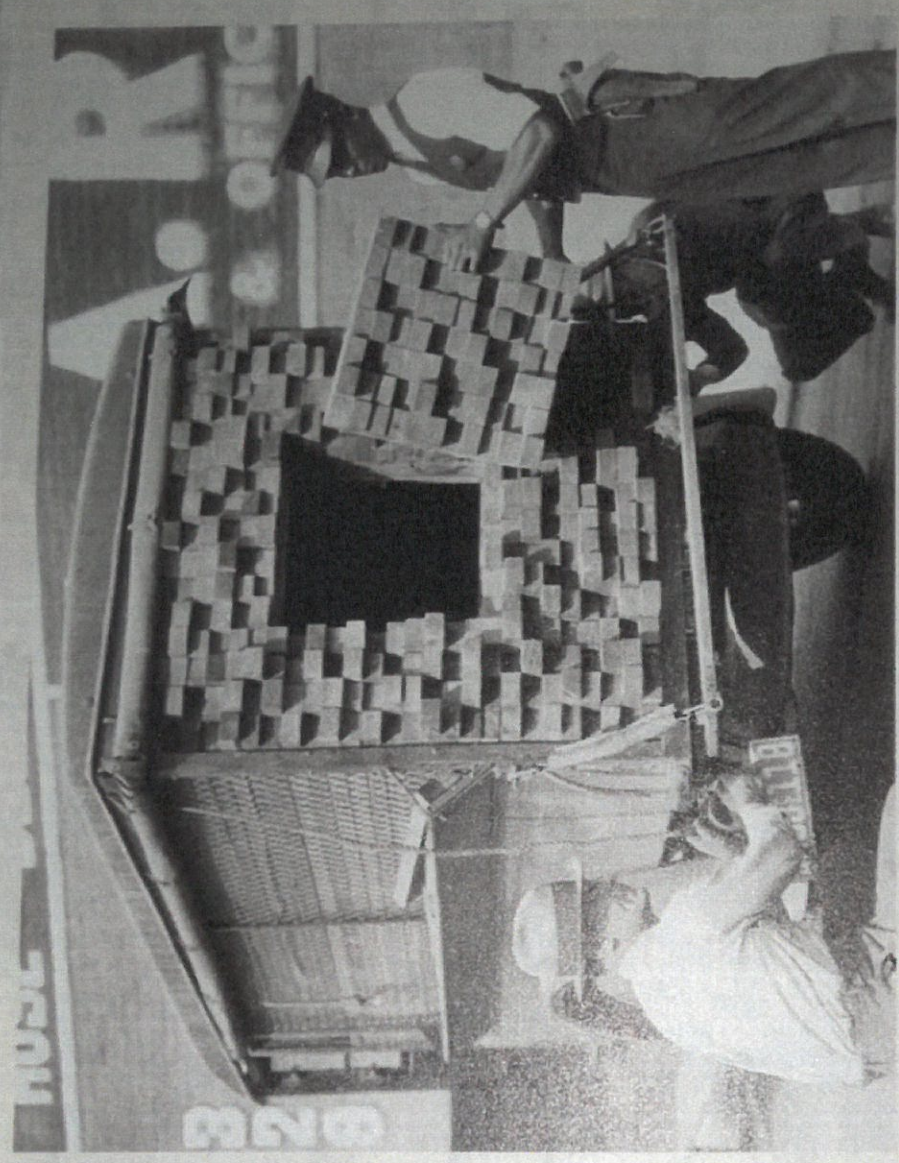


Photo left: A Minneapolis woman arrested by police for transporting and selling liquor from her camel pack vest. EVIDENCE PHOTOGRAPH, U.S. POLICE RECORDS, APRIL 10, 1924.

