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# Changing Drink: How the Eighteenth Amendment Significantly Altered the Way People Regard Drink

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**Chapter One: Introduction**

Early nineteenth century Americans embraced a culture of drink that was embedded in all parts of life, including their work, family, religion, traditions, and social relations. Critics of this drink culture succeeded in banning the production and sale of alcohol under the Eighteenth Amendment which lasted from 1919 until 1933. This abrupt transformation dramatically changed American's drinking habits by forcing the consumption of alcohol into a new culture of secrecy and unlawfulness. By the time the nation's leaders realized the error of Prohibition, the culture of alcohol and drink had drastically transformed from an integrated part of public life to a cocktail culture mediated by marketers and attuned to the new aura of exoticism and taste preferences ushered in during the post-Prohibition era.

Public officials enacted Prohibition as an experiment that would improve Americans' work ethic and morals. The experiment did, however, have some unintended consequences. When voters ratified the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, government officials did not foresee what was to ensue. People did not give up drink entirely, nor did anyone's morals and ethics significantly improve. In fact, for many, the opposite was true. People across the country began to drink differently, and because it was illegal, many people began to practice unlawful ways. The Eighteenth Amendment that banned alcohol was meant to be a permanent part of the Constitution; it was meant to be a long lasting ban. There were many aspects of the law, however, that the creators of the law did not see clearly. The law did not take into account how the ban on alcohol would affect peoples' habits and traditions, nor did it take into consideration that perhaps not everyone wanted to change. The biggest misstep in writing and enacting the law was not taking into consideration human behavior and free will.

Prohibition has been a topic of interest for many historians since the failure of the governmental experiment and the Twenty-First Amendment overturning the act. Prohibition is unique in that the Eighteenth Amendment was the first time in American history where rights were being revoked instead of gifted through a Constitutional amendment. It was also the first time where many people were openly adamant about disobeying the law and publicly misbehaving to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the law.

Many historical works focus on Prohibition, including the recent and well regarded *Dry Manhattan* (2007) by Michael Lerner. In this case study of Prohibition-era New York, Lerner argues that Prohibition was about more than simply the right to drink. It was instead about "competing visions of American society."[i] Social conservatives argued that America had become a nation of drunkards and demanded that the manufacture and sale of alcohol be prohibited by law. Others saw such actions as antithetical to notions of American liberty and, moreover, thought the prohibition of alcohol impossible to enforce. Lerner showcases the struggle that Americans engaged in, as social conservatives came to recognize that policing and controlling those differences was an unrealistic goal. Daniel Okrent, in *Last Call the Rise and Fall of Prohibition,* argues that Prohibition ultimately changed the way people live, and that it "fundamentally redefined the role of the federal government."[ii] Both believe that the critical lesson of Prohibition involved understanding the limits of government power to engage in social control. Okrent's work is featured in Ken Burns' current documentary on Prohibition; a three-part series on Prohibition that aired on PBS in 2011 and earned great on-air ratings. His documentary did so well because of America's continued interest in Prohibition. Most Americans view the Prohibition era as a glamorous time, as suggested by the term "The Roaring 20's." Many people saw Prohibition as a time of great exuberance and freedom, dominated by

gangsters and rum-running. Rather than viewing Prohibition as simply a "failed experiment," from which Americans could return to the status quo ante, this paper argues that Prohibition fundamentally changed what it meant to drink in America.

This paper will discuss the transition of behavior before, during, and after the Prohibition era. It will look at the issues that prompted the new law, as well as how Prohibition forced a change in early drinking standards and stigmas. Based on a review of existing literature, as well as an analysis of primary sources contained in Johnson & Wales University's Culinary Archives, this paper will discuss how these changes to American drink culture are still evident today.

Chapter Two will discuss the events that led up to the Eighteenth Amendment that created the prohibition of alcohol, including religious and political movements, as well as the impact of new immigrants' arrival in America. It will also cover how drink was incorporated into life before Prohibition, as well as the people who opposed drinking. It will discuss common drinking practices and social stigmas based on ethnicity, gender, and class. It will conclude with the passage of the Volstead Act and the new laws' effect on Americans.

Chapter Three focuses on the time during which Prohibition was enforced. It will begin by discussing the abrupt change from daily life before Prohibition into what people consider "the roaring 20's." It will discuss the major changes to daily life for men and women, as well as how society as a whole was altered. The chapter will also discuss why these changes came about, and the impact of the general unlawfulness that came with it. It will discuss many of the hypocrisies surrounding drink as well as crafty ways people devised to circumvent the law. This chapter will conclude by focusing on the repeal of Prohibition and the changes to the way most Americans viewed the act of drinking.

Chapter Four will begin by discussing some of the major changes to American drink culture that occurred between the end of Prohibition and 1950. It will then note the major changes in drink based on group identities such as gender and social class. This chapter will also explore how liquor and drink itself has changed, discussing issues such as improvements in quality, availability, and branding. It will conclude by discussing how drink has transformed from the early nineteenth century into the period after Prohibition, reflecting on how the legacy of Prohibition remains clearly evident today.

