

# **The Failure of U.S. Prohibition, 1920-1933**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Tato práce se zabývá prohibicí alkoholu, která byla právně nařízena v letech 1920-1933 ve Spojených státech amerických. Cílem prohibice bylo umírnit spotřebu alkoholu a zároveň v jejím průběhu napravit americké morální zásady. V první části této práce jsou představeni ti, kteří měli na uzákonění prohibice největší vliv, a to na pozadí podrobně popsání stoletého procesu samotného vzniku prohibice. Následovně je prodiskutována reakce americké společnosti na prohibici a důvody jejího selhání.

Klíčová slova:

Spojené státy americké, Alkohol, Spotřeba, Protialkoholické hnutí, Progresivní éra, Imigrace, Wayne B. Wheeler, 18. ústavní dodatek, Andrew J. Volstead, Prohibice, Úplatkářství, Pašeráctví, Organizovaný zločin, Velká hospodářská krize, Warren G. Harding, Franklin D. Roosevelt, 21. ústavní dodatek

## **ABSTRACT**

This work concerns the legally-mandated prohibition of alcohol in the United States, 1920-1933, the goals of which were to moderate alcohol consumption and, in the process, improve American morals. First, it details the century-long origins of prohibition and identifies those who had the greatest influence on its becoming the law of the land. Then it discusses society's response to prohibition and details the reasons why it failed.

Keywords:

United States, Alcohol, Consumption, Temperance, Progressive Era, Immigration, Wayne B. Wheeler, 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Andrew J. Volstead, Prohibition, Bribery, Smuggling, Organized Crime, Great Depression, Warren G. Harding, Franklin D. Roosevelt, 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment

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# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1 THE APPROACH OF PROHIBITION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 EARLY SETTLERS AND THEIR TASTE FOR ALCOHOL .....	10
1.2 THE ROLE OF LIQUOR BEFORE AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE .....	10
1.3 THE FIRST STRUGGLE OVER ALCOHOL .....	13
1.4 THE RISE OF TEMPERANCE MOVEMENTS .....	13
1.5 TEMPERANCE MOVEMENTS' UPS AND DOWNS .....	15
1.6 WOMEN DECLARING WAR ON LIQUOR .....	16
1.7 THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON .....	19
1.8 MODERN SUPPORTERS OF THE ANTI-ALCOHOL MOVEMENTS AND THEIR FOES .....	21
1.9 THE ASL CONQUERING THE NATION'S CAPITAL .....	23
1.10 GERMANS – THE ALIEN ENEMIES .....	25
1.11 THE DRYS HAVING THEIR LAW, THE WETS THEIR LIQUOR .....	27
<b>2 PROHIBITION IN A FULL SWING.....</b>	<b>29</b>
2.1 THE NEW ERA .....	29
2.2 AN IMMEDIATE CHANGE.....	30
2.3 KING REMUS .....	31
2.4 A BIG FAILURE .....	33
2.5 RUM-RUNNERS .....	34
2.6 THIRSTY COSTUMERS .....	36
2.7 CHICAGO: A LAWLESS CITY.....	38
2.8 THE AMENDMENT TO BE REPEALED .....	40
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>WORKS CITED .....</b>	<b>48</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The last New Year's Eve before Prohibition was marked by celebrations, ranging from lavish private parties in hotels or clubs, to rather moderate ones in saloons and taverns. The whole nation was attempting to enjoy the last moments of what would soon become a thing of the past – drinking alcohol in public. The nationwide prohibition of alcohol, for which many popular and influential temperance groups had been fighting for decades, was near. January 16, 1920, would be a triumphal day for the most forceful and sustained movement that America had ever seen. With it, the Anti-Saloon League optimistically predicted the birth of “a new nation.”<sup>1</sup>

Surprisingly, the majority of freedom-loving Americans “welcomed” the Eighteenth Amendment, which was designed to limit personal freedom through the nationwide prohibition of alcoholic beverages. Although surely unintended, the ASL's prediction proved true. With Prohibition, the United States did become a new nation, one characterized by illegal stills, despair, corruption, bribes, and organized crime. With it, the utopian dreams of the moralists and suffragists who believed that Prohibition would create a healthier American society soon turned into nightmares.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis proves that U.S. Prohibition, 1920-1933, did not achieve its goals of moderating alcohol consumption and improving American morals. In fact, Prohibition had the opposite outcome - firstly, consumption increased, and the alcohol industry became America's largest; secondly, Prohibition proved a fertile breeding ground for crime and corruption. For these reasons, Prohibition was a failure, and Americans were right to repeal it.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-4.

## 1 THE APPROACH OF PROHIBITION

### 1.1 Early settlers and their taste for alcohol

Puritans, on a mission to establish “a City upon a Hill” in America, arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony on Easter Monday, 1630.<sup>3</sup> With many restrictions, they did not see the taste for alcohol as a sin – they detested drunkenness though not the drinking of liquor.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the ships carrying Puritans to New England were, apart from being loaded with necessary equipment and food to survive, filled with “more than ten thousand gallons of wine in its hold and carried three times as much beer as water.”<sup>5</sup> In general, one of the features of the “New Continent” way of living was mainly the drinking of hard liquor. After his arrival in New Amsterdam (later New York City) in 1647, Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch colonial governor,<sup>6</sup> noticed that “one quarter of New Amsterdam is devoted to houses for the sale of brandy, tobacco and beer.”<sup>7</sup> It was therefore clear from the very beginning of the colonization of North America that Europeans and their cultures would strongly influence the drinking habits in the future United States of America.

### 1.2 The role of liquor before American independence

In colonial times, alcohol such as rum or blackstrap (the mixture of rum and syrup) was comparatively cheap – as little as a few pence for a quart. For this reason, most eighteenth-century Americans, either wealthy or poverty-stricken, slaves or women, could easily afford liquor.<sup>8</sup> In 1763, having tea imported from Asia was more expensive than obtaining a bottle of rum then being produced at one of the 159 profitable New England distilleries.<sup>9</sup> In several American colonies, liquor was used as a medium of payment - instead of displaying the prices in money, traders used whiskey pints or gallons to set the price.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Paul Johnson, *Dějiny amerického národa* (Translated by Věra and Jan Lamperovi. Voznice: Leda, 2014), 35-36.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2011), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 7.

<sup>6</sup> “Peter Stuyvesant,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Peter-Stuyvesant> (accessed February 5, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 9.

This process of transaction was mainly used while trading with Native Americans – cheap rum for otter furs.<sup>11</sup>

When Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States,<sup>12</sup> was sixteen-year-old, he collected 19 expressions for being drunk. A few decades later, when he started publishing the *Pennsylvanian Gazette*, he could already name 228 synonyms of this term.<sup>13</sup> Besides many other concerns, Franklin also criticised excessive drinking that, in his words, contributed to the elevation of “swearing, poverty, and the distaste for religion.”<sup>14</sup> Another national hero and the leader of the colonial forces fighting against the British during the American Revolution was George Washington, the first U.S. president.<sup>15</sup> He did not share the same attitude towards alcohol as Franklin did – in fact, Washington was a heavy drinker. During the first months of his presidency, approximately one-fourth of his personal expenses were associated with liquor.<sup>16</sup>

On the contrary to Franklin’s opinion about alcohol and its influence on religion, the Bible itself blessed the delight of liquor, therefore, it is no wonder that clergymen were among the heaviest drinkers in the second half of the eighteenth century. During their visits to homesteads, a drink of hard cider or rum was usually offered to them – some of them could manage twenty such visits a day (on top of that, at the end of every housecall, a farewell drink was included as well).<sup>17</sup>

There were many occasions for drinking, such as weddings, funerals but also court sessions, during which judges and jury members imbibed. Any alcohol consumed during a trial was considered a court expense. In the same way, many community activities, for example infrastructure-building, barn raising, or wood processing were an excuse for a feast accompanied by alcohol. What is more, many workers were partially paid in liquor.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>12</sup> “Ben Franklin: A Quick Biography of Benjamin Franklin,” Independence Hall Association, <http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/info/index.htm> (accessed February 5, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 14.

<sup>15</sup> “George Washington,” A&E Television Networks, <http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/george-washington> (accessed February 6, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 9.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, the only medical doctor among those who signed the *Declaration of Independence*,<sup>19</sup> for the first time in American history launched a brief and ineffective campaign against heavy drinking. This campaign was based on a scientific note concerning the effects of alcohol on the human body. His scientific note, also known as Rush's "Inquiry", was complemented by a scale chart, representing many kinds of alcohol as well as their influence on one's body and mind. Rush also came up with specific disorders that were caused by the excessive consumption of alcohol – for instance "decay of appetite, sickness at stomach, puking of bile and discharging of frothy and viscous phlegm." Nevertheless, Rush was not a prohibitionist. He did not want Americans to stop drinking alcohol altogether but, if possible, to change their drinking habits from hard alcohol to beer and wine. For those who were extremely addicted, he even recommended blending opium with wine. Opium was, back then, nearly as common as aspirin nowadays.<sup>20</sup> Rush's utopian plan for reforming the hard drinking society was eventually, by 1836, generally dismissed.<sup>21</sup>

Before American independence, there had been many efforts to lower the consumption of alcohol. These efforts were mainly by colonial leaders who were under the supervision of British authorities. One of the intended efforts was, for example, the limitation of the quantity of liquor that a person could consume in a drinking shop and also the time the person could spend drinking in the shop. Of course, the regulations differed from place to place. In Massachusetts, delinquents who enjoyed excessive drinking were forced to wear a shirt with a big letter D or simply the word Drunkard. The most radical regulations came in 1734-35 in Georgia - one of the fiercest drinking colonies, but also one of the colonies most strongly influenced by the protestant religious movement now referred to as the First Great Awakening.<sup>22</sup> Partly at the urging of preachers, prohibition was passed, and alcohol importation into the colony was banned. However, the prohibition was repealed eight years later in part because Georgian crop-producers were abandoning their farms in order to focus on moonshining (the illegal making or smuggling of distilled alcohol), and also be-