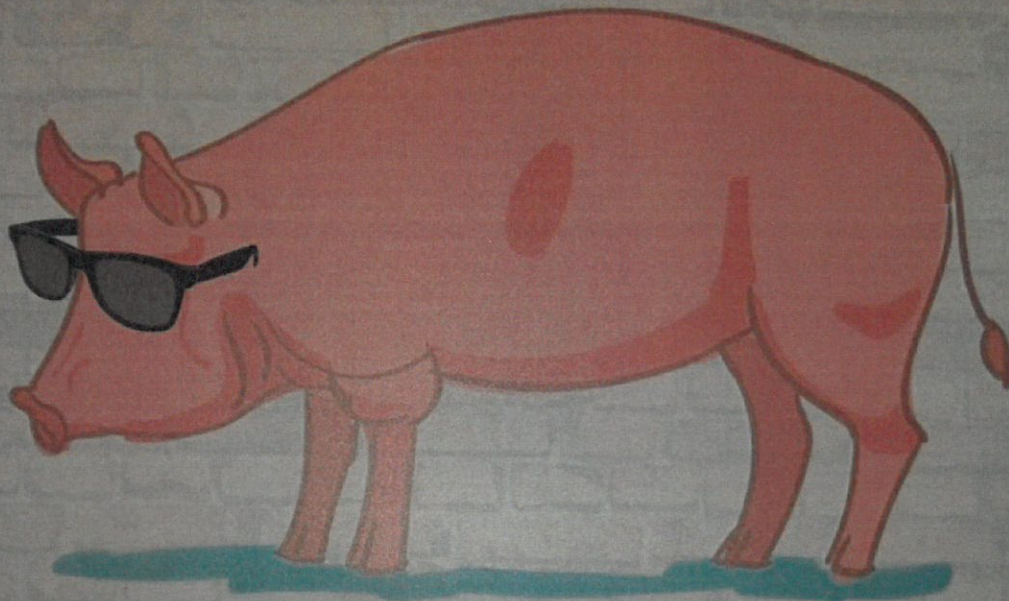


What was thought to be a standard truckload of lumber turned out to be a bootlegger's vehicle loaded with prime Scotch. When Los Angeles Federal Prohibition agents smelled the odor of the broken bottles, their investigation led to a cleverly hidden trapdoor of board ends leading to the interior, from which 70 cases of liquor were confiscated. IMAGE COURTESY GETTY IMAGES.

Blind Pigs & Tigers

Why 'blind pigs?' If they are to be called after any animal, call them skunks. That is the only animal that dispenses strong liquor without a license.

—CLARENCE TRUE WILSON



Blind Pigs and Blind Tigers started popping up the first day of Prohibition. These "attractions" were yet another ingenious way Americans circumvented the law. Their business strategy was pretty straight forward: a patron was sold a ticket to see a blind tiger or pig, or another exotic animal kept in a back room, and was served a "complimentary" drink during the exhibition. Technically, the admission fee was for the attraction and not the booze. Authorities were not amused.

PROHIBITION, THE BLIND PIG'S HOPE



WREN THE SPILL OF THE PROHIBITION WOULD BE THE SPOT OF PROHIBITION FOR THE SUN. THE SIGN ON THE SIGN WOULD BE THE SPOT OF PROHIBITION FOR THE SUN.

The difference between a Speakeasy and a Blind Pig is that a Speakeasy was usually a high class establishment that served food, sometimes requiring patrons to wear coat and tie and dresses. A Blind Pig was usually a low class dive where only beer and cheap liquor was sold.



In Atlanta and other cities in Georgia, police had a hard time keeping track of Blind Tigers as they grew in great numbers. Police in Atlanta discovered a "blind tiger of superior growth operating in the Georgia State Capitol building." The Atlanta Constitution claimed "25,000 gallons of liquor were taken from blind tiger raids over a period of six days."

Arrests of "walking Blind Tigers" were common in cities. These were pedestrian entrepreneurs who sold liquor in small quantities (by flask) on foot or from a wagon. The service usually was a quick swig straight from the bottle, but other methods were more involved. For example, a "Tiger" was a person in an overcoat who hid an elaborate system of tubes for dispensing liquor into a passing customer's waiting glass. The exchange would appear to bystanders as someone asking for directions or chatting.