**Chapter Two: Drink and Temperance in Early American Life**

During the late nineteenth century and through the turn of the twentieth century, drink was as common a daily part of life as was church and work throughout most of the country. Men often drank daily. Much of daily life focused around the local saloon. Men would frequent the saloons for the free lunch they provided along with a drink purchase. The children would be sent at night to obtain growlers of beer for the family dinner. For many of those new to America, drink was embedded in the culture, and it was common practice to drink beer every day all day for nutritional and safety purposes. White men of the slave holding south enjoyed whiskey, which was best distilled and aged in southern climates. In New England, the drink of choice was typically gin or hard cider.[iii] Outside of the cities in more rural areas, strong beer was served in the morning so that the men could do strong work. The saloons provided free lunch with drink, which is how many working men could afford to eat lunch. This habit of drinking throughout the day was not in a conscious effort to become inebriated. Rather beer and drink were thought to be a good part of one's diet, and in most cases a safer alternative to common water.[iv]

Drink culture grew more varied during the nineteenth century as immigrants from new ethnic cultures arrived in the United States in large numbers. As with early Anglo-Americans, drink often coincided with daily life and traditions. The Irish and German immigrants in particular both held long standing traditions of being brewers and beer drinkers. These people made up much of the influx of new immigrants to America in the mid nineteenth century. The German immigrants that came over were not only fond of drinking beer, but they were expertly trained at making beer as well.[v] They also knew best how to market their beer so more people would drink it. The new waves of immigrants had a great impact on brewing in America. They referred to their beer as "liquid bread," which made beer seem more innocent and morally upstanding, and equally fit for men, women, and children.

Trying to distinguish "healthful" beer from dangerous liquor, brewers liked to refer to it as "liquid bread." Detroit brewer George H. Gies took the healthfulness argument several steps further.

[vi]

Image 2.1: Beer Marketed for Nutritional Purposes as "Liquid Bread"

The marketing of the beer was perhaps the most important deciding factor as to drink beer or liquor. In fact, calling beer "liquid bread" really is not too far from the truth. All beer contains grains, water, and yeast, all of which are integral components to bread. In Bavaria, the monks brewed bock beer, which is a slightly stronger beer variety than most. They then took their beer to the Vatican, to ask the Pope if they could substitute their bock beer in place of plain bread. Fortunately for the monks, the beer had spoiled on the journey, thereby ruining its typically pleasing taste, and convincing the pope to allow the consumption of beer, rather than bread, during the forty days of lent.[vii] When Germans immigrants marketed their beer in America as "liquid bread," it was more than a marketing ploy. In fact, it reflected their cultural assumptions about the natural place of beer in one's diet. This worked to their advantage when the brewers were targeted by the temperance movement. Intolerance towards drink might be seen as reasonable, but having a general intolerance towards bread was inconceivable. However, the labeling of beer as "liquid bread" was not enough to hold off supporters of Prohibition. (See image 2.1).

The movement towards Prohibition emerged gradually. The American Temperance Society was founded in 1826.[viii] Its supporters pushed for the total prohibition of alcohol, rather than for personal moderation. Maine was the first state to pass a law banning alcohol in 1851, much earlier than the national law that went into effect in 1919. Although there were many groups pushing to outlaw alcohol, the movement was not able to immediately take hold, due in part to early politicians who, unwilling to support such a divisive proposition, favored moderation over an outright ban. In 1887, President Grover Cleveland made a comment on the

consumption of alcohol. In reference to his personal preference of drinking beer and lighter wines, he notes that "I do not recommend their use to others, because I believe every man should be a law unto himself in this matter." At the beginning of the movement towards Prohibition, people, including most politicians, were not in favor of strict government regulation of drinking. It was not until much later, near the turn of the century, when the Women's Christian Temperance Movement (WCTU), the Anti-Saloon League, and the American Temperance Society began to really take hold and work together as a combined force to have a voice in politics heard through political lobbying. This is when the Prohibition movement began to take hold.

One of the main proponents of the Prohibition movement was the Anti-Saloon League, a group dedicated to shutting down every saloon in America. This group fed on anxiety over the influx of new immigrants and led native born Americans to reconsider the role of drink in public life as an expression of anti-immigrant sentiment. Members of the league believed saloons to be breeding grounds for immoral behavior and wished to eradicate all of them. However, saloons were utilized in many ways, and were often much more than simply a place to drink and get drunk. "Saloonkeepers cashed paychecks, extended credit, supplied a mailing address…"[ix] These saloons that were so hated by certain groups actually did many people a great deal of good. They provided sleeping space for those who did not yet have a permanent home. They also would serve as a makeshift post office, holding letters for those who did have homes for mail to be sent to. The barkeep knew everyone, and was typically helpful to those who needed it. Saloon owners in port town areas also provided notices of work available at the docks.

To a casual uninformed viewer, the saloon might appear threatening. It was dark, and inhabited by hardworking men who may not appear their best after working all day and who

were now drinking. There was a lot of noise, and no real semblance of order. But a closer look could reveal a potentially supportive environment, where the owner might have been helpful and gracious, and where work could be found for decent pay. But still, many people who were in favor of Prohibition failed to view saloons in any positive light. They were only seen by some as debaucherous dwellings where men went to waste their paychecks and get drunk.

Saloons were, however, significantly more substantial. They provided services, the saloonkeeps were trusted members of the community, and often the drinks found at a saloon were safer than the local water. "In the late nineteenth century, when both drinking water and fresh milk were of questionable quality, the saloon's beer was seen as a cheap, nutritious, and safe component of working-class diets."[x] Daily life focused around saloons in many instances. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner centered around the bar. Beer was nutritious, and certainly safer than common drinking water. The German immigrants knew it as "liquid bread" and valued it as such. Being comprised mainly of sturdy whole grains yeast and water, the notion is not far off. The saloon provided safe beverages as well as a good deal of people's nutrition. The saloon was much more than a location in which to get drunk, as the Dry lobby perceived it to be.

The Anti-Saloon League also associated men's going to saloons with violence and unruly behavior that appeared particularly threatening to women. This argument, advanced by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, helped push the issue of Prohibition onto the political agenda. The WCTU was founded in Ohio in 1874. Frances Willard, who became president of the WCTU in 1879, led fellow Christian Women in the fight against the ills of alcohol. Her organization waged this campaign not just through political lobbying, but also by praying for lost souls. The women would rally together within their respective communities and hold pray-ins at local saloons and bars, protesting the sale of alcohol and demanding that people stop selling it

and drinking it. Through these protests, the WCTU was able to drive liquor sales out of almost two hundred and fifty communities in America. They had begun to realize that as a group, their power lay in their women's voices, which could be used as a form of moral persuasion to convince people of the evils of alcohol. Willard recognized that this form of persuasion could further women's political pull as well.[xi] The WCTU was not just a single group of women, but rather was composed of many groups of women across America who used their moral and religious authority to fight for political change.