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<sup>19</sup> "Benjamin Rush (1746-1813)," University of Pennsylvania University Archives and Records Center, [http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1700s/rush\\_benj.html](http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1700s/rush_benj.html) (accessed February 6, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 14-17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>22</sup> "George Whitefield (1714-1770)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last modified October 27, 2015, accessed February 23, 2016, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/george-whitefield-1714-1770>.

cause illegal liquor was pouring into Georgia from South Carolina in enormous quantities. This early attempt to establish a colony-wide prohibition was just a clear prognosis of what would happen over one century and a half later – bootlegging, moonshining and bribery would take place every day but on a considerably larger scale.<sup>23</sup>

### 1.3 The first struggle over alcohol

The taxation of alcohol was a big issue in the late-eighteenth century. The struggle started when Alexander Hamilton, who was president George Washington's Secretary of the Treasury, proposed in 1791 the Excise Act, which would impose a tax on alcohol that would fund the federal government. Hamilton "cared enough for liquor that he considered it an all-but-essential component of a democracy,"<sup>24</sup> but he also thought that taxing it would dissuade society from consuming it excessively. Congress quickly passed the legislation, the news of which greatly displeased the poor frontier farmers of western Pennsylvania. The problem was that the earnings of these farmers largely relied on crops like rye, grain and corn, from which they produced liquor that was easy to transport and store. The farmers, feeling like their livelihood was under attack, orchestrated the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794.

The rebellion was accompanied by fierce protests. When roughly 400 whiskey rebels attacked and set fire to the home of the tax collection supervisor in Pittsburgh, it was the last straw for the federal government. A thirteen-thousand-strong militia was formed and sent to western Pennsylvania, prompting the rebels to abandon their cause. Two men were found guilty of treason but were given amnesty by the president. The tax on whiskey was repealed in 1802 by President Thomas Jefferson.<sup>25</sup> From then on, the temperance and prohibition issue developed into arguably "the most important question in American life."<sup>26</sup>

### 1.4 The rise of temperance movements

In colonial Massachusetts, puritan leaders were conscious of the problems that excessive drinking caused. Among them were Cotton Mather and his father Increase. They

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>24</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 53.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Kotowski, "Whiskey Rebellion," Loyola University Chicago, <http://www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/whiskey-rebellion/> (accessed February 7, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 10.

both made an effort to fight alcohol consumption. In one of his sermons, Increase Mather suggested that “the flood of excessive drinking will drown Christianity.”<sup>27</sup> However, Mather did not reject alcohol altogether, but just the excessive consumption of it, which allowed him to conclude in 1673 that “Wine is from God but the drunkard is from the devil.”<sup>28</sup>

After the Great Awakening, religion increasingly served as a catalyst for temperance. By the early-nineteenth century, temperance supporters were increasingly viewing alcohol consumption as a deadly sin that put not only the body but the soul in danger. From the 1830s onward, alcoholism was associated with damnation, whereas abstinence led to salvation.<sup>29</sup>

In 1810, the United States was home to approximately seven million inhabitants<sup>30</sup> and more than fourteen thousand distilleries.<sup>31</sup> Among the first temperance societies was the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (MSSI), established in 1813<sup>32</sup> because “the quantity of ardent spirits consumed in the country surpasses belief,”<sup>33</sup> by their estimate 25 million gallons per year, or roughly 3.5 gallons per person. But this estimate was incorrect, for it did not consider private production or imports. Overall, the consumption was in fact 33,365,559 gallons, which is 4.7 gallons per person.<sup>34</sup>

Once religious zeal had ignited a battle against liquor, Dr. Rush’s scientific testimony was strengthened by evidence presented by Thomas Sewell of Columbia College, who claimed that drinking alcohol had caused many human diseases, such as dyspepsia, emaciation and jaundice. In addition, many physicians controversially argued that excessive alcohol consumption could lead to spontaneous combustion – a myth that gained broad acceptance and eventually was used as propaganda and reported in temperance papers as “a mild foretaste of what awaited the drunkard in hell.”<sup>35</sup> Reverend Justin Edwards, one of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>31</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Jack S. Blocker et al., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 401.

<sup>33</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 13.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 22.

the important pioneers of the American temperance movement,<sup>36</sup> described spontaneous combustion as well as the effects of alcohol on the human body in his “Temperance Manual” - firstly introduced as a sermon but afterwards distributed nationwide. However irrational, the “Temperance Manual” influenced the opinions of his passionate Christian audience.<sup>37</sup> Such early leaders and supporters of the temperance movements built a strong foundation for new generations of various movements in support of alcohol prohibition

## 1.5 Temperance movements’ ups and downs

In the 1830s and 1840s, the eastern United States was home to a new generation of prohibition advocates, who were usually backed by churches. However, there were exceptions; in 1840, a movement called the Washingtonian Revival, which was established by six notoriously known drunkards, came into existence in a barroom nearby Baltimore.<sup>38</sup> The Washingtonian Revival was to become the first large-scale movement that would spread anti-alcohol sentiment nationwide. Its founders’ objective was simple – they wanted heavy drinkers to sign an abstinence pledge. Among the supporters of this movement was also Abraham Lincoln, who stated that “those who they desire to convince and persuade are their old friends and companions. They know they are not demons.”<sup>39</sup> The best speaker that the Washingtonians could have wished for was John Bartholomew Cough, himself a former drunk. He managed to give thousands of speeches to approximately nine million listeners in the 1840s.<sup>40</sup> The Washingtonians were not the only temperance society that drew the attention of crowds. Another rival of theirs was the Independent Order of Good Templars, a powerful movement gaining strength mainly in the 1850s and 1860s when it eventually attracted more than a half million members.<sup>41</sup> For the first time in American history, blacks, though segregated, were also becoming members of particular movements. Once the temperance movements gained power throughout America at the beginning of 1850s, the consumption of alcohol rapidly decreased to slightly more than two gallons per person.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Blocker et al., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, 215.

<sup>37</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 23-25.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 28-30.

<sup>39</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>41</sup> Blocker et al., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, 268-69.

<sup>42</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 28-31.

Another significant individual was Neal Dow from Portland, Maine. Dow, who was the twenty-four-year-old son of a prominent abolitionist, managed to persuade the volunteers of the local fire department to give up liquor. Moreover, he was also the leader of a group of entrepreneurs from Portland who had banned alcohol in the workplace. As soon as he was elected mayor of Portland in 1851, Dow introduced an idea to the Maine legislature of a state-wide regulation (The Maine Law) that would ensure penalizations for those convicted of trading and producing alcohol. Thanks to the Washingtonians, the Maine Law was passed and also used as a pattern for similar laws in different states. After that, Dow became a national star. P. T. Barnum, the writer of melodramas such as *The Drunkard*, was one of hundreds of thousands of Americans whom Dow led to prohibitionism.<sup>43</sup> Dow was not only pro-prohibition but also a well-known racist – he particularly detested Irish Catholic immigrants for their unethical behaviour and excessive drinking habits.<sup>44</sup> This hostility against Irish immigrants, who disliked Dow and his Law, eventually led to protests.

In the late 1850s, the nationwide temperance movement failed to maintain its drive. During that decade, the states that had implemented their own version of the Maine Law eventually repealed it, including Maine.<sup>45</sup> As the Civil War neared, priorities changed and the zeal for prohibition halted.<sup>46</sup>

## 1.6 Women declaring war on liquor

By the time the Civil War began in 1861, there had already been two attempts to impose a tax on alcohol – the first one connected with the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, and the second one that came a few years later when the excise tax was reinstated by James Madison to finance the War of 1812. Both attempts were eventually suspended. Nevertheless, an excise tax was introduced once again by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 as a means of paying for the Civil War. This specific tax had turned into an addiction and, for

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<sup>43</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 11-12.

<sup>44</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 31.

<sup>45</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 31.

the first time, it was not suspended when the war was over. In fact, for the next three decades it provided twenty to forty percent of the government's revenue every year.<sup>47</sup>

After the Civil War, America, on one hand, had to deal with the wounds that the war had caused and, on the other hand, had to prepare itself for another fierce conflict: the struggle between prohibition activists and their foes, the alcohol producers.<sup>48</sup> In the Reconstruction era, the period well-known for not only industrial expansion but for political conservatism,<sup>49</sup> American society became more coordinated as well as complicated – generally, there was not enough space for individuals and their ground-breaking ideas.<sup>50</sup>

The United States Brewers' Association, established at the beginning of the Civil War by “new Americans” – mainly Germans who had been immigrating to the States since 1840, was an authoritative and independent group whose biggest enemy were primarily WASP women.<sup>51</sup> These women wanted to change the stereotype of women as caring mothers, angels of grace, and the defenders of moral principles. Yet, they approached this change via professions that had becoming progressively associated with them, such as jobs in social and educative spheres.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to fighting for their rights, women were also enthusiastic about alcohol-related topics, which were introduced to them particularly by Dr. Dioclesian Lewis, a well-known advocate of abstinence, healthy lifestyle and, in general, the rights for women. In late 1873, he visited the town of Hillsboro, Oregon, in order to speak to women concerning alcohol-related problems. He advised the women to use their prayers to get rid of the saloons in the town. Lewis's impact on the women was huge – in the following days more than seventy Hillsboro women led by Eliza Jane Trimble Thompson were going around to Hillsboro's saloons, drugstores and hotels – every place where liquor was sold. In each of them, they were kneeling, singing, reading from the Bible and praying for the owners' souls. Even though it was a freezing winter, they managed to stay outside for hours. There was a drugstore in which they were particularly successful. Its owner eventually joined the women praying in front of his drugstore and promised them to never sell liquor again. In

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<sup>47</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 54.