The Ku Klux Klan – Prohibition Enforcers

Prohibition was the catalyst for the Klan's resurgence, their membership skyrocketing to five million men by the late-1920s. The KKK used the 18th amendment to justify attacks on immigrant business owners like German and Irish brewers and minority bootleggers, often torching their establishments, saloons and homes. Prohibition became one of the Klan's driving issues and they strongly supported its strict enforcement, often to the extreme. The Dry mission intersected perfectly with the Klan's anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, white-supremacist agenda. They formed armed patrols to intercept shipments of alcohol and organized raids on Speakeasies. Local police with Klan support freely entered the private residences of minorities and others, smashing down doors to catch violators. Search warrants were issued on the basis of suspicion with scant evidence.



*"There is as much chance of repealing
the Eighteenth Amendment as there is for
a hummingbird to fly to the planet Mars
with the Washington Monument tied
to its tail."*

- Sen. Morris Sheppard,
author of the 18th Amendment

Happy Days are Beer Again

This convention wants repeal; this candidate wants repeal, the people of the United States want (Prohibition) repealed. From this date on, the Eighteenth Amendment is doomed!

—PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, 1933

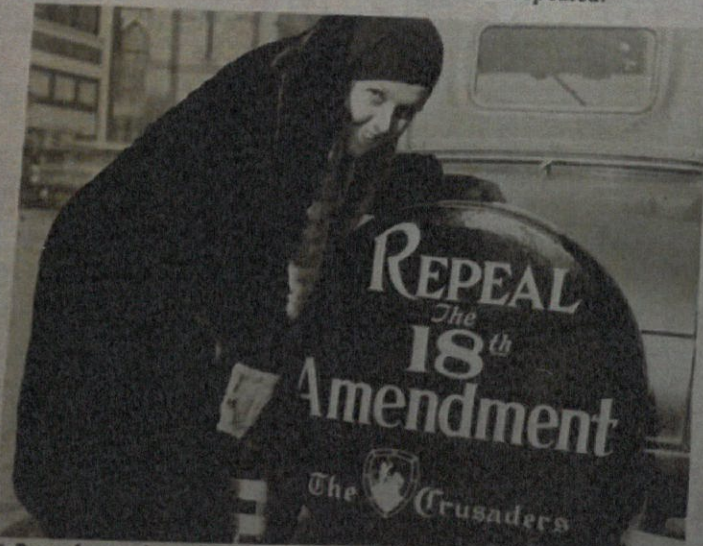


Happy Days Are Beer Again! America celebrated the return of liquor in 1933. IMAGE COURTESY GETTY IMAGES.

After 13 years, 10 months and 18 days, a new U.S. Congress amended the Volstead Act's definition of "intoxicating" to make beer legal once again. President Roosevelt immediately signed the "Beer Bill" - the 21st Amendment repealing Prohibition laws was ratified December 5, 1933. Roosevelt proclaimed the "return of individual freedom" and cautioned citizens: "I trust in the good sense of the American people, that they will not bring upon themselves the curse of excessive use of intoxicating liquors, to the detriment of health, morals and social integrity." It was the first time in American history that a constitutional amendment was repealed.



Revelers across the nation toasted the end of the 18th amendment and the return of their age-old right to drink freely. IMAGE COURTESY GETTY IMAGES.



A Repeal crusader commemorates the end of Prohibition in 1933. IMAGE COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Like the Drys who celebrated the death of liquor and "John Barleycorn" on the eve of Prohibition in 1920, Wets across the country rejoiced at the return of social drinking as if it was the 4th of July. It was indeed a new Independence Day.

Delivery trucks stocked up at liquor warehouses, and thousands of champagne bottles were popped. Once closed restaurants and nightclubs polished their dusty glassware and bartenders tried to remember how to mix drinks. Jazz bands played packed clubs well into the night and drinkers sang along to "Happy Days Are Here Again" on the evening forever known as "Repeal Night".



The first water cure was the flood, find it killed more than it cured

repent

repent

repent

repent

one for every
day