Many blamed the ills of society on the consumption of alcohol by men. The time before Prohibition was also the time before women's suffrage. Women could not vote or own property, and in the rare case of divorce, women had no rights to their children. Women could, however, claim to be defending morality and could say that they were trying in earnest to protect their homes and families. These women lacked political representation, but they could use the issue of Prohibition to further their cause and advance their political standings. These Christian women used this new group to lobby for total abstinence as a way of diminishing improper behavior by men, and also to gain some control where they had none. The WCTU was forceful in its lobbying, and thus women's political power was instrumental in passing the Eighteenth Amendment and securing the Prohibition of alcohol a year before women secured their own political representation through the Nineteenth Amendment.

The WCTU and the Anti-Saloon League fought hard to outlaw drink in America, even though most Americans were not in favor of banning alcohol outright. The Dry lobby, however, was a major political force, garnering support from politicians who approved the law as a way of bolstering their image. Meanwhile, opponents of the law, primarily workers and immigrants, were largely disenfranchised and thus not properly represented. Immigrants were often denied

the right to vote, and many who were illiterate simply did not vote. Powerful politicians were in favor of Prohibition, hoping to project the image of someone with outstanding moral values, whereas the average American was very much against Prohibition. Few people desired to have their rights limited and a integral part of their daily lives taken away.

Prohibitionists' primary goal was to stop Americans from drinking as a way to cure the many ills of a supposed morally corrupt society. What happened as a result of the Prohibition experiment was quite different than those who lobbied for it thought it would be. The American people thought that the Eighteenth Amendment would put a permanent end to the manufacture and sale of alcohol. The driving force behind the law was that a ban on alcohol would "morally uplift" society, making the American people healthier and harder working, and ultimately creating a better way to live. The law went into effect because the lobby promised that the absence of alcohol would lead to a more moral and a more efficient society.[xii] However, as the next chapter reveals, the results of Prohibition would be very different.

## Chapter 3: Prohibition and the New Face of America

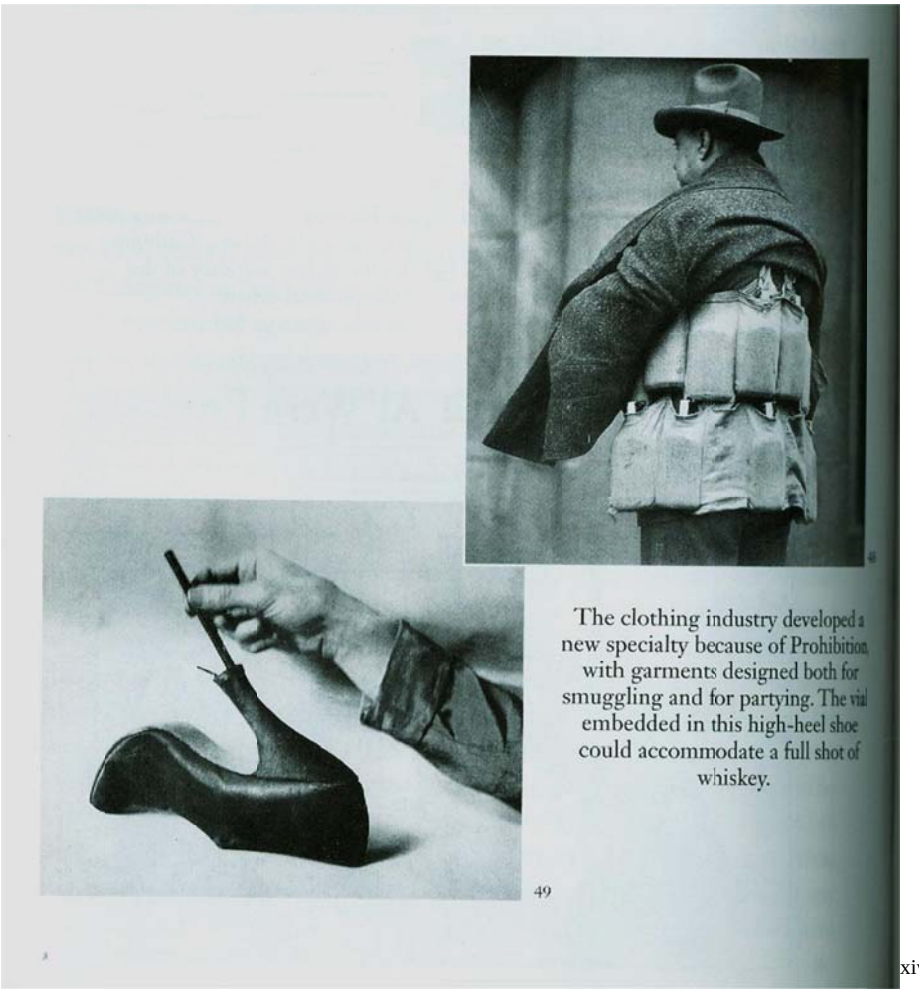
Chapter Two argued that early nineteenth century Americans embraced a culture of drink that was embedded in all parts of life, including their work, family, religion, traditions, and social relations. The abrupt transformation wrought by Prohibition left Americans unable to drink freely. This dramatic change in American's drinking habits forced the consumption of alcohol into a new culture of secrecy and unlawfulness.