<sup>48</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 45.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 45.

<sup>51</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 122.

fact, he was not the only one to close down the doors of his business, there were eight more in Hillsboro. The Hillsboro women's powerful determination had spread across the Midwest, through New York state and New England, and led to the initiation of crusades in these places. As a result, the amount of tax collected from alcohol declined by \$300,000 in two districts alone. In spite of the fact that Thompson and her sisters were influential, their crusades did not last long and the movement lost its momentum - soon after, the saloons that once had been closed were reopened.<sup>53</sup>

However successful, the crusades led to another wave of actions by American churches. For example, the Presbyterian Church's leaders in Cleveland, inspired by the crusade phenomenon, organized a convention in 1874 where the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union came into existence. This union was exceptional – not only that it was more efficient than any crusade but that it brought to power the first president of the WCTU - Frances Elizabeth Willard, an ex-member of the crusades and former university professor. She was born to a puritan Methodist family, and she was raised to believe that the only purpose of alcohol was to promote Godlessness.<sup>54</sup>

The reason why women were involved in alcohol-related issues was simple – they eagerly wanted family well-being, which could be partially accomplished if their husbands only abstained. Men, the best clientele of taverns and saloons, wanted to ease the burdens of life stemming from family and home duties. A constantly drunk head of household was, for many women, a misery that traded sustenance for liquor. Women saw the saloons and taverns as satanic places to be fought against. To fight well, they needed suffrage.<sup>55</sup>

Frances Willard, soon after being elected president of the WCTU, wanted to transform the temperance issue into solely a women's issue because she believed that such an issue could not be dealt with by men. Moreover, she was convinced that only a specific kind of prohibition might destroy the evil of liquor, and such a prohibition could only be executed if women had the right to vote.<sup>56</sup> Willard worked hard throughout her life; under her leadership, the WCTU was in the 1870s the first movement to flood schools nationwide with leaflets introducing the evils of alcohol to children. In addition to the leaflets,

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<sup>53</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 13-14.

<sup>54</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 38.

<sup>55</sup> Okrent. *Last Call*, 15-16.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

another considerable WCTU success was alcohol-related courses that were introduced to all American public schools.<sup>57</sup> The Alcohol Education Act was passed in Seattle in 1885-1886, where the courses became compulsory to all pupils.<sup>58</sup>

Another woman equalled Frances Willard in her prohibition efforts. Although a representative of the WCTU, Carry Nation led her own type of battle against the devil, alcohol. A lifelong rebel, she conducted fierce crusades not only against alcohol but also against tobacco and sex. Unfortunately, these crusades mirrored her own miserable life experience.<sup>59</sup> Twice divorced, she entered the temperance movement in the 1880s when Kansas, where she was living, had become a dry state.<sup>60</sup> Instead of diplomacy, Nation favoured physical protest, which she first used in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, where she raided a drugstore which sold illegal liquor, using a sledgehammer to smash not only bottles containing alcohol but also the room's equipment. She then took her protests nationwide, stating, "Smash! Smash! For Jesus' sake, smash!"<sup>61</sup> In the beginning, she was financed by the WCTU, but her violence led the WCTU to gradually distance itself from her. She died alienated and mentally ill at age 65.<sup>62</sup>

## 1.7 The most powerful weapon

One of the first men who introduced legislation that would guarantee white women the right to vote was Arthur Denny – a prohibitionist whose 1853 legislation did not pass only by one vote. The prohibitionists were becoming visible on the political scene mainly in the 1870s thanks to the WCTU, and so the Prohibition Party was eventually established in 1869.<sup>63</sup> Among the party's essential principles were, for example, public education and the support of suffragists.<sup>64</sup> The Prohibition Party, though gaining great media sympathy, did not manage to change American politics significantly.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 39.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>60</sup> "Carry Nation," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Carry-Nation> (accessed February 24, 2016).

<sup>61</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 42.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-44.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-48.

<sup>64</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 19.

<sup>65</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 48.

The Anti-Saloon League, the most powerful weapon of the prohibition movement and the partner of the women suffragists, was established at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> For the last three decades of the nineteenth century, America was experiencing an industrial revolution. The first transcontinental railroad was constructed, and therefore a steam locomotive had helped international trade to arise as well as to create an international marketplace in the American Northwest.<sup>67</sup> There was a new kind of American as well – modern, business-oriented manufacturers with the intention of maximizing their profit. To do so, these manufacturers were not afraid to abuse child labour or to force their employees to work until they dropped. This economic and social development brought much misery: prostitution, poverty, crime, and especially political corruption. This is why the ASL, founded in 1893, launched various campaigns in which this league took advantage of new inventions such as electricity that had changed the way of communication and helped to spread these campaigns across America.<sup>68</sup>

The ASL consisted mainly of the Protestant church leaders. However, not every religious group in America was bone dry – groups, such as Jews and Lutherans, perceived drinking of alcohol as an individual's own freedom to choose. On the contrary, the “drys” damned all the drinkers and particularly saloons where alcohol was offered. Before prohibition, there was a saloon or tavern for every three hundred inhabitants of the United States. As a result, the ASL led mainly campaigns to support anti-alcohol sentiment – these campaigns had become “one of the most exemplary lobbying feasts the world has ever seen.”<sup>69</sup>

There were many active moralists at the end of the nineteenth century in America, yet none of them had brought the prohibition issue to the public's mind as much as Wayne Wheeler. During his career, he had gained the reputation of the most powerful and manipulative individual in America – not only that he was supervising six Congresses but he was also advising two Presidents. As a result, Wheeler had significantly changed the political situation in the United States concerning the prohibition message. In contrast to his peers,

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>67</sup> Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, 51.

<sup>68</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 49.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 49-51.

Wheeler's prohibition favour was not built on religious grounds – he himself recognized his capability for manipulation, and so he wanted to use prohibition to gain power.<sup>70</sup>

Wheeler was born to an Ohio farming family, and no sooner had he become an adult than he gained the entrepreneurial know-how so desirable in nineteenth-century society.<sup>71</sup> With his business skills, he would have competed with the robber barons, such as John D. Rockefeller who established his monopolistic Standard Oil Company in 1882, thanks to which he became America's first billionaire.<sup>72</sup> However, Wheeler wanted to change the face of America in a different way. He was rather attracted by poems, lecturing and debating – this is what brought him to the prohibition issue.<sup>73</sup> Wheeler was defined as a “locomotive in trousers”<sup>74</sup> and, on the top of that, with such qualities and anti-alcohol sentiment, the Ohio-based ASL was highly interested in recruiting Wheeler. As a result, Wheeler was asked by Reverend Howard Russell, the leader of the ASL in Ohio, to become one of the ASL's first full-time employees. Wheeler accepted, claiming he was impressed by the league's benevolence and morality.<sup>75</sup>

## 1.8 Modern supporters of the anti-alcohol movements and their foes

With industrialization expanding throughout the nation, the giant corporations started becoming aware of the troubles that alcohol had caused not only in the workplace but also to families. Large companies such as U.S. Steel, Pittsburgh Steel and others, declared war on liquor and promised they would lay off any employee known for drinking it.<sup>76</sup> Henry Ford, the automobile tycoon and the inventor of the assembly line and model T Ford,<sup>77</sup> was himself a teetotaler and therefore, he demanded his workers to be as well. However, Ford went even further - he set up a private police force that would stalk his employees, and if they were caught buying hard alcohol for the second time they surely would be fired.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>72</sup> “Robber Barons and Silicon Sultans,” *The Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21637338-todays-tech-billionaires-have-lot-common-previous-generation-capitalist> (accessed February 29, 2016).

<sup>73</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 53.

<sup>74</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 39.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>77</sup> “Henry Ford and the Impact of the Motor Industry,” BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/usa/boomrev3.shtml> (accessed March 1, 2016).

Another business figure teetotaler was J. D. Rockefeller, who not only detested alcohol but was also financially supporting the ASL in its campaigns.<sup>78</sup>

Apart from work being done properly, the family income was at stake as well. According to one of the health propagandists of the beginning of the twentieth century, Dr. Thomas Darlington, drinking hard alcohol affected the worker's wages as well - such a worker used more money to satisfy his addiction rather than the family's needs.<sup>79</sup>

Modern supporters of the anti-alcohol sentiment and the prohibition issue in general did not come only from the commercial sphere. Writers, such as Jack London and Upton Sinclair were advocates too, yet the first of them least likely.<sup>80</sup> Although London was often writing about "the great questions of life and death and the struggle to survive with dignity and integrity,"<sup>81</sup> he was hazarding with the joys of alcohol. He described alcohol as a taste that was hurtfully gained and when he died aged forty, another well-known author said that "alcohol made him." In contrast to London, Sinclair was a lifetime anti-alcohol campaigner whose hatred for alcohol had already started in his childhood – his father was a drunkard. Himself a novelist, Sinclair was writing especially about social and political issues. In his best-known novel, *The Jungle*, he also depicts immigration, horrible working conditions and the negative impact of alcohol on society.<sup>82</sup>

Since the immigration of Europeans to America was increasing at the end of the nineteenth century, more movements were established, including the racist Ku Klux Klan operating mainly in the xenophobic South. The Klan's hatred was not only focused on black people but also on the Catholic and Jewish immigrants pouring into the United States. The KKK was especially supporting women suffragists because of their favour for prohibition that would be used as a means to an end to limit the immigration of hard-drinking Irish and Poles.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 58.

<sup>79</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 51.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>81</sup> "Jack London – A Brief Biography," Jack London State Historic Park, <http://jacklondonpark.com/jack-london-biography.html> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>82</sup> Anthony Arthur, "Upton Sinclair," *New York Times*, [http://www.nytimes.com/ref/timestopics/topics\\_uptonsinclair.html](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/timestopics/topics_uptonsinclair.html) (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>83</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 86.

