

The XVII Amendment's impact to Economy, Politics, and European Immigration during Prohibition in the United States

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Prohibition occurred between the years 1920 to 1933. The United States Congress ratified the XVII amendment prohibiting the sale, manufacture, and transport of intoxicating liquors. During these years United States emerged from its involvement in World War I, experienced the Roaring Twenties, and felt the impact of the Great Depression. The era historically transformed the United States during the period of thirteen years. Upon the ratification of XVIII amendment, the Volstead Act became the enforcing mechanism of the law, Prohibition took effect within the United States on January 17, 1920. The economy, law enforcement and European immigration were all sectors uniquely affected during the Prohibition era in the United States. The United States government political fallout occurred because they believed the ratification would positively impact the country's economy, however; the government lost tax revenues immediately after the tax on liquor sales halted. The law's goal was to eliminate all liquor within the United States. The government did not expect illegal smuggling nor the establishment of a bootlegging industry. The closure of saloons led to an illegal development of underground speakeasies. Alcohol smugglers thrived, while the National Anti-Saloon League influenced distinguished members of Congress and the government with their use of "pressure politics." The Treasury Department assigned a Prohibition Unit agency known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation to follow paper tracks and anonymous tips about speakeasies and illegal smuggling. The United States endowed Border Patrol with law enforcement authority allowing them to make arrests without warrants on any violation of immigration laws. Immigrants found opportunities sidestepping the law and built speakeasies to supplement their incomes. Germans, Italians, and Irish Americans were all targeted because of citizens preconceived prejudices against immigrants in the United States.

Historian Daniel Okrent details the various economic, political, and social impacts of Prohibition. Okrent's book, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, published in 2010 close to a century after the era; details the transformation of society resulting from the law not tolerating public drinking, however, bootleggers and rumrunners illegally selling intoxicating liquors allowed for illegal drinking within establishments called speakeasies. Politically, once the law went into effect the government needed to ensure the law remained upheld by overseeing the investigations and arrests. Okrent's argument describes the life of citizens under prohibition law, the amount of government influence and interference which society dealt with during the era. Illegal importations allowed for Canadian liquor companies to transport liquor into the United States. Speakeasy owners hiding their establishments from the government easily smuggled goods without taxation nor the necessity to report the importation leading to tax revenues from the sale of intoxicating liquors remaining completely lost to the government's knowledge.¹

Similarly, historian Michael A. Lerner, in his book, *Dry Manhattan: Prohibition in New York City*, explains the amount of liquor tax revenues lost by the government in New York City after the law went into effect. Lerner details how the federal government lost a significant revenue in the millions in liquor taxes just in New York.² Nationally, the law impacted the economic revenue of the United States with about \$11 million in tax revenue lost and another \$300 million spent on enforcing the law. State governments relied solely on income tax revenues to support their finances.³ Lerner dives deeper into the economic aspect focusing on the revenues which the government lost immediately from the end liquor sales.

¹ Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. First Scribner hardcover edition. New York, NY: Scribner, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., (2010).

² Michael A. Lerner, *Dry Manhattan: Prohibition in New York City*. Vol. 1st Harvard University Press pbk. ed. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, (2008): 271.

³ Walter Anderson. "The Speakeasy as a National Institution." *Current History (1916-1940)* 36, no. 4 (1932): 419.

Another historian who shares viewpoints with Daniel Okrent is Walter Anderson, in his journal article, “The Speakeasy as a National Institution,” where he examines the history of speakeasies and the rise of these establishments during Prohibition. He describes how speakeasies became the modern-day saloons of the Prohibition era where people could go dress’ up and socialize with others while enjoying their intoxicating liquors. Anderson and Okrent both state that New York City had about 32,000 illegal speakeasies by the end of the 1920s.⁴ Speakeasy establishments remained profitable since society demanded them, and owners caught by federal, or state police only received small fines which did not deter them.⁵

Equally important, other historians focus on the politics surrounding the era of Prohibition. Richard Mendelson and Margrit Biever Mondavi, in their chapter “National Prohibition,” in the book, *From Demon to Darling: A Legal History of Wine in America*, dive deeper into the unforeseen impacts of the law on the politics of the United States. Much like the other historians, Mendelson and Mondavi focus on Congress designing a permit system to regulate the companies who were exempt.⁶ The Treasury Department assigned and created a Prohibition Unit, or the Bureau of Prohibition, to enforce the law and investigate.⁷ The historians go even deeper and discuss thoroughly the *National Prohibition Cases*; brewers, distillers, and liquor distributors, along with the states of Rhode Island and New Jersey brought forth seven individual cases against Congress, later combined, challenging the constitutionality of the XVIII amendment. The oral arguments persisted for five days, the longest arguments on record for a government case.⁸

⁴ Okrent, 208.

⁵ Anderson, 419.

⁶ Richard Mendelson and Margrit Biever Mondavi. “National Prohibition.” In *From Demon to Darling: A Legal History of Wine in America*, 1st ed., University of California Press, (2009): 60.

⁷ Mendelson and Mondavi, 60.

⁸ Mendelson and Mondavi, 62.

Historian John Fox, in his journal article, “Intelligence Analysis and the Bureau: The Evolution of Analysis and the Analyst Position in the FBI, 1908-2013”, discusses the initial role of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The attorney general of the United States originally tasked the FBI with conducting investigations on his behalf. However, the ratification of the 18th amendment radically changed the bureau's mission to focus on combatting domestic problems and deporting enemy aliens.⁹ Fox details how the bureau’s ability to be readily available for the attorney general led them to becoming the department at the forefront of investigations during Prohibition.