During Prohibition, the majority of activities having to do with drinking were illegal, including public drinking as well as the purchase, production, and manufacture of alcohol. There

were, of course, some loopholes in the system. Near beer could be made at equal to or less than half of a percent, or .05% alcohol by volume. Prescriptions could also be obtained by a physician for limited alcohol as a medication for various ailments. Prescription alcohol was one of the main exceptions to the Volstead Act, and the only loophole to allow for the major distribution of alcohol. The physicians understood that these prescriptions were sure to be much sought out, and many doctors gained legal access to alcohol prescriptions. Within six months after Prohibition went into effect, over fifteen thousand physicians had already signed up to be eligible to dole out the alcohol as medicine.[xiii] The physicians all lined up to receive permits because they knew that now that the law said drink was illegal, people would be willing to pay for it, especially if it was technically deemed legal. People were going to continue to drink, and getting a prescription for hard alcohol made it much easier to obtain. However, getting a prescription from a doctor and getting it filled regularly was costly, as well as risky. The prescriptions were on numbered slips distributed by the government, so the individual receiving alcohol as medical care was not anonymous.

Obtaining a bogus prescription for alcohol was just one of many ways people found a way to not follow the Prohibition laws. People found creative ways to evade the law. This habit of circumventing the law seemed to work well for many people, and has carried into some of the ways Americans act in society today. People still, to some extent, tolerate underage drinking, as well as drinking in areas and manners where it is inappropriate. It is never appropriate to do things such as sneak in alcohol to sporting events, concerts, theaters, etc., but many people do it. This stems from Prohibition where the desperation for alcohol led people to think up ways in which to effectively smuggle alcohol whenever they saw fit. There are numerous new inventions that help facilitate sneaking alcohol into establishments where it does not belong. During

Prohibition, women could purchase specially designed garter belts that held a small flask at the thigh. Shoes for women were being designed to hold vials of alcohol in the heel of the shoe. Men were able to hide flasks within their jackets without encountering any major problems while doing so. Drinking for non-medicinal purposes was still illegal, so people found creative ways around the flawed system. (See image 3.1).




[xiv]

3.1: New Clothing Inventions to Disguise Carrying Alcohol on One's Person

The act of making drinking, formerly understood to be a personal choice and an individual liberty, illegal, was rather off-putting for most people. In Ken Burns' PBS documentary, he notes that our country was founded partially on the notion of personal freedoms

and choices. These new laws banning alcohol in all of its many forms was the first time in American history where personal freedoms were being taken away.[xv] The Constitution, as well as the Bill of Rights and its amendments were written to protect the rights of people to make their own liberties. People had the right to own property, to bear arms, as well as the right to choose their religion without persecution.

For many cultures, alcohol and religion are very much intertwined. The Catholic Church serves wine as the blood of Christ at every mass, and has been following this practice for almost two thousand years. In Hebrew, which is the language of the Jewish religion, there are thirteen different words for wine.[xvi] There were stipulations put into the Eighteenth Amendment specifying the acceptable usage of sacramental wine for religious purposes. However, there was still a lack of freedom associated with this law, as there was a specific allotment of sacramental wine allowed, and it was now controlled by the government. With this act of regulation, Congress appeared to undermine the historic separation of Church and State and was accused of attempting to control religion.

Many ethnic cultures were also opposed to the new law. The Germans have been brewing beer for over eight hundred years, and the art of brewing is thoroughly imbedded within their culture. The Germans also established Reinheitsgebot, which is a beer purity law established in 1516, and have been proudly brewing “pure beer” ever since. The Italians have a long running relationship with wine, dating back to the Roman Empire, when the legionnaires would carry wine with them in their canteens as opposed to water. Wine was cleaner and more sanitary than the highly polluted, unfiltered common water supply. Prohibition took away these deeply engrained habits from everyone. Not only was it off putting to have people’s freedoms torn away, but many people, especially immigrant brewers, lost their jobs. People were now

upset about this loss of choice, so they chose to find ways around the law, so as to preserve their livelihoods and means of cultural expression.

One way people got around the illegalities of alcohol was to make their own alcohol at home. Although this was common practice for many people, it was still considered manufacturing alcohol and therefore illegal and dangerous. They were not, by any means, producing quality alcohol. Rather, they produced "Bathtub Gin," as it was often called, by setting up a temporary, low quality distillation set up and literally stored the product in the bathtub, as it was the only vessel large enough to hold the large quantity of gin. This was a dangerous practice because if the distillery was set up poorly, catastrophe was imminent. The liquid needed to be heated to a high temperature, potentially creating a fire hazard. When the alcohol is in the distillation process, it is heated, and the vapors are then collected, cooled, and reheated. This gives the alcohol a higher proof or alcohol content. If not done properly, especially in an area with less than ideal ventilation, the alcohol vapors also posed a risk. However, these risks seemed unimportant to many, as procuring alcohol, not practicing safety, was the main concern. Acquiring alcohol for personal use for entertaining or even to run an underground speakeasy put many in jeopardy.

Another way people created the alcohol they so desperately wanted was by using common household ingredients and blending them into something that might resemble alcohol. In 1933, M. I. Fogelsonger wrote a book titled "The Secrets of the Liquor Merchant Revealed, or the Art of Manufacturing the Various Kinds and Qualities of Brandies, Whiskies, Gins, Rums, Bitters, Wines, Cordials, Syrups, Etc." Fogelsonger's text gives detailed recipes for creating all of these beverages from the comfort of one's own home. The book was written and published during Prohibition, as a wet response to the new law. People did not appreciate being told they

were being unlawful by consuming alcohol, so they used little tricks to find a way around the system. Common ingredients are used in these recipes, but the ingredients used are mostly inedible. One of the recipes in the book is for “Irish Whisky Essence” and reads as follows.

| | |
|---|---|
| Pelargonic Ether | 2 oz |
| Acetic Ether | 2 oz |
| Rectified Fusel Oil | 1 oz |
| Creosate | ½ oz |
| Extract of Orris Root | 4 oz |
| Cologne Spirits | 7 oz |

Mix them

To the modern reader, the ingredients seem wholly unsafe to consume. But such recipes offer clear evidence that, despite Prohibition, drinking remained a part of American life, even more so than it had been before. Moreover, drinking changed during Prohibition. These ultra-pungent, off-tasting hard liquors are one of the main reasons that mixed, sweetened cocktails gained such popularity. These types of books were written because people needed help bringing their highly coveted alcohol up to drinking standards. Some books contained less-than-sincere notations that all drinks were intended to be non-alcoholic. Predictably, not everyone listened, which is why some also included common remedies for the hopelessly inebriated. The notes on the drinks being “non-alcoholic” were not meant to be viewed as truth; rather, the notes revealed the general sentiment that blatant disregard of the law was acceptable, as it appeared to be impractical and unfair.