In contrast to the KKK, the Progressive Movement was supporting black citizens in their quest for socioeconomic equality. This movement believed that many of the American society's problems could be solved – the problems that were mainly caused by industrialization and the conquering of the frontier. Another issue the Progressive Movement was dealing with was Social Darwinism – only the fittest survive - that was particularly promoted by the wealthiest but refused by the Progressives.<sup>84</sup> Apart from that, the movement was also in a favour of the dry sentiment and therefore prohibition.<sup>85</sup>

Nevertheless, the movements against alcohol did not have only supporters but also detractors. The biggest of them was the United States Brewers' Association, consisting mainly of German immigrants. Many breweries were also the owners of saloons that the ASL wanted to get rid of. At one of its conventions, a member of the USBA, Thomas Gilmore, described the ASL as one of the most impressive movements that the nation had ever recognized, but by the most impressive he meant “the most autocratic, the most dictatorial, as well as the most dangerous power ever known in the politics of this country.” Having the same opinion, the USBA's potential counterpart – the distillers - still did not want to partner with the Brewers' Association due to the fact that the hard-alcohol producers saw the closing of the brewery-owned saloon as an advantage.<sup>86</sup> Although being strong in number, the brewers and distillers underestimated the powerful potential of the ASL's campaign that would eventually lead to nationwide prohibition.<sup>87</sup>

## 1.9 The ASL conquering the nation's capital

The ASL had chosen a specific scheme used for supporting the candidates willing to undertake the dry strategies. This scheme was firstly used in Ohio, but proving effective, was adopted nationwide, conquering Washington D.C. as well. The ASL did not want to make the same mistake as the Prohibition Party, and so the league's priority was to impress potential voters and supporters. To accomplish this, the ASL introduced its own pamphlet called *Church in Action against the Saloon* – the production of this printed matter reached

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<sup>84</sup>“The Progressive Movement,” Online Highways, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1061.html> (accessed March 1, 2016).

<sup>85</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 49.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>87</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 60.

a few tons a day. With such a pamphlet, the ASL focused mainly on schools and meetings where they could spread its gospel.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the ASL was becoming more and more powerful partially thanks to the support from Democratic politicians such as Cincinnati John M. Pattison or William Jennings Bryan, who argued that the Democratic Party should be the first one to become formally dry. However, thanks to Wheeler's forceful direction and the County Local Option laws, Ohio became in 1908 the driest state in America –fifty-seven of Ohio's counties went dry, but larger towns in the state, notably Cincinnati, remained wet. "Wet" legislators were conscious of the fact that the income from liquor taxation and from issuing saloon licences was remarkable – for example, a saloon licence in 1906 cost \$1,000, and the number of saloons was increasing. Furthermore, such legislators not only in Ohio but also in other states were very often partners of the owners of breweries and were being bribed into compliance.<sup>88</sup>

By 1913, Ohio under the ASL's reign had become a role model for other states in the question over liquor, and the ASL's army of a few thousand trained lecturers had spread the anti-alcohol sentiment throughout the country. There were particularly two successful turning points for the ASL in 1913 – the first of them was the passing of the Prohibition laws state-by-state, on which the ASL had been focused for many years; the second one was a law that banned the importation of alcohol into a dry state. These events proved that "dry" forces had become widespread and had representatives all over America.

The ASL was aware of one particular thing – to accomplish a nationwide prohibition, there must be a new source of income that would no longer come from the taxation of alcohol. As a result, the Income Tax Amendment, solving the revenue problem, was adopted in 1913. Of course, the dries' opponents, the most powerful wets in Congress, called "Standpat" Republicans, were against everything the dries wanted to put through (the income tax included). Although facing opposition, the ASL was one step closer to a national prohibition that would be introduced by another amendment – the eighteenth.<sup>89</sup>

Wheeler was certainly a great manipulator, and in one of his interviews for the muckrakers, a group of American writers providing precise political and economic reports

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 57-58.

<sup>89</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 59-84.

concerning corruption and social difficulties before World War I,<sup>90</sup> he revealed his strategy. Wheeler used the power of minorities to manipulate the majority, for example in elections, he was able to bring the voters to one particular nominee. If there was any politician that tricked the voters of the ASL, Wheeler responded, “They’ll break their promise. Sure. Next time, we’ll break them.”<sup>91</sup> The voters were the key to ASL success.

At the ASL’s National Board of Trustees (with representatives from all forty-eight states) meeting in Columbus in 1913, Wheeler called out for national Prohibition that would be accomplished by the passing of constitutional amendment which was to ban the manufacturing and sale of alcohol. With this, “the first shot in the Eighteenth Amendment had been fired.”<sup>92</sup> To show their power, the dry army consisting of men from the ASL and women from the WCTU gathered in the late autumn of 1913 in Washington D.C. to hand over a petition that would ensure the introduction of the eighteenth amendment to the constitution. This action at the Capitol brought nationwide attention, and according to the reporters on the spot, “it was the largest crowd ever to gather on the building’s [Capitol’s] steps.”<sup>93</sup> To encourage the dry policy even more aggressively, the Great War was about to break out in Europe, and the anti-German mood in America would soon deliver the final blow for the foes of Prohibition.<sup>94</sup>

### 1.10 Germans – the alien enemies

With America being hugely industrialized in the second half of the nineteenth century, and with a revolution occurring in Europe in 1848, a considerable number of immigrants from Europe saw an opportunity to start a new and better life across the Atlantic Ocean. However, it was difficult for them to assimilate into a new environment, especially because of their churches, languages and cultures, which promoted self-segregation.<sup>95</sup>

The flood of increasing number of immigrants was alarming for many (still) puritan-thinking Americans. According to historian Dennis Brogan, the immigrants had “nothing

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<sup>90</sup> “Muckraker,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/muckraker> (accessed March 6, 2016).

<sup>91</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 59.

<sup>92</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 59.

<sup>93</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 61.

<sup>94</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 60.

<sup>95</sup> Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, 8.

to lose but their chains and little to sell but their votes.”<sup>96</sup> Germans represented the biggest number of immigrants from Europe – there were over eight million of them at the end of the nineteenth century in the U.S., and as a result, they were soon to change not only the alcohol drinking habits in America.

What made Germans different from the other immigrant groups was their civic-minded sentiment, industriousness and advanced education. Although being spread throughout America, the greatest influence of German culture was mainly recognizable in Cincinnati, where German language was even taught in schools as a native tongue, not a foreign one. Once Cincinnati became almost a German city, it started hugely benefiting from that – German-Americans were financially supporting hospitals, schools, cultural events and charities as well. These German-Americans made a profit mainly in the brewing industry - the consumption of beer in Cincinnati alone was as much as four times higher than the nationwide average.<sup>97</sup> The brewers became not only wealthy but also influential. They, for example, supported the civic group called the German-American Alliance based in Washington D.C., which eventually became all-in-one their lobbying tool and subsidiary.<sup>98</sup> By 1914, Cincinnati had already become a perfect example of a melting pot where German-Americans and Irish-Americans lived side by side. However, this era of well-being and mutual tolerance was about to come to an end with the beginning of the First World War in Europe and the growing anti-German propaganda partially enhanced by the Prohibitionist themselves.

The more the anti-German sentiment grew, the stronger the ASL became. To deepen it even more, the ASL was during 1914 publishing brochures in million copies throughout America and, apart from that, Wheeler and his followers took advantage of the fact that most of the breweries were owned by Germans and used that as another reason for the public to detest this immigrant group. When President Wilson’s Administration was preparing and mobilizing the nation for a modern war, the Great War, in 1917,<sup>99</sup> the hatred for Germans was at its maximum – streets with German names were changed: Frankfurt Avenue became Connecticut Avenue; Bismarck Street, Montreal Street. Moreover, German was no

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<sup>96</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 63.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-65.

<sup>98</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 85.

<sup>99</sup> Wiebe, *The Search for Order*, 293.

more to be taught in schools and, eventually, the German-American Alliance was forbidden by Congress to continue in its activities.<sup>100</sup> According to Wheeler, Germans in general became “alien enemies.”<sup>101</sup>

Despite all the obstacles and the American states passing Prohibition legislations, the German-American beer producers still believed they would not be banned from the alcohol-manufacturing industry, but the opposite was true. What is more, the distillers were hit by the influence of the war as well. It was again Wheeler who put his full weight behind a bill that would ban the selling of grains to distillers. As an argument, Wheeler stated that such a foodstuff would be redundantly misused for the need of alcohol manufacturers.

As the war was about to come to an end in 1918 with a German defeat, the ASL would also be soon celebrating the victory against alcohol. After so many years of effort, the ASL could announce that nationwide Prohibition was unavoidable. The only question was when 75 percent of the states would pass it.<sup>102</sup>

### 1.11 The drys having their law, the wets their liquor

Andrew J. Volstead, born to a family of Norwegian immigrants in 1860, was to become the author of a bill that would prohibit the manufacturing and selling of alcohol in America.<sup>103</sup> He became a member of Congress in 1903, and even though he was not an avid advocate of the dry policy and never became a member of the ASL, his name would be forever remembered with Prohibition. Volstead had spent sixteen years in Congress before he took on the Judiciary Committee chairmanship. This function brought a duty that Volstead had to accept – being involved in the preparations of the National Prohibition Act (the Volstead Act) – a legislation that was to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment.<sup>104</sup>

Being introduced in the House in 1919, the Volstead Act was actually passed by a vote of 255 to 166 and, afterwards, went successfully through the Senate only to be vetoed by President Wilson. But the President’s veto was the same day overridden by the Con-

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<sup>100</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 85.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-72.

<sup>103</sup> Curt Brown, “Minnesota History: Andrew Volstead Got Skewered Even before Prohibition,” *Star Tribune*, <http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-history-the-boozy-prequel-to-prohibition/305574231/> (accessed March 15, 2016).

