

Prohibition

During the early 1900s, an anti-alcohol social trend gradually built momentum until the 18th Amendment to the Constitution was passed banning the manufacture, transport, and sale of alcohol. The loudest proponents of this amendment were women, most notably the Women's Christian Temperance Union. National prohibition officially went into effect on January 16, 1920. Federal prohibition agents were tasked with enforcing the law.

Regardless of its prohibited status, many bars continued to illegally serve alcohol to customers. Known as speakeasies, these underground and highly secretive dens of iniquity continually sprung up during prohibition. It seemed that as fast as one speakeasy could be shut down, two more sprung up in its place.

Many began to question the effectiveness of prohibition, and saw the hypocrisy of many prominent members of society and politicians who used alcohol during prohibition as reason enough to question the law. President Harding himself kept the White House stocked with bootleg liquor even though he voted for prohibition as a senator.

One unforeseen result of prohibition was the effect it had on the American grape growing industry. Since most grapes grown in America were shipped to wineries, planters uprooted their fields believing that their market had disappeared. An enormous shortage of grapes ensued and those who still grew



them found their prices to have risen from 20 dollars per ton before prohibition to over 200 dollars per ton during prohibition. Rushing to rejoin the market, planters regrew excessive amounts of grapes and the price plummeted 15 dollars per ton by the end of prohibition.