These new ways of drinking forced people to be much more secretive than in the time before Prohibition. Prior to 1919, it was commonplace for a man to enjoy a beer at the saloon, or for a lady to enjoy a small glass of sherry with her guests after dinner. Prohibition caused people not only to be secretive about their imbibing, but it also redefined hard alcohol as a main drink. It was the easiest to create, and the easiest to disguise the taste. Sweetened cocktails began to gain popularity, as did new cocktail handbooks and recipes. Some people authored books with insincere notations that drinks were intended to be non-alcoholic. The non-alcoholic comment was clearly a sham, meant to fool officials so as to pass the books off as quality materials fit for a dry society.

The authors embedded sarcasm in the pages, implying that those who enacted the law did not themselves necessarily follow it to the letter. While the books may note that they are "non-alcoholic," the general public typically understood that these were legitimate cocktail recipes, intended to be made with strong spirits. Virginia Eliot and Phil Strong's *Shake 'em Up: A Practical Handbook of Polite Drinking*, (1930) took particular interest in subtly pointing out the many hypocrisies associated with drinking. The book introduced each section with a short note on what type of drinking specifically the section pertains to. Some notes advised how to coat the stomach to prevent drinking illnesses, or how to politely get the sick, inebriated gentleman out of your home before his sickness ruins the furniture. The underlying sarcasm is thick and clearly present. "If one of your guests, rather the better for drink, should be called upon suddenly to preach a sermon in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, or attend a meeting of Congress, or speak before the W. C .T. U., try black coffee on him first of all…"[xvii] The passage continues on to note further remedies that might make the drunken hypocrite feel better, such as mixing baking soda and ammonia in carbonated water.

The book is witty and flip, but in fact it contains a serious critique of those who approve Prohibition, while still providing the guidance of excellent hostessing and drink making for those opposed to Prohibition. This particular passage made special reference to the hypocrisies of all those who pushed to make the country dry. It laughed at the preachers, lawmakers, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, indicating that those who disapproved of alcohol were drinking too. According to the authors, church leaders were drinking just as heavily as the saloon-goers, even though they publicly disparaged it.

The politicians who enacted the law were also weakly committed to Prohibition, as was evident when the law was overturned. "Of the twenty-two members who had voted for the Eighteenth Amendment sixteen years earlier and were still senators, seventeen voted to undo their earlier work."[xviii] The Senators overturning of their votes was evidence of the law's flaws. Most of them recognized that the problems that came along with Prohibition were much worse than the problems people had prior to the amendment. Prohibition was an act of social control, brought on by a few, and used primarily to police working-class immigrants. The author of this book pointedly observed that fact without engaging in overt criticism of the law. Even though the book was written mostly as a hostessing handbook with appetizers to pair to drinks, it was also a subliminal poke at the politicians and preachers who would not even follow their own ways. "The complicated problems of etiquette raised by the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment are solved here."[xix] For those especially who had favored the dry party, getting around the new amendment that had been enacted was often tricky. With drink being illegal, there was no easy manner in which to frankly discuss cocktails, parties, and drink-related ailments. As with any illegal substance, the question of how to properly obtain and use a product, cannot be publicly discussed. "Non-alcoholic" handbooks were one way in which

people were able to educate themselves on the topic. Drink was important to all people, and its importance only grew after alcohol became illegal.

Before Prohibition, it was typically men who drank, or at least who drank publicly. Men populated the saloons, and drank beer and whisky. Women were almost never seen drinking heavily in public, especially in polite company. During prohibition, the social acceptance of drinking shifted greatly, and not in the way that the temperance organizations wished it too. Instead of abolishing all drink for all people, drink became even more prevalent, and spread to new social groups. Men and women drank together now, where as previously saloons were entirely patronized by males, with women sometimes serving. Before Prohibition, women did not go into saloons for social drink.[xx] After Prohibition began, however, drink was more popular, and women wanted to become a part of the new culture. Because of all the secrecy of alcohol and speakeasies, men and women sometimes now drank together; sometimes they drank together at cocktail parties in a home or more often when going out. Prohibition fueled the beginning of the at-home dinner party.[xxi] The new trend of attending or hosting a dinner party served many purposes, the main purpose being it provided people a safe, private location in which they could freely drink, even though it was illegal. They were typically hosted at one's house, where the host or hostess would invite their friends. Many times, the guests attending were couples, and everyone would socialize and consume liquor together, un-separated by gender. Men and women were comfortable with the idea of both socializing and drinking together. This carried on outside the home, making it acceptable in semi-public places such as speakeasies.

The social stigma surrounding the image of women drinking in public had mostly dissolved. Because women's sense of taste is different than that of men, this changed how

people drank their drinks. Women are more apt to taste things that may be slightly off in nature. This is due partially to the increased amount of taste buds women possess compared to men.[xxii] To combat many of the undesirable flavors women would detect in their questionable spirits, alcohol was being used in conjunction with sweeteners and mixers. Cocktails were becoming sweeter, and not only to combat the off taste of homemade alcohol, but to please the female palate as well. With men and women drinking together more frequently, it was important that there be something for everyone to enjoy, not only the men. This new trend of sweeter cocktails continued on, and only gained popularity after Prohibition was over.