<sup>104</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 108-109.

gress, and the Volstead Act became law, yet to be ratified by the states. Replacing all the previously established measures in many states, the law stated, “No person shall manufacture, sell, barter, transport, import, export, deliver, furnish or possess any intoxicating liquor except as authorized in this act.”<sup>105</sup> However strict, there were some exceptions concerning sacramental wine, alcohol for industrial or medical purposes, etc. Alcohol advertisements were prohibited by the act as well. Brewers were at least provided with the opportunity to produce maximally 0.5 percent alcoholic beer called “near-beer.” In addition to all the bans, the act also stated the fines for breaking the law, ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

The act involved individual liberties as well. Therefore, it had to take into consideration the liquor that had been stored as property.<sup>106</sup> As a result, the act allowed Americans to “drink intoxicating liquor in your own home or in the home of a friend when you are a bona fide guest.”<sup>107</sup> What is more, home-made cider was, according to Wheeler and Volstead, absolutely tolerable.<sup>108</sup>

Once the Congress sent the amendment to the states, it only took a year for thirty-six states to ratify it.<sup>109</sup> The Eighteenth Amendment went into effect at midnight on January 17, 1920.<sup>110</sup> But as was frequently stated, even though “the dries had their law, . . . the wets would have their liquor.”<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 78.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>108</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 112.

<sup>109</sup> “Teaching with Documents: The Volstead Act and Related Prohibition Document,” *National Archives*, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/volstead-act/> (accessed March 15, 2016).

<sup>110</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 78.

<sup>111</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 114.

## 2 PROHIBITION IN A FULL SWING

### 2.1 The new era

Just a few months before Prohibition, Americans panicked. Many distillers moved their stocks to the Bahamas or Canada, which would both becoming centers of bootlegging operations during Prohibition. In addition, distillers and brewers, who wanted to unload their supplies, successfully convinced many Americans to take advantage of the legality of storing alcohol on their private property. Soon, basements and closets were filled with cases of alcohol.<sup>112</sup> Extraordinary parties also took place throughout America on the eve before Prohibition. One of them was a private party in the Park Avenue Hotel, New York, where the atmosphere was funeral-themed - black dresses, black bottles and many other features – yet, everybody enjoyed their last legal sips of alcohol in public.<sup>113</sup>

However, there were those who had been waiting for this moment to happen – the prohibitionists – who, instead of drinking alcohol, celebration via oratorical performances.<sup>114</sup> For instance, Billy Sunday, an evangelist and a passionate supporter of Prohibition, stated that “the reign of tears is over... Men will walk upright now, women will smile, and children will laugh.”<sup>115</sup> If he only knew, that only a few hours after alcohol became illegal, a group of armed men had stolen a \$100,000 supply of whiskey in Chicago. This was one of the first crimes, and not the last one, to be committed during Prohibition - thousands more crimes, on even greater scale, were to follow.<sup>116</sup>

The organization established to oversee law and order during Prohibition was the Prohibition Bureau - approximately 1,500 Prohibition agents (more to come) needed to be hired, and the Bureau itself was placed under the Treasury Department, which was Wheeler’s idea, that later proved to be a bad one. Not being under the Justice Department, the Prohibition agents had therefore different regulations to follow than those in the Civil Service. What is more, the prohibitions agent’s salary was about \$2,300 per year, which

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<sup>112</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 81.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 82

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 82

<sup>115</sup> Ruth C. Engs, *The Progressive Era’s Health Reform Movement: A Historical Dictionary* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003), 327.

<sup>116</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 83.

was very little, and so being bribed was soon another (and easier) option of enriching oneself.<sup>117</sup>

A new era of American history had started – an era that was supposed to change Americans for the better but instead produced unintended consequences such as speakeasies, cocktails, corruption, gangsters, and alcohol poisoning, the result of drinking illegal and often poorly-made spirits.<sup>118</sup>

## 2.2 An immediate change

As soon as nation-wide Prohibition came into effect, many Americans took this amendment seriously and started to drink less. As a result, in the first year of Prohibition, indicators of alcohol-related problems, such as death rates, started declining rapidly.<sup>119</sup> The statistics concerning public health were encouraging – between 1917 and 1919, the deaths caused by alcohol consumption dropped from 5.2 to 2.7 per 100,000 Americans. In 1920, it was under 2 per 100,000. Prohibitionists recognized this as a clear proof that their program worked. However, this rated started to climb again from 1923 onward.<sup>120</sup>

In general, alcohol-related crimes – public drunkenness, public disorder, domestic violence, etc. – declined as well. American songwriter Albert Von Tilzer became popular with his song, “I Never Knew I Had a Wonderful Wife until the Town Went Dry,” Which reflected an immediate change within American society at the beginning of the 1920s. Reduced crime even led to the closure of one of Chicago’s prisons.<sup>121</sup>

Wheeler himself exaggerated the positives of Prohibition, claiming that by 1925 it had saved the lives of a million Americans. Other Prohibition supporters were convinced that men were no longer spending money on alcohol but rather on better households – they were buying better foodstuff thanks to which the families started eating properly and healthier. What is more, saving accounts became popular among Americans, and employee morale supposedly improved – according to one entrepreneur, the absence of workers after

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 83-89.

<sup>119</sup> Jack S. Blocker Jr., “Did Prohibition Really Work? Alcohol Prohibition as a Public Health Innovation,” *American Journal of Public Health* (February 2006): 233-243, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2005.065409>.

<sup>120</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 148.

<sup>121</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 118-119.

a payday dropped from ten percent to less than three. Nevertheless, once lawbreaking entrepreneurs took advantage of the situation that Prohibition brought and started satisfying Americans' increasing thirst for illicit alcohol, the benefits of Prohibition were negated and alcohol consumption increased once again.<sup>122</sup>

### 2.3 King Remus

F. Scott Fitzgerald, an American writer also known as “a chronicler of the jazz age,”<sup>123</sup> published his novel *The Great Gatsby* in 1925.<sup>124</sup> Undoubtedly, Fitzgerald, while writing this novel, was inspired by the life of George Remus, who was nicknamed the “King of the Bootleggers.” Although fictional, Jay Gatsby - the main character of Fitzgerald's novel - and George Remus had a lot in common.<sup>125</sup>

Making a fortune out of bootlegging, Remus could afford to hold lavish parties in his mansion in Cincinnati, which were attended by top local figures including police and politicians. Although a generous host, Remus was rarely seen at such parties – he rather spent the time reading books in his library, where he did not want to be disturbed (just the same way as Jay Gatsby).<sup>126</sup>

Prohibition afforded lawbreakers a great chance to make money by making, transporting, and selling alcohol that was increasingly in demand. Remus, an attorney in Chicago, became interested in this business as well.<sup>127</sup> Ahead of Prohibition, Remus saw an opportunity in the supplies that remained in the distilleries. Spending his savings, he started buying the whiskey certificates from the distilleries and government-bonded depositories. Soon after, these, still legal, operations became rapidly profitable, and Remus was one of the biggest owners of distilleries in the United States. Once he had amassed the necessary supplies, Remus rushed to get an official approval to sell whiskey to the pharmaceutical industry, especially to the companies that were licensed to produce medicinal whiskey.

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<sup>122</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 149.

<sup>123</sup> “F. Scott Fitzgerald,” A&E Television Networks, <http://www.history.com/topics/f-scott-fitzgerald> (accessed March 23, 2016).

<sup>124</sup> “A Brief Life of Fitzgerald,” University of South Carolina Board of Trustees, <http://library.sc.edu/spcoll/fitzgerald/biography.html> (accessed March 23, 2016).

<sup>125</sup> Joel M. Beall, “Cincinnati Lawyer Was Smuggler, Model for Gatsby,” Cincinnati, <http://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/history/2015/02/07/cincinnati-lawyer-remus-smuggler-model-gatsby/22884467/> (accessed March 23, 2016).

<sup>126</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 98-99.

<sup>127</sup> Beall, “Cincinnati Lawyer Was Smuggler, Model for Gatsby.”

However, only a limited amount of this whiskey turned out to be for medical use – in fact, retail bootleggers were more lucrative customers. As Remus’s alcohol operations were growing, more employees were needed. He eventually employed 3,000 people, ranging from drivers to security guards.<sup>128</sup>

Due to the fact that most of Remus’s whiskey ended up in the hands of middlemen (bootleggers) rather than in the medical industry, he acquired a discreet place called Death Valley Farm, situated in Cincinnati, where the operations, such as bottling and repacking, could be done in private. The farm was named after the fact that it was guarded by armed men. With this private property, Remus was able to run a business worth \$25 million a year.<sup>129</sup>

But this business was not without certain unavoidable operational costs. Remus was “parasitized” by local officeholders, such as politicians and police, who would look the other way in exchange for handouts. The farm was routinely guarded by policemen who certainly knew what was going on there. When two Prohibition Bureau agents entered the farm, they left without having made an arrest but with \$1,000 each and a complimentary bottle of Remus’s product.

Although Remus spent an estimated half of his net income on protection, he soon encountered two men who were not corrupt – the Prohibition director of Indiana, Burt Morgan, and Sam Collins, the director of the Kentucky district. These two “untouchables” raided the Death Valley Farm, where they discovered huge cellars of illegal alcohol. Remus and twelve of his associates were arrested, and in May 1922 they were tried, found guilty and sentenced. Remus was sentenced to two years in prison and fined \$10,000.<sup>130</sup> He paid the price of being over-confident about his immunity from prosecution, and he later told a reporter that he “learned there isn’t enough money in the world to buy up all the public officials who demanded a share.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 96-97.

<sup>129</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 198-199.

<sup>130</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 102-126.

<sup>131</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 199.

