

Prohibition:

Early Prohibition Party cartoon,



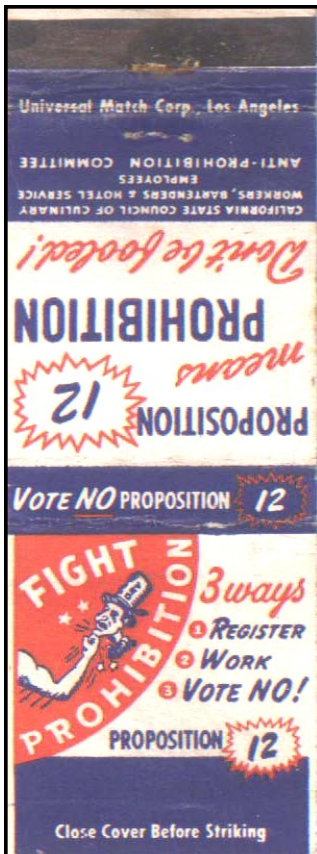
“In May 1657 the General Court of Massachusetts made illegal the sale of strong liquor. There was a clear consensus that while alcohol was a gift from God, its abuse was from the Devil. Explanation was sought by medical men. One suggestion had come from Dr. Benjamin Rush. In 1784, he argued that the excessive use of alcohol was injurious to physical and psychological health. Apparently influenced by Rush's widely discussed belief, about 200 farmers in a Connecticut community formed a temperance association in 1789. Similar associations were formed in Virginia in 1800 and New York in 1808. Within the next decade, other temperance organizations were formed in eight states.

The prohibition or "dry" movement began in the 1840s, spearheaded by pietistic religious denominations, especially the Methodists. The late 1800s saw the temperance movement broaden its focus from abstinence to all behavior and institutions related to alcohol consumption. Some successes were registered in the 1850s. However, prohibition was not a major political issue during the American Civil War. It revived in the 1880s, with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Prohibition Party.

In 1881, Kansas became the first state to outlaw alcoholic beverages in its Constitution, with Carrie Nation gaining notoriety for enforcing the provision herself by walking into saloons, scolding customers, and using her hatchet to destroy bottles of liquor. Other activists enforced the cause by entering saloons, singing, praying, and urging saloon keepers to stop selling alcohol. Many other states, especially in the South, also enacted prohibition, along with many individual counties. Hostility to saloons and their political influence was characteristic of the Progressive Era. Supported by the anti-German mood of World War I, the Anti-Saloon League, through intense lobbying, pushed the Constitutional amendment through Congress and the states, and it went into effect in 1920.

National Prohibition was accomplished by means of the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (ratified January 16, 1919) and the Volstead Act (passed October 28, 1919). Prohibition began on January 16, 1920. The main force for prohibition came from pietistic Protestants, who comprised majorities in the Republican party in the North, and the Democratic party in the South. Catholics and German-Americans were prohibition's main detractors; however, German-Americans were discredited by World War I, and their protests were ignored.

Although it was highly controversial, Prohibition was widely supported by diverse groups. While the manufacture, sale, and transport of alcohol was illegal in the U.S., it was not illegal in surrounding countries. Distilleries and breweries in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean flourished as their products were either consumed by visiting Americans or illegally imported to the U.S. Chicago became known notoriously as a haven for disobeying Prohibition during the time known as the Roaring Twenties. Many of Chicago's most notorious gangsters, including Al Capone and his enemy Bugs Moran, made

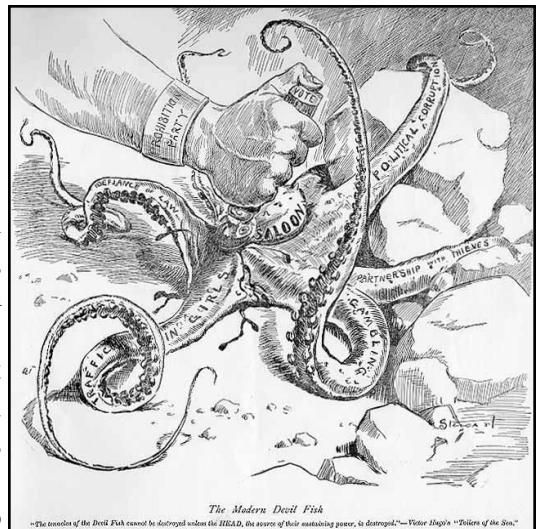


A Short History

*Early Prohibition
Party cartoon,*

millions of dollars through illegal alcohol sales.

As Prohibition became increasingly unpopular, especially in the big cities, "Repeal" was eagerly anticipated. On March 23, 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law an amendment to the Volstead Act known as the Cullen-Harrison Act, allowing the manufacture and sale of "3.2 beer" and light wines. Roosevelt made his famous remark; "I think this would be a good time for a beer." The Eighteenth Amendment was repealed later in 1933 with ratification of the Twenty-first Amendment. After the repeal, some states continued to enforce prohibition laws. Mississippi, which had made alcohol illegal in 1907, was the last state to repeal Prohibition, in 1966. Kansas did not allow sale of liquor "by the drink" (on-premises) until 1987. There are still numerous "dry" counties or towns where no liquor is sold, even though liquor can be brought in for private use.



Many social problems have been attributed to the Prohibition era. A profitable, often violent, black market for alcohol flourished. Racketeering happened when powerful gangs corrupted law enforcement agencies. Stronger liquor surged in popularity because its potency made it more profitable to smuggle. The cost of enforcing Prohibition was high, and the lack of tax revenues on alcohol (some \$500 million annually nationwide) affected government coffers. When repeal of Prohibition occurred in 1933, organized crime lost nearly all of its black market alcohol profits in most states (states still had the right to enforce their own laws concerning alcohol consumption), because of competition with low-priced alcohol sales at legal liquor stores.

Prohibition had a notable effect on the alcohol brewing industry in the United States. When Prohibition ended, only half the breweries that had previously existed reopened. The post-Prohibition period saw the introduction of the American lager style of beer, which dominates today. Wine historians also note that Prohibition destroyed what was a fledgling wine industry in the United States. Productive wine quality grape vines were replaced by lower quality vines growing thicker skinned grapes that could be more easily transported. Much of the institutional knowledge was also lost as wine makers either emigrated to other wine producing countries or left the business altogether. At the end of Prohibition some supporters openly admitted its failure.

Despite the efforts of Heber J. Grant and the LDS Church, a Utah convention helped ratify the 21st Amendment. While Utah can be considered the deciding 36th state to ratify the 21st Amendment and make it law, the day Utah passed the Amendment, both Pennsylvania and Ohio passed it as well. All 38 states that decided to hold conventions passed the Amendment, while only 36 states were needed (three-fourths of the 48 that existed). So, even if Utah had not passed it, it would have become law.”

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibition_in_the_United_States]