Prohibition altered drink culture in ways that most could not have predicted. Whereas in the past, saloons were legitimate business centers as well as a place to obtain drink, now they were replaced by speakeasies: clandestine locations operated by individuals whose livelihood was based around secrecy and evading the law. To patrons, the speakeasy's appeal was its secrecy and exclusivity, and it was often thrilling to attempt to outsmart the police as to the locations of secret drinking establishments. The saloon had been a place for men to go, not a drinking establishment intended for couples and families as well. After Prohibition, however, saloons were no longer widely available as they once were prior. Prohibition forced the close of many bars and saloons across America. Saloons were forced by the law to either legitimize their business quickly, or to close their doors. This led to men and women now often drinking together at social gatherings, given that the locations that now served alcohol were limited and choosy about the patrons that visited them.

Prior to the Eighteenth Amendment, laws were created with the intention of keeping people safe and protecting their rights. People had the freedom of religion, freedom of speech, the right to remain silent, and many more. All of the amendments prior to the Eighteenth

Amendment were designed with the intention to keep people safe. When the Eighteenth Amendment passed and Prohibition went into effect, people had their rights taken away, and were none too thrilled with the outcome. Prohibition was, like previous amendments, designed to keep people safe. The result was not what lawmakers had intended when enacting the law. The intention of keeping people safe by improving the country's morals and work ethic was widely lost on the general public, who saw the law more as an infringement on their rights. As a result, people began to protest.

In 1931, as the citadel of Prohibition began to crumble, forty thousand people jammed Military Park in downtown Newark, demanding legal beer. Pauline Sabin was among those who addressed the crowd.

Beer's return was hurried along by the Depression. The nation's desperate need for both jobs and tax revenue prompted this labor-sponsored parade in Detroit.

xxiii

3.2: Men Gathering to Protest and Rally for Legal Beer

Some rallied and protested publicly, but most chose to protest by finding what loopholes they could within the system. This meant that the wine the clergy was rationed by the government for religious services was sometimes used recreationally instead. The alcohol the

government allowed physicians to use for prescriptions was abused and used not for its intended purpose. Some people chose to blatantly disregard the law by manufacturing their own alcohol in their own home or community. When confronted with the impractical nature of policing a common place activity such as drinking, people grew increasingly comfortable with the notion that they were disobeying authority and breaking the law. (See image 3.2).

Men and women now had closer and more frequent social interactions with one another due to the limited number of drinking locales. The drinks themselves began to change as well. The alcohol was becoming much harsher, as black market liquor lacked any real quality control and relied on the addition of questionable flavoring ingredients. Cocktails became sweeter to combat this off-taste. Women were beginning to drink more hard alcohol as well, and the sweeter cocktails were a natural transition.

Prohibition was intended to morally uplift the country and to make its citizens happier, healthier, and more productive. Prohibition failed this original preconception in that the results were much different than intended. People had instead adopted a sneaky, unlawful, and argumentative approach to authority. While it is evident that Prohibition had a major impact on Americans during its time, it also continued to affect society as well as the culture of drink in general, after its repeal. This culture was permanently altered. It was now acceptable for men and women to drink together. It was now acceptable to dodge certain aspects of the law that one might feel were too controlling. Drink was no longer predominantly something only males took part in publicly, nor was it focused mainly around the central location of the saloon. There was a new exciting aura surrounding drink, and many people wanted to be a part of that. Drinking had become fashionable, and so had some of the exoticness surrounding it.

It is clearly evident that the Eighteenth amendment and the laws surrounding Prohibition had a major impact on people's lives and they ways in which they chose to drink. Prohibition ended the legal distribution, manufacture, and sale of alcohol. It did not, however, stop people from drinking. In many instances, Prohibition had the opposite effect. Now that alcohol was illegal, it became all the more fashionable, and people worked hard to circumvent the law by any means necessary to obtain their much wanted alcohol. Alcohol was still available in the form of prescriptions and sacramental wine, but these forms were closely monitored by the government.

Not everyone appreciated such strict governmental controls, especially as most people not associated with religious organizations or politicians approved of Prohibition. Many ethnic groups, particularly Irish and German immigrants, felt this government control targeted them directly. Irish and German immigrants both had long-standing cultural ties to beer. It was seen as healthy and nutritious, and certainly safer than some drinking waters. To avoid the government's control over alcohol, many people turned to home consumption. It is possible to make beer, wine, or alcohol from the home, which is what many people chose to do. This process created an alcoholic product, but many times the result was sorely lacking in quality. Some people were forced to resort to mixing household products together so as to resemble alcohol.

These products were wholly unsafe, and led to drinks being mixed differently. More juices and syrups were added to the cocktails to sweeten the drink and mask the off-taste of poorly made alcohol. The drinks also altered to fit women's palates, since women were now able to freely drink as much as men. There were new cocktail and hostessing handbooks written to cater to these changing demands, as well as to subtly point out the many hypocrisies surrounding the dry lobby and their penchant for alcohol. Prohibition changed how all

Americans lived their lives. These changes can be most strongly observed in the years following the overturn of Prohibition, when a new drink culture emerged that clearly differed from the time when Prohibition was in full effect, as well as from pre-Prohibition America.

## Chapter 4: Drink Culture in Post-Prohibition America

This chapter demonstrates how many of the habits of drink learned during the Prohibition era such as women drinking with men, women drinking in public, and the arrival of newly designed cocktails, continued to evolve in the post-Prohibition period. Whereas once, American drinkers were typically men who most often drank at home or at the local saloon, by the 1940s, they had begun to shift towards equal drinking as well as more public drinking for all. Drinking publicly was no longer reserved for any one group of people, such as only men. It was now considered commonplace for all adults to indulge in a drink, including both men and women, regardless of location. This chapter will also show how the newly liberated drink culture evolved from common drink, to secretive drink, and into what it ultimately is today. The law was designed to permanently ban alcohol, and due to numerous unintended consequences, the law actually succeeded in liberating the American culture of drink.