Prohibition, as it became notoriously visible, came hand in hand with fraud and bribes of high-level officials, who were actually expected to fight against all of that. The biggest failure in this regard was President Warren G. Harding's administration.<sup>132</sup>

## 2.4 A big Failure

The 1920s was an era when many people witnessed and felt a nationwide modification in the American way of living, working and social convergence. This era is known as the Roaring Twenties and one of the best ingredients of this period was the arrival of Prohibition itself.<sup>133</sup>

Harding was, according to scholars, the weakest and the lowest evaluated American president ever.<sup>134</sup> For the first two years of Harding's presidency, beginning in 1920, "he wanted to be everybody's friend... [He was] a small town play boy."<sup>135</sup> During these years America did not face foreign threats, but it did face a domestic threat in Harding himself - he was too indecisive and often let his (mostly corrupt) friends decide in his stead, which often led to national scandals. What is more, he himself was apparently aware that he lacked the abilities required for being president – in an interview, Harding told a reporter that he could not have solved the tax issue because he was receiving conflicting reports from trustworthy advisors, and he could not determine who was correct.<sup>136</sup>

Harding pretended to be one of the dries in order to get votes, but in fact, he was a constant alcohol consumer.<sup>137</sup> He had constant access to liquor – his attorney general, Harry Daugherty, very often received alcohol confiscated by Justice Department. This is why Harding frequently held poker games at the White House, and many influential figures (including bootleggers) came to play.<sup>138</sup> The Senate library also became a suitable place for enjoying alcohol and was even once referred to as "the greatest bar in Washington."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 104.

<sup>133</sup> Philip P. Mason, *Rumrunning and the Roaring Twenties: Prohibition on the Michigan-Ontario Waterway* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1955), 70.

<sup>134</sup> Gary A. Fine, "Reputational Entrepreneurs and the Memory of Incompetence: Melting Supporters, Partisan Warriors, and Images of President Harding," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 5 (March 1996): 1159.

<sup>135</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 105.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-113.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>138</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 129.

<sup>139</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 115-119.

Harding's administration was responsible for scandals and frauds, such as building hospitals for exorbitant prices, for which the U.S. Secretary of Health received a healthy kickback. However, thanks to Daugherty, the incriminating evidence simply disappeared. Such was the case also with Standard Aircraft Company, which received millions of dollars for manufacturing warplanes but never delivered them., Daugherty himself made a fortune by ensuring immunity to underworld bosses, such as Remus.<sup>140</sup>

Harding died suddenly of a heart attack in 1923 while still in office. This is why he and his scandalous administration avoided punishment. On the other hand, these scandals were not to be the only ones during the 1920s to shake the very foundations of American society.<sup>141</sup>

## 2.5 Rum-runners

In spite of the fact that Al Capone was a ruthless gangster, there existed places where he was widely considered a hero. Such places include St. Pierre and Miquelon, French islands off the Canadian coast, which during Prohibition experienced a period of an economic expansion largely due to Capone, who used the islands as smuggling centers.<sup>142</sup>

Before he became the best-known rum-runner, William McCoy had designed splendid yachts for wealthy people. McCoy was a true-lover of sailing, yet bootlegging was another way to make huge profits.<sup>143</sup> In 1922, he became interested in setting up Rum Row in the port of St. Pierre for two reasons – firstly, the illegal operations could be done under the French flag and secondly, the port did not suffer from severe winters. Thanks to this, St. Pierre's economy immediately boomed. McCoy was sure that this kind of business was good for the local people, mainly poor fishermen who were now given the possibility of a more lucrative business.<sup>144</sup> As a result of the likes of McCoy and Capone, the island of St. Pierre became in 1923 a vibrant port serviced by more than one thousand vessels carrying

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 115-119.

<sup>141</sup> "Warren Harding," The White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/warrenharding> (accessed March 25, 2016).

<sup>142</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 130.

<sup>143</sup> "The Real McCoy," *Time*, [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1864521\\_1864524\\_1864621,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1864521_1864524_1864621,00.html) (accessed March 26, 2016).

<sup>144</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 167-168.

liquor mostly from Canadian and British distillers to be illegally imported into the United States.<sup>145</sup>

McCoy's operations became highly profitable – he could earn nearly \$300,000 per whiskey delivery. He also owned a rum-running vessel that soon gained a reputation as a floating liquor store.<sup>146</sup> McCoy's "mother ship" was not alone. A high concentration of mother ships could be seen off the coast of New York City, where the thirst for liquor was enormous. Darkness often revealed "a luminous floating city" off the coast.<sup>147</sup>

Not only the island of St. Pierre, but also the Bahama Islands became a heaven for smugglers and rum-runners. During 1921 and 1922, "the net tonnage of vessels registered in the Bahamas increased tenfold."<sup>148</sup> And according to U.S. Coast Guard estimates, the number of traded quarts of liquor in the Bahamas reached ten million a year.<sup>149</sup>

In general, the responsibility of Coast Guard was to help vessels facing danger at sea. However, with the arrival of Prohibition, the Coast Guard's mission had been adjusted, and now it also had to prevent the rum-runners from their illegal operations. Once again, bribes were often too tempting to resist. On one hand, there were some astonishing achievements by the Coast Guard, such as the capture of McCoy's *Arethusa*. On the other hand, there were also scandals that hurt the reputation of the institution. For instance, when two drunk members of the Coast Guard attempted to sell seized liquor to passer-byes on a street; a bribed Coast Guard commander looked the other way while smugglers did their business, or, as a Prohibition enforcement representative of the Atlantic coastline told an interviewer, in the case of Coast Guard members helping the rum-runners to transfer bottles of alcohol from one ship to another. What is more, some members of the customs office crew were involved in keeping the seized liquor for themselves or in reselling it.<sup>150</sup>

Thanks to Prohibition, America's neighbouring countries were all profiting from exporting alcohol (of course not directly to the U.S.). New export records were set, as in the case of French champagne, the exports of which between 1922 and 1929 increased

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<sup>145</sup> Larry Karson, "American Smuggling and British White-collar Crime," *Papers from the British Criminology Conference 12*, no. 25-40 (2012): 34.

<sup>146</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 136-137.

<sup>147</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 166-167.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>150</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 130-143.

over tenfold. The Canadian government took advantage of the situation and demanded export duties on every bottle of alcohol intended for the American market.<sup>151</sup> In 1923, it was even difficult for Roy Haynes, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, to explain the increasing quantity of alcohol pouring to America. He commented: “You cannot keep liquor from dripping through a dotted line.”<sup>152</sup> The American border was indeed leaky.

## 2.6 Thirsty costumers

After Prohibition was enforced in 1920, it took only twenty months for bootlegging to become a billion-dollar business. According to the Internal Revenue Bureau, Americans were consuming 25 million gallons of prohibited alcohol a year, plus more than 30 million gallons were used for medical purposes.<sup>153</sup> A sizeable percentage of this 55 million gallons was consumed in so called “speakeasies,” places where liquor was sold illegally.<sup>154</sup> Speakeasies could be found throughout America; by the end of 1927 there were over 30,000 of these illegal establishments in New York alone.<sup>155</sup>

Of course, some speakeasies were as simple as two chairs, a table and a bottle of liquor, but there were also speakeasies that drew the attention of prestigious cities’ elite. Such speakeasies also offered jazz music and dancing, which was not possible without women.<sup>156</sup> The new American way of life was accurately described by the American novelist Willa Cather when she said, “nobody stays at home anymore.”<sup>157</sup> Consequently, the word ‘party’ entered the vernacular, and for the very first time in American history, couples were enjoying alcohol outside their home together and, as a result, society changed forever. In order to attract women, a lot of speakeasies were designed as restaurants.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>152</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 153.

<sup>153</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 147.

<sup>154</sup> Jen S. and Ceyana A., “Prohibition and the Speakeasies,” History of the Roaring Twenties Blogspot, entry posted June 10, 2010, <http://theroaringtwentieshistory.blogspot.cz/2010/06/prohibition-and-speakeasies.html> (accessed March 27, 2016).

<sup>155</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 87.

<sup>156</sup> Kathy Weiser, “American History: Speakeasies of the Prohibition Era,” Legends of America, <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/ah-prohibitionspeakeasy.html> (accessed March 27, 2016).

<sup>157</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 207.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 207-211.

This era also gave birth to a new kind of dance, the Charleston, and it created new possibilities for black musicians to perform Jazz music, such as Louis Armstrong.<sup>159</sup>

As women were being welcomed in speakeasies and other establishments, another barrier, this time racial, was being torn down as well. For instance, in Harlem, New York's black neighbourhood, an unusual kind of segregation took place – for the first time, whites and blacks could be seen on the floor dancing and mixing freely at the same time.<sup>160</sup> According to journalist Theophil Lewis, “the night clubs have done more to improve race relations in ten years than the churches, white and black, have done in ten decades.”<sup>161</sup>

Although the speakeasies had improved social relations, they could not guarantee the quality of the liquor they sold. During prohibition, drinkers were taking a risk that the liquid they were consuming was poisonous. Even the customers of a luxurious speakeasy were sold the same, albeit more expensive poisonous liquor as the guests of a substandard speakeasy. Bootleggers were distributing industrial alcohol that was blended with poisonous wood alcohol. The casualties mounted, and American newspapers increasingly reported on the deaths and paralysis caused by alcohol. One of the worst examples happened in Wichita, Kansas, where more than five hundred citizens were crippled from consuming contaminated alcohol.<sup>162</sup>

Agents from the Prohibition Bureau were supposed to fight the speakeasies as well. However, bribes frequently curtailed their efforts. According to Roy A. Haynes, the Prohibition commissioner from 1920-1925, only forty-three agents from the Bureau were found guilty during his directorship of the Bureau. However, evidence suggests that more than half of all agents (17,816) were involved in criminal activities – a fact Haynes did not want the public to know. On the other hand, there were also those agents who paid the price for not “looking the other way” – Haynes called them the “fallen heroes” – thirty agents who were killed in the first five years of Prohibition.<sup>163</sup> Even so, uncorruptable agents did exist. Among the best-known were Isidor Einstein (“Izzy”) and Moe Smith. These two, especially Einstein, became immediate celebrities. Izzy was notoriously known for his ability to

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<sup>159</sup> Weiser, “American History.”

