



Prohibition had the effect of potentially criminalising millions of Americans.

Millions are not prepared to accept the new laws and are willing to work ways around them.



**DEFYING THE LAW**

- MOONSHINE (illegal alcohol) is produced on illegal stills in hidden factories, mines, barns, huts and forests. Agents found and destroyed up to 280,000 stills but there were plenty to replace them and few convictions.
- SMUGGLING. The US had a border that has thousands of miles in length, Canada, Mexico and Caribbean countries all had alcohol and many became wealthy smuggling it into the US. The Real McCoy became famous for his smuggled Scotch from the West Indies.
- SPEAKEASIES- up to 250,000 of these illegal bars sprang up.

DRIED WINE- California wine sellers dried the wine into blocks and sold it - buyers soaked it in water for 1 day to create alcohol.

DRINKING- it was illegal to sell, produce and transport but not drink. Rich Americans stocked up their wine sellers before prohibition.

**LOOPHOLES**

There were major loopholes which were keenly exploited. Alcohol was allowed for religious occasions. 🏠

These boomed in popularity 😊

Doctors could also hand out prescriptions for alcohol. There were over 10 million of these handed out!

**FAILURE OF ENFORCEMENT** 🇺🇸

The Federal prohibition agents were poorly paid, ill resourced and there was only 1,500 for the whole USA! Many were open to bribes and corruption.

It was a fact that many in Harding's government including himself were not privately in favour of prohibition. There were major scandals which implicated many of his advisors in corruption.

The border was too huge to adequately patrol it had a 4,000 km border with Canada alone and nearly 30,000 km of coastline.

Even when they did spot smuggling the agents had slower cars or boats and the bootleggers almost always got away

Agents were only paid \$2,500 a year making them vulnerable to corruption. 1 in 12 took bribes. Even Judges took bribes.

THE UNTOUCHABLES were set up under the command of Elliot NESS. They were a dedicated and more successful group who eventually got Capone jailed for tax evasion!

**THE WICKERSHAM REPORT 1929**

was set up to report back on the effects of Prohibition to Congress. It agreed that :

- 1) Prohibition was not working and was unenforceable
- 2) It was undermining respect for the law with so many Americans ignoring it
- 3) People were angry about the high levels of crime and gangsterism.

Just like in 1918 in the run up to Prohibition, there was a varied group of people and groups who were determined to end prohibition. They campaigned vigorously to end it.



**WEALTHY**

Rich businessmen like **Pierre DuPont** (chemicals millionaire) campaigned against prohibition. He saw it as an attack not only on American industry but on American freedoms. He funded the **ASSOCIATION AGAINST PROHIBITION AMENDMENT AAPA**



**WOMEN**

Famous Americans like **Pauline Sabin** campaigned to end it claiming that the massive levels of people disobeying the law gave children an open disrespect for the law.

She founded the **WONPR- Women's Organisation for National Prohibition Reform**. This again showed the effective political voice women were using. It was much larger than the temperance opponents.



**ECONOMICS**

The 1930's and the Great Depression helped change Americans. They realised the need for jobs associated with alcohol. They also badly needed tax revenue to pay for the swelling unemployment



**HEALTH**

There were major dangers to health from unregulated production of alcohol. There were over **100 deaths** from moonshine alcohol poisoning.

**ORGANISED OPPOSITION TO PROHIBITION**

**IT WAS UNENFORCEABLE**



**WHY DID PROHIBITION FAIL?**

**IT HELPED FUEL GROWING CRIMINALITY**

**BOOTLEGGERS**

Many big criminal organisations saw prohibition as gold dust to develop their criminal enterprise. Bootlegging (smuggling) alcohol became a massive business for these criminal gangs. There was a switch from beer to spirits as they had more alcohol and were easier to hide.

**RACKETEERING**

Another growth industry was racketeering which was intimidating business and industry into offering 'protection'. Failure to pay this could result in destruction of premises, injury or death.

**BEFORE 1920's**

Criminal gangs were quite low key and based on low level prostitution or local racketeering. Prohibition allowed these gangs to boom in finance and power. It was big criminal business.

**POLITICS**

Prohibition had split the Democrat party due to the opposing interests of various regions.

However, by 1933 their Presidential candidate **Franklin Delano ROOSEVELT** was clearly against prohibition. This became a popular message which helped get him elected



**AL CAPONE**

**AL CAPONE, CHICAGO AND VIOLENCE**

Gangsters like AL CAPONE were feared in cities like **CHICAGO**. He was making up to **\$1500 a minute in 1928**. Capone controlled the Chicago underworld. He worked his way up to lead a gang called **THE OUTFIT**. He once killed several men with a baseball bat.

**RACKETEERING** was also a way of making money through intimidation. Businesses were forced to pay money for 'protection' if they didn't then they would clearly face the threat of looting or burning by the gangs

His set of **700 TORPEDOES** (assassins) were deeply feared as they were used to kill and intimidate.

There were **130 gangland killings in Chicago between 1926-27**

Many gangsters were killed including **Tight Lips Gussenberg**.

Other criminal gangs like the **MAFIA** expanded at this time.

**THE MONEY WAS USED TO GAIN POWER AND CONTROL**

**BRIBERY** and corruption were very common with criminal gangs frequently **paying off local politicians**. It was thought Capone could manipulate elections through the use of intimidation

Money was also used to **bribe prohibition agents and the local police**, who turned a blind eye to his operations.

Money also bought **faster cars and boats** enabling them to outrun and often outgun federal agents



**ST VALENTINES DAY MASSACRE 1929**

Capone ordered his assassins to murder 7 of his main rivals

They dressed as policemen to make it seem like a police raid and then opened fire, killing them all.

Capone was known to kill people himself. He killed three Sicilians with a baseball bat in what became known as the **LAST SUPPER**

**WAS IT A COMPLETE FAILURE?**

- Alcohol consumption decreased by 70% in the 1920s with added health effects. Deaths from liver disease decreased dramatically
- There remained high degrees of rural support for prohibition. They saw drunkenness as a trait of the cities
- Religious groups continued to support prohibition throughout its time arguing that it improved family life and morals.
- Middle Class communities also tended to support it arguing that it helped American productivity.



**ENDING PROHIBITION**

ROOSEVELT was elected into office in a landslide in 1933. He passed the **CULLEN HARRISON** or **BEER PERMIT ACT** allowing alcohol to be sold again.

**DECEMBER 1933**

**21st AMENDMENT** ended prohibition.