The Twenty-First Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1933, officially ended Prohibition in America. States were now able to create and enforce their own laws regarding the sale, consumption, and manufacture of alcohol. The attempt to ban alcohol ultimately failed. The government was not able to predict the power of the individual's wishes. In the end, the desire to drink and the desire to have the freedom to drink prevailed, and Prohibition was overturned. Most Americans were pleased with the overturn, and were happy to be able to drink

once again. John D. Rockefeller Jr. was a lifelong teetotaler, and had never consumed any alcohol. In 1932, he wrote a letter to Nicholas Murray Butler on how Prohibition was having a negative effect on the country because of the increased disrespect for the law. A prominent figure, due to his lineage, businesses, and philanthropic work, the letter was well regarded and was subsequently published in the New York Times for all to read.[xxiv] He stated that the Eighteenth Amendment should be repealed, and that it simply had not been working. Rockefeller did not drink, nor did he particularly approve of the habit, so his letter asking for the amendment's overturn was a profound one. He states that "the regrettable failure of the Eighteenth Amendment has demonstrated the fact that the majority of this country are not yet ready for total abstinence, at least when it is attempted through legal coercion."[xxv] He did not drink alcohol at all, and he did not intend to drink should the amendment be overturned. Instead, he realized the problems that the Eighteenth Amendment had created, and hoped that the overturn of the law would help to change the unruliness of the current situation and bring the country back around to a calmer perspective on alcohol. When the Twenty-First Amendment was ratified a year later, it was immediately evident through people's behavior how much had changed during Prohibition.

After Prohibition had ended and drink was legal again, alcohol sales predictably skyrocketed. The purpose of Prohibition was to stop people from drinking and to show how awful its effects were, but it only popularized the substance. Drinking was no longer just a mundane part of everyday life, but rather an exciting venture to take part in. This feeling that drink was exciting, exotic, and new continued after Prohibition had ended. Only, by then, people took more pride in the quality and safety of what they were drinking. People became more aware of quality. When it was clearly visible where a drink was coming from and who

manufactured that drink, it was easy to remember it and make note. People could recall brands and associate brands with high quality or mediocrity. Branding also ensured sameness. Someone drinking a Pabst brand beer could be confident that if he bought it again a month later that the two beers would taste identical. The big companies were able to market themselves well and establish brand loyalty. They were wealthy and, through advertising, were able to spend advertising dollars to create lifelong customers. People were proud to admit to what they were drinking because of alcohol's newly established quality achieved through branding. People consumed name brand spirits, and not frightening concoctions created in bathtubs and sold in back alleys.

During Prohibition, many companies that manufactured alcohol were forced to close their doors, or at the very least rebrand themselves. At the fall of Prohibition, some companies were able to open again and begin manufacturing alcohol quicker than others. The companies that were first to open their doors ultimately fared best, because at that point people were desperate for real alcohol. These companies were able to make a real name for themselves, and this continued in the way of name branding. After Prohibition ended and especially with the return of economic prosperity following World War II, people were looking for newer and better things in all aspects of life. Americans who chose to continue drinking during Prohibition spent almost fifteen years drinking highly questionable alcohols, and were realizing their error and demanding quality. Their expanding tastes in drink were no exception. With so many options available, and new ones being discovered regularly, people wanted more than just the basics of un-named, generic vodka, whiskey, gin, and rye.

People were beginning to recognize the subtle differences in their drinks, even drinks of the same spirit family. It was becoming evident that perhaps not all rums were the same, and

that they may all have different effects when present in mixed drinks, which had only increased in popularity since the days of Prohibition. In 1946, Victor Jules Bergeron, Jr., who was widely known as "Trader Vic," wrote his first book titled *Trader Vic's Book of Food and Drink*, in which he discusses brands and styles of drink and how brand choice can change a drink recipe. Before Prohibition and certainly during, there were not many options for drink, and selectiveness and branding just did not happen. He notes that rums in particular have been underrepresented in America and boasts their many attributes. "Very little thought has been given in the past to rum punches, rum cocktails, or rum highballs with soda or plain water, but they are coming into their own in our generation."[xxvi] Trader Vic mentions what little thought had gone towards rum in the past. They were becoming increasingly popular due to branding and much more extensive world travel. Before Prohibition, rum was not the main spirit of choice. If people did use it, it typically went into punch bowls as a sweet liquor additive. People didn't understand the difference between light and dark rums, or the difference between Jamaican and Cuban rums.

The post-Prohibition world sparked new drinking habits and new taste cultures that particularly emphasized the type, brand, and quality of spirits. There is a vast difference between the many types of rums. In color alone, rums can range anywhere from absolutely clear to an ultra-dark brown, with varying flavor profiles to match. One of the reasons that people used to shy away from using rum in drinks is due to the prevailing notion that rum was only intended for pirates and stumblebums, and not for polite society.[xxvii] Bergeron goes into detail on the specific profiles of different rums to educate Americans on how complex and delicious rum really is. He discusses rums with enthusiasm, and endorsed them as his favorite drink. With the popularization of rum, it could be seen that people's drinking tastes could be expanded to encompass newly available liquors, and rum was one of many new things people began to take

notice of and appreciate after Prohibition had ended. The country was seeing things with a more global approach, including sourcing their drinks.

The Caribbean and other nearby islands contributed much to this new rum craze. Trader Vic wrote this book in 1946, when the war was over and the islands reemerged as a major tourist destination. Before the Cuba embargo, it was a popular place to go for a weekend vacation. Cuba is also the original locale of Bacardi rum production. Those who currently consume Bacardi can clearly see Puerto Rican rum listed on the label, but it originated in Cuba. It is a light rum that pairs well with light clean flavors, and Americans liked this new type of rum drink. Older styles of rums were often considered stronger and less refined than other hard alcohols of similar strengths, and they were certainly not considered the favored drink for Americans to be seen publicly consuming. After Prohibition, however, many people chose not to look at rum's past, but rather at the complexity, charm, and allure that Trader Vic spoke so highly of. It was no longer seen as a drink for pirates, but as a complex alcohol fit for everyone.