<sup>160</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 212.

<sup>161</sup> Michael A. Lerner, *Dry Manhattan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 215.

<sup>162</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 209-221.

<sup>163</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 152-153.

disguise himself, and therefore he made arrests disguised, among other things, as an opera singer, football player or African-American inhabitant of Harlem.<sup>164</sup> In one case, Izzy and Moe were on the track of the illegal sale of sacramental wine. The trail brought them to a scandalous discovery – they found out that a synagogue of six hundred members was no more than a laundry, where a thousand gallons of wine was stored. Another success came with the exposure of a fake organization called the Assembly of Hebrew Orthodox Rabbis of America, which consisted only of one Irishman.<sup>165</sup> During his career, Einstein, with Moe's help, arrested 4,932 lawbreakers. However, being too successful, they were both dismissed by Haynes for having offended too many upper-level officials.<sup>166</sup>

## 2.7 Chicago: A lawless city

During the Prohibition era, underworld bosses such as Al Capone or John Torrio colluded with corrupt politicians to make vast fortunes. In Chicago, Mayor William “Big Bill” Thompson helped transform the city into “the most corrupt and lawless city in the world.”<sup>167</sup> From 1920 on, Chicago was practically run by mobsters.<sup>168</sup> Chicago, though, had always attracted crime. Torrio ran brothels and gambling operations in Chicago before 1920, but after Prohibition, he and his partner Capone quickly saw the lucrative potential in bootlegging.<sup>169</sup> However, they were not the only ones. Competition over the illicit but highly profitable liquor trade led to gang warfare throughout the city. Between 1920 and 1933, more than seven hundred mobsters were killed in gunfights with others gangsters, and opulent funerals became routine.<sup>170</sup>

Some Chicago political figures were strongly and publicly supported by gangs in order to ensure them protection from prosecution. Moreover, the gangs were able to provide the politicians with necessary votes in elections (very often the votes of immi-

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<sup>164</sup> David J. Hanson, “Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith: Famous Prohibition Agents,” Alcohol Problems and Solutions, <http://www.alcoholproblemsandsolutions.org/izzy-einstein-and-moe-smith-famous-prohibition-agents/> (accessed March 28, 2016).

<sup>165</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 157.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-157.

<sup>167</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 176.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>169</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 272.

<sup>170</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 177.

grants).<sup>171</sup> One of the best examples of such a partnership was between Thompson and Capone. Capone was one of, if not the greatest, financial contributor to Thompson's mayoral campaigns. Capone even hung a portrait of Thompson behind his desk. The reasons for such support were that, first of all, the bootleggers wanted the dry legislation to be preserved, and secondly, they required protection from law enforcement.<sup>172</sup> Bill Thompson was the right man with which to co-operate, for he could offer both. As Behr noted, "Big Bill and Prohibition were certainly made for each other."<sup>173</sup>

All in all, Thompson served three terms as mayor of Chicago, from 1915 to 1925, and from 1927 to 1931.<sup>174</sup> Especially during his second term, the most scandalous, law-breaking escalated (in one year by 50 percent) mainly thanks to Thompson's appointments of corrupt officials and police. In the other cases, the police either looked the other way or simply did not want to be involved in the gangs' settling of scores. Furthermore, there was evidence of illegal profits in other of the city's activities, such as education, healthcare or public works.<sup>175</sup> In 1927, when gang warfare was at its peak and Thompson was seeking reelection, he made a campaign promise not only to reopen the speakeasies that police and federal agents had closed but to "open 10,000 new ones."<sup>176</sup> Soon after, Capone and other gangsters increased their financial support of Thompson's campaign. Thompson won.<sup>177</sup>

Al Capone could afford to finance Thompson's campaign thanks to the bootlegging business and the gambling activities he provided. Capone stated that "ninety percent of the people of Cook County drink and gamble, and my offense has been to furnish them with those amusements."<sup>178</sup> According to Chicago newspapers, Capone's illegal, yet high-return activities earned him \$100 million a year. Even though Capone was able to garner public sympathy, he was actually a ruthless personality, as in the case of St. Valentine's Day

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<sup>171</sup> Richard Maltby, *Why Boys Go Wrong: Gangsters, Hoodlums, and the Natural History of Delinquent Careers* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 81-82.

<sup>172</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 303.

<sup>173</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 179.

<sup>174</sup> Ron Grossman, "'Big Bill' Thompson: Chicago's unfiltered mayor," Chicago Tribune, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-big-bill-thompson-trump-flashback-perspec-0207-jm-20160205-story.html> (accessed April 18, 2016).

<sup>175</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 183.

<sup>176</sup> Edward McClelland, "The Most Corrupt Public Official in Illinois History: William Hale Thompson," NBC 5 Chicago, <http://www.nbcchicago.com/blogs/ward-room/The-Most-Corrupt-Public-Official-In-Illinois-History-William-Hale-Thompson-138057708.html> (accessed April 18, 2016).

<sup>177</sup> McClelland, "The Most Corrupt Public Official in Illinois History."

<sup>178</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 321.

Massacre when he gave the command to eliminate his rival, “Bugs” Moran (seven of Moran’s men were assassinated, but Moran himself survived). Although Capone had committed various and brutal crimes, he was eventually found guilty of income-tax evasion and imprisoned for eleven years. He died of natural causes in 1947.<sup>179</sup>

## 2.8 The amendment to be repealed

The repeal of Prohibition actually began in 1920 which was, in fact, the first year of its existence. One of the first men to utter this idea was an American lawyer and aristocrat, Elihu Root, who disagreed with the whole idea of Prohibition from the very beginning. According to him, “prohibition takes away the chief pleasure in life for millions of men who have never been trained to get their pleasure from art, or literature, or sports, or reform movements.”<sup>180</sup> Besides taking the main pleasures of one’s life away, Prohibition also took lives of thousands of Americans due to the fact that there was always a way, very often illegal, to get liquor.<sup>181</sup>

During R. A. Haynes’s tenure as Prohibition commissioner, the total income from liquor operations of either domestic or foreign lawbreakers reached over four billion dollars, and this industry became America’s largest.<sup>182</sup> By 1925, the American government wanted to prevent alcohol used for industrial purposes from ending up in the hands of bootleggers, and therefore it ordered the producers of this type of alcohol to add substances (some of them toxic) to make it undrinkable. However, approximately sixty million gallons of poisonous industrial alcohol were seized by bootleggers every year and eventually re-distilled and delivered to customers, often with fatal consequences – by the end of Prohibition, more than 10,000 Americans had lost their lives to alcohol poisoning – and it was partly the government’s doing.<sup>183</sup> Indicative of this dangerous situation was a Prohibition Bureau report from 1927 which stated that “of 480,000 gallons of confiscated booze ana-

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<sup>179</sup> “Al Capone,” A&E Television Networks, <http://www.history.com/topics/al-capone> (accessed April 18, 2016).

<sup>180</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 121.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>182</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 158.

<sup>183</sup> David J. Hanson, “Deaths during Prohibition: Government Poisoned Alcohol to Stop Drinking,” Alcohol Problems and Solutions, <http://www.alcoholproblemsandsolutions.org/deaths-during-prohibition-government-poisoned-alcohol-to-stop-drinking/> (accessed April 19, 2016).

lysed in New York in 1927, 98 percent contained poisons.”<sup>184</sup> What is more, on New Year’s Day, 1927, forty-one deaths caused by toxic liquor were reported in New York alone. Not only the Volstead Act but also Wayne Wheeler were criticised for causing them. From then on, the ASL found itself on the defensive.<sup>185</sup>

Due to his heightened sense of self-importance, by 1925 Wheeler had already begun to lose control over the ASL and Congress.<sup>186</sup> Wheeler’s loss of favour encouraged old and new anti-Prohibition organizations to lobby for the restoration of those liquor laws valid in the years before Prohibition. Middle-class Americans were surprisingly influential in this regard.<sup>187</sup> One of the most powerful national organizations to fight against the Eighteenth Amendment was the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment (AAPA), established by William H. Stayton in 1919 but not reaching its prime until the second half of the 1920s.<sup>188</sup>

The person who in 1926 breathed life into the AAPA was Pierre S. du Pont – chairman and president of General Motors.<sup>189</sup> Du Pont had once believed that Prohibition would improve production, but when corporate reports demonstrated that production had actually decreased, he turned his back on Prohibition. As a result, the wealthy and charismatic du Pont became a leader of the wets and took over the AAPA. In 1928, when the Repeal movement began in earnest, seventy prominent businessmen and financiers who shared Pierre du Pont’s opinion of Prohibition joined the AAPA.<sup>190</sup>

Another prominent supporter of Repeal was Pauline Morton Sabin, a socially and politically-influential New York City resident, the daughter of the secretary of the Navy, the granddaughter of the governor, and the first female member of the Republican National Committee.<sup>191</sup> Originally, she supported Prohibition but was eventually disgusted by the social changes it had brought. She noted that “girls of a generation ago would not have

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<sup>184</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 222.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>186</sup> “Wayne Wheeler,” Westerville Public Library, <http://www.westervillelibrary.org/antisaloon-wheeler> (accessed April 20, 2016).

<sup>187</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 223.

<sup>188</sup> Blocker et al., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, 72.

<sup>189</sup> Ranjit S. Dighe, “Pierre S. du Pont and the Making of an Anti-Prohibition Activist,” *Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 24, no. 2 (Summer, 2010), <https://alcoholanddrugshistorysociety.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/shad-24-2-dighe.pdf> (accessed April 20, 2016).

<sup>190</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 297-299.