Moreover, in “Deportation Policy and the Making and Unmaking of Illegal Aliens,” historian Mae Ngai argues that the Border Patrol’s creation during Prohibition focused on conducting only one thing—vast deportations. Border Patrol agents posted on roads made unwarranted arrests solely based on looks and immigration status, the agents arrested any citizens unable prove their legal status, taking them to the headquarters for deportation. Unwarranted arrests led to a significant increase in Border Patrol arrest numbers. The numbers doubled within the first year of the department becoming an agency and more than tripled by the 1930’s. The Immigration Act of 1924 and the enforcing mechanisms limited the number of immigrants allowed into the U.S. and lead to mass deportations of legal immigrants already established within the country.¹⁰

The historians mentioned contribute to the discussions of the social, economic, and political lens’ of Prohibition caused by the ratification of the eighteenth amendment. The books

⁹ John Fox, “Intelligence Analysis and the Bureau: The Evolution of Analysis and the Analyst Position in the FBI, 1908-2013.” *Journal of Strategic Security* 6, no. 3 (2013): 114-115.

¹⁰ Mae M. Ngai, “Deportation Policy and the Making and Unmaking of Illegal Aliens.” In *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America - Updated Edition*, REV-Revised. Princeton University Press (2004): 56-60.

and journal articles focus on diverse aspects like saloons and speakeasies, tax revenues, illegal selling and buying of intoxicating liquors, and immigration. Even though the historians all take a different angle on Prohibition, most historians have not discussed in detail how the formal movements adapted, and the changes law enforcement underwent all directly contribute to immigrants Prohibition experience.

Formal movements contributed to the passage of prohibition, creating abstinence groups focusing on ending liquor consumption in the United States. Historian Dierdre Moloney details the lengths to which the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America attempted to lure its members away from traditional heavy drinking, instead encouraging fraternal organizations social activities.¹¹ However, growing support for Protestant Temperance groups, in the early twentieth century, affected Catholic members and the union chose to work together with the Protestants.¹²

Over the timespan of a century, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, (WCTU), exponentially grew and influenced prominent people in government and communities about the evils of liquor. The WCTU became a prominent women's group advocating for the abolishment of liquor. In 1919, once the law took effect, their membership steadily declined.¹³ The WCTU achieved its goal the day the law was passed, unlike most women's organizations who fought against problems affecting the women in the United States, the union did not only fight against the liquor problem but chose to focus most of their efforts in favor of prohibition. The passage of the XVIII amendment directly impacted the WCTU rendering them obsolete resulting from the accomplishment of their main movement, abolishment of liquor consumption.

¹¹ Dierdre M. Moloney, "Combatting 'Whiskey's Work': The Catholic Temperance Movement in Late Nineteenth-Century America." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 16, no. 3 (1998): 15.

¹² Moloney, 22.

¹³ History.com Editors, "Woman's Christian Temperance Union." History.com. A&E Television Networks, March 23, 2010. <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/womans-christian-temperance-union>.

Similarly, the National Anti-Saloon League functioned much like the WCTU, with the primary goal of having the Prohibition law endorsed. However, once the law passed in 1919, unlike the WCTU, the league adapted and continued influencing the public. The Prohibition law impacted the National Anti-Saloon League's goal, shifting their focus into the enforcement of the law. The League pressured the government to obligate law enforcement to enforce prohibition.¹⁴ The League continued their crusade, creating the World League Against Alcohol, fighting for "a global mission to cure the alcohol problem."¹⁵ The League became ambitious after succeeding within the United States and decided to fight against the liquor problem worldwide. Unfortunately, the League ran into problems because of troubles with the newly appointed league president. To regain their initial movement the League created the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment, (AAPA). The AAPA was meant to lobby for the greatness of the law but eventually exposed the problems within the law and the League.¹⁶ Contrary, the National Anti-Saloon League adapted and continued to be influential throughout Prohibition by adjusting their goal.

The League developed a tactic called "pressure politics," influencing candidates and pushing for legislative laws against liquor.¹⁷ Pressure politics allowed the league to constantly harass government officials legally by demanding and harshly insisting advocating for or against bills in the process of becoming laws. The League swayed members of Congress and the cabinet; WCTU and the National Anti-Saloon League utilized pressure politics to advocate for the ratification of the XVIII amendment.¹⁸ Once the law took effect, pressure politics continued. The Volstead Act enforced the ban on intoxicating liquors and created a federal bureaucracy to enforce

¹⁴ "Post-Ratification: Educate or Enforce," Anti-Saloon League collection, Westerville Public Library, n.d. <https://westervillelibrary.org/antisaloon-education-vs-enforcement/>.

¹⁵ "Post-Ratification: Educate or Enforce"

¹⁶ "Post-Ratification: Educate or Enforce"

¹⁷ Harvey Graeme Furbay, "The Anti-Saloon League." *The North American Review* 177, no. 562 (1903): 435-436.

¹⁸ Furbay, 435-436.

National Prohibition. The WCTU and the League applied pressure politics to force Congress into designing a permit system to regulate companies exempt from the law.¹⁹ The law allowed individual people to retain and consume alcohol for themselves until the Treasury Department created a Prohibition Unