

Prohibition in Illinois Presentation by Kathi Kresol

Introduction:

The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—which banned the manufacture, transportation and sale of intoxicating liquors—ushered in a period in American history known as Prohibition. Prohibition was ratified by the states on January 16, 1919. It officially went into effect on January 17, 1920, with the passage of the Volstead Act.

In early 1933, Congress adopted a resolution proposing a 21st Amendment to the Constitution that would repeal the 18th. The 21st Amendment was ratified on December 5, 1933, ending Prohibition.

Prohibition exceptions or “loopholes”:

Prohibition allowed for rare exceptions, most notably in the case of religious or medicinal alcohol, and bootleggers took full advantage of the loopholes.

- Fruit wines made by farmers

- Alcohol stashed away BEFORE prohibition took effect

- Prescriptions

- Religious Sacramental wines

Chicago area gangs and their leaders

"Big Jim" Colosimo: The original boss who ran a massive network of brothels

Dean O'Banion: Leader of the North Side Gang, the primary rival to Torrio and Capone.

Johnny "The Fox" Torrio: The mastermind who built the Chicago Outfit into a corporate-style syndicate.

Al "Scarface" Capone: As the most infamous leader of the Chicago Outfit from 1925 to 1931 Capone was an American gangster and businessman who attained notoriety during the Prohibition era. Capone controlled Chicago's illegal alcohol, gambling, and vice, amassing immense power and wealth through ruthless tactics.

George "Bugs" Moran: Took over the North Side Gang after O'Banion's death. Several members of his gang were killed in the St. Valentine's Day massacre in 1929 as part of the Beer Wars.

Rock Island area:

John Patrick Looney: Looney was an Irish mob boss who created an illegal empire that included gambling, prostitution, protection money, and illegal alcohol starting in the early 1900s. His control included Rock Island, Davenport, and surrounding towns.

Southern Illinois (Williamson and Franklin Counties):

Charlie Birger: American bootlegger during the Prohibition period in southern Illinois. (Born Shachna Itzak Birger).

Shelton Brothers: Carl (born 1888), Earl (born 1890), and Bernie "Red" Shelton (born 1898) They were an early Prohibition-era bootlegging gang based in southern Illinois. They were the main rivals of the famous bootlegger Charles Birger and his gang.

Rockford Area

Giovingo Family: At least two of the brothers were engaged in the illegal alcohol business.

Elgin Area:

James Reitmayer: owner of the Reitmayer's Beer garden: an early speakeasy in Elgin.

Lawrence "Butch" Crowley: co-owner of the Elgin Ice and Beverage Company.

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