<sup>191</sup> Blocker et al., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, 535.

ventured into a saloon, ... but today girls and boys drink, at parties and everywhere, then stop casually at a speakeasy on the way home.”<sup>192</sup> In contrast to women who had fought for a dry nation in the years leading to the eighteenth amendment, Sabin was different because she believed that dry women had been dazzled by their dedication to the dry cause and did not perceive what it had actually done to society. This gave her the impulse “and determination not to reform Prohibition but to abolish it.”<sup>193</sup> Her husband was already a member of the AAPA, however Sabin decided to establish her own organization, the Women’s Organization for National Prohibition Reform (WONPR).<sup>194</sup>

At the same time in 1926 that the ASL started losing its influence, Wheeler was diagnosed with heart troubles, leaving him reportedly looking “like a corpse, haggard, weary, and spent.”<sup>195</sup> As his health worsened, his doctor advised rest. Wheeler listened and left his dry duties behind.<sup>196</sup> He soon died.<sup>197</sup>

Two major reactions appeared in newspapers after Wayne Wheeler’s death: the first was from his foes, who tried to blemish everything he had achieved during his career; the second was from his supporters, who either described him as a crusader whose legacy would never be forgotten, or as a hero. Nevertheless, the ASL needed a new leader. Internal disputes arose. Julian Codman, an eminent anti-Prohibition activist told his colleague, Pierre du Pont, that “the Anti-Saloon League has lately shown marked signs of weakness, largely because the Prohibition forces have been disorganized by the death of Wayne B. Wheeler.”<sup>198</sup> The most-likely replacement for Wheeler seemed to be James Cannon, Jr., who was a bishop of the southern Methodist Church and a well-known yet dubious American political and social leader. Cannon and his scandal would partially contribute to the fall of the ASL and Prohibition in general.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 224.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 315-316.

<sup>194</sup> Blocker et al., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History*, 535.

<sup>195</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 270.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 292-293.

<sup>197</sup> Daniel Okrent, “Wayne B. Wheeler: The Man Who Turned Off the Taps,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, [http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/wayne-b-wheeler-the-man-who-turned-off-the-taps-14783512/?no-ist=&onsite\\_campaign=photogalleries&page=5](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/wayne-b-wheeler-the-man-who-turned-off-the-taps-14783512/?no-ist=&onsite_campaign=photogalleries&page=5) (accessed April 21, 2016).

<sup>198</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 300-302.

<sup>199</sup> “James Cannon, Jr.,” *Encyclopaedia Virginia*, [http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Cannon\\_James\\_1864-1944#start\\_entry](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Cannon_James_1864-1944#start_entry) (accessed April 22, 2016).

In 1928, Cannon not only had a love affair while his wife was dying of cancer, but he misused Republican campaign funds of nearly \$48,000 and never gave an adequate explanation to investigators. Embraced by the American press, the Cannon issues worsened the ASL's already poor reputation.<sup>200</sup> Another nail in the ASL's coffin came with an accusation against William Hamilton Anderson, the General State Superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League of New York, who was charged with falsifying the financial records of the ASL.<sup>201</sup>

In general, the ASL's financial situation worsened in the last half of the 1920s. As a result, the ASL had to reduce its budget on the operations related not only to public relations, but also to the distribution of its supporting materials.<sup>202</sup> John D. Rockefeller, Jr. had for a long time supported Prohibition, however being disgusted by the consequences of Prohibition, he reversed his opinion and decided to stop donating to the ASL and other Prohibition movements. Instead, he himself started backing the Repeal of Prohibition.<sup>203</sup> However, Rockefeller, Jr. was not the only one to endorse Repeal. The anti-Prohibition zeal was growing, as reflected in a newspaper survey which concluded that more than three-quarters of Americans supported Repeal.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, in October 1929, the "devastating stock market crash . . . sounded the alarm that terrible economic times were around the corner."<sup>205</sup> In fact, the arrival of the Great Depression led to massive layoffs, high levels of poverty, and a governmental budget crisis stemming from a drastic decrease in tax collection.<sup>206</sup> No constitutional amendment had ever been repealed, but with growing support, the Eighteenth Amendment "was beginning to look like a candidate."<sup>207</sup>

From the very beginning of the Depression, more arguments in favour of Repeal arose, such as that it would bring more tax revenue from the manufacturing and selling of

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<sup>200</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 230-231.

<sup>201</sup> "Guide to the William H. Anderson and the Anti-Saloon League Papers," University of Chicago Library, <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/src/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.WHANDERSON> (accessed April 22, 2016); Behr, *Prohibition*, 231.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>203</sup> Jay D. Moore, *Alcoholics Anonymous and the Rockefeller Connection: How John D. Rockefeller Jr. and his Associates Saved AA* (Hillsborough: Lulu.com, 2015), 87.

<sup>204</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 233.

<sup>205</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 328.

<sup>206</sup> "The Great Depression," A&E Television Networks, <http://www.history.com/topics/great-depression> (accessed April 22, 2016).

<sup>207</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 328.

alcohol, or that reopening distilleries and breweries would give jobs to those in need.<sup>208</sup> That this financial crisis was a nationwide tragedy led the AAPA to initiate a campaign focused on defeating Prohibition, built on the argument that the government could use tax revenue from liquor productions and sales. Pierre du Pont argued that “the Repeal of the XVIIIth Amendment would permit Federal taxation in the amount of two billion dollars.”<sup>209</sup>

Nevertheless, the WONPR did not fall behind the AAPA in the campaign against Prohibition. On the contrary, the WONPR’s ranks at the beginning of the 1930s were joined by a huge number of women from various classes and of various nationalities, races, and ethnicities (including black women as well).<sup>210</sup> Extraordinarily successful, the WONPR by 1933 had more than 1.3 million supporters, and Sabin herself urged the WONPR to support Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his presidential campaign.<sup>211</sup> Roosevelt firmly believed that the disputes around Prohibition had to be decided by the society itself – in democratic way.<sup>212</sup> On the other hand, Roosevelt, much to the delight of anti-Prohibitionists, pointed out that the “legalization of beer would increase the Federal revenue by several hundred million dollars a year.”<sup>213</sup>

The Democrat Roosevelt eventually won the presidential election over his opposition, Herbert Hoover, and took office in 1933. With his election, there was nothing that could stop the Eighteenth Amendment from being repealed – the powerless ASL was on the verge of collapse, while pro-Repeal movements were gaining strength.<sup>214</sup> Apart from introducing the New Deal, a program designed to restore the U.S. economy and alleviate suffering,<sup>215</sup> Roosevelt proposed that Congress adjust the Volstead Act by increasing the percentage of real beer to 3.2 – Congress promptly accepted his proposal. The ratification process of the Twenty-first Amendment (the amendment that would repeal the Eighteenth

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 384.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>210</sup> Kenneth D. Rose, *American Women and the Repeal of Prohibition* (New York: NYU Press, 1997), 108.

<sup>211</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 341-350.

<sup>212</sup> Jeffrey W. Coker, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Bibliography* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005), 21.

<sup>213</sup> Okrent, *Last Call*, 350.

<sup>214</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 234-235.

<sup>215</sup> “The New Deal,” A&E Television Networks, <http://www.history.com/topics/new-deal> (accessed April 22, 2016).

Amendment) began on December 6, 1932. In December, 1933, after a year of a two-thirds ratification process, Utah became the thirty-sixth state to vote in favour of the Twenty-first Amendment. The production and consumption of liquor was legal again after thirteen turbulent years. Prohibition, notes Behr, “had become a joke.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 236.

## CONCLUSION

Prohibition was repealed on December 5, 1933, making the consumption and production of liquor legal again. Yet, the celebrations held in honor of its repeal were surprisingly mild, accompanied by generally-moderate drinking. Not only had American society matured, but with the Great Depression in full swing, lavish parties were out of fashion.<sup>217</sup>

The nationwide prohibition of alcohol did not achieve its goals. Even though the consumption of alcohol immediately dropped as soon as Prohibition came into effect, it subsequently continued to increase again and became even higher than in pre-Prohibition years. Furthermore, the higher demand for alcohol during Prohibition not only allowed organized crime to flourish but resulted in thousands of cases of alcohol poisoning. Nor did American morals improve. Prisons were filled to capacity and the bribery of officials was commonplace. Finally, trying to enforce Prohibition cost the federal government greatly but was ineffective, which led to public outcry after 1929.<sup>218</sup> Ultimately, only the corrupt benefited from Prohibition, making repealing it the right move.

Lacking alcohol, Prohibition encouraged many drinkers to switch to other substances, such as cocaine, marijuana or opium.<sup>219</sup> As a result, national drug prohibition in the United States naturally evolved from alcohol prohibition, and agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, were established in the late 1920s. Yet, some eighty-five years later, narcotics prohibition in the United States has also failed.<sup>220</sup> If the United States had learned from its previous mistake with alcohol prohibition, it might have regulated and taxed narcotics instead of banning them outright.<sup>221</sup> The decriminalization or legalization of recreational marijuana, which is now occurring on a state-by-state basis, is a step in the right direction, but greater reforms, especially on the national level, would reduce crime and law

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<sup>217</sup> Behr, *Prohibition*, 236-237.

<sup>218</sup> Mark Thornton, "Alcohol Prohibition Was a Failure," *Cato Institute Policy Analysis*, no. 157 (1991): 1-8.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>220</sup> Harry G. Levine and Craig Reinerman, "Alcohol Prohibition and Drug Prohibition," CEDRO – centrum voor drugsonderzoek, <http://www.cedro-uva.org/lib/levine.alcohol.html> (accessed May 1, 2016).

<sup>221</sup> Thornton, "Alcohol Prohibition Was a Failure," 1.

enforcement expenses, and increase tax revenues. Moreover, demystifying narcotics might reduce consumption as well.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> “Canada to Introduce Legislation to Decriminalize Recreational Cannabis,” *The Guardian News*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/20/canada-legislation-decriminalize-recreational-cannabis-weed-marijuana> (accessed May 1, 2016).

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