This new popularity was due mainly to rums new availability and the marketing of the product itself. Rum was associated with tropical locales and excitement, and people wanted their drinks to follow suit. It was new and exciting, and rums came from exotic locales that people rarely traveled to thirty years earlier. During Prohibition, drink recipes may have called for "whiskey" or for "rum;" by the mid-twentieth century, new recipes would call for "Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey" or for "Meyer's Jamaican Rum." This is not to say that quality was not appreciated before Prohibition, merely that it was not ascertained in the same way. Times had begun to change, and through branding and marketing, name brand became increasingly important.

Name brands changed not only for liquor but for beer as well. Many breweries failed during Prohibition because they were unable to re-brand themselves and produce different products, such as malt syrup, ice cream, or cheese. Some companies began making near-beer, while others made the switch to food products. After Prohibition had ended, the companies who had the money to make beer first fared the best. People were desperate for beer, and the companies that were able to make it first made a name for themselves. Before Prohibition had gone into effect, there were approximately 1,345 breweries in America. When Prohibition ended, only 31 were able to begin production and sale within three months.[xxviii] These were the companies that did best. Most of these companies had been able to reinvent themselves during Prohibition, making cheese or ice cream in order to continue making money. Some of the biggest companies that fared best after Prohibition are among the top beers in the world still today. Pabst, Busch, Miller, and Coors were able to open first and become fast favorites among Americans. Other beer companies were still able to open and profit, but on a much smaller scale and over a much more drawn out period of time. The trend of a few big name beer companies having the majority control of the market continues today.

The main difference between the alcohol manufacturer's experience with branding and the beer manufacturer's experience was that, for beer companies, the importance was not who was best, but rather who was first. During Prohibition, the breweries were forced to close down all real beer production. This meant that many breweries had to close their doors forever. When Prohibition ended and production and sales became legal once again, the brewing families that were able produce first fared the best. More so than desire, there was a need for beer. Americans didn't care if it was the same beer they used to drink, so long as it was real beer. The big companies that were able to brew first did more than get their product out; they got their

names into American's minds. Once the big names dominated the market and pushed the smaller companies out of the way, Americans more routinely drank "big beer". This is still evident today, with the big name beer companies owning the majority of the market share. Anheuser-Busch InBev, MillerCoors Brewing Co, and Pabst Brewing Co are the top three companies selling beer in America today.[xxix] Anheuser-Busch is number one in the world for beer sales annually. These were all brands of beer that emerged immediately after Prohibition had ended, and have done very well maintaining the stronghold they had since their original founding.

Even though Prohibition failed as a law and as a social restraint, it led to many changes that are still evident in society today. Drinking in modern America is not seen as mundane, but rather as an exciting part of life: a passport to excitement, glamour, and social opportunity. Branding came about following Prohibition, with new companies seizing the opportunity to have their name heard and their product purchased. Brands were special. No longer was basic, no-name or locally produced alcohol acceptable; Americans now had a choice in their alcoholic beverages and the standards to which those drinks were held.

Rum manufacturers, supported by drinking connoisseurs such as Victor Bergeron, made a huge push, and due to big name endorsements and advertising, rum was able to change its public image from that of a less favorable drink to the new, exotic, drink of choice. Beer also fared extremely well following Prohibition. People wanted their beer back since Prohibition went into effect. Once Prohibition had ended, the big name companies that were able to sell first fared the best. Big beer companies continue to hold the market share. Moreover, today, drink continues to be marketed as exciting and sophisticated, and many people still feel it is acceptable to skirt

the law when it comes to alcohol. Although Prohibition failed legally, its lasting effects are still seen on society today.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Early nineteenth-century Americans embraced a culture of drink that was embedded in all parts of life, including their work, family, religion, traditions, and social relations. While drink culture varied based on location, upbringing, gender, and personal opinion, among others common thought held that drinking was acceptable and did not merit Prohibition. There were, however, individual groups that were able to join together to lobby for the outright ban of alcohol. They viewed it as a detriment to society, and asserted that drink was an evil that the country needed to be rid of. Critics of this drink culture succeeded in banning the production and sale of alcohol under the Eighteenth Amendment which lasted from 1919 until 1933 when the law was overturned by the Twenty-First Amendment to the Constitution.

To date, the Eighteenth Amendment is the only addition to the constitution to be formally repealed by way of a new amendment. Clearly, Prohibition had failed. But it's failure is less important than the new society it left in its wake. This society differed greatly from pre-Prohibition America, with regard to morals, behaviors, and general opinions towards alcohol. The intention of Prohibition was to uplift Americans' morals and to make a more productive society. However, most people do not highly regard government coercion, and the American people reacted strongly to the sudden ban on alcohol.

This abrupt and total transformation dramatically changed American's drinking habits by forcing the consumption of alcohol into a new culture of secrecy and unlawfulness. By the time

the nation's leaders realized the error of Prohibition, the culture of alcohol and drink had drastically transformed from an integrated part of public life to a cocktail culture mediated by marketers and attuned to the new aura of exoticism and taste preferences ushered in during the post-Prohibition era. The list of Prohibition's unintended consequences is long. Some promoted a new kind of equality, in which men and women now publicly drank together on many occasions, whereas prior to this, men only drank publicly among other men. Other consequences were not beneficial, such as Americans' growing comfort with disobeying the law in order to obtain personal wants. The failed experiment that was Prohibition revealed the difficulties in attempting to regulate people's behaviors, as well as the challenging process of separating the unfavorable habits from everyday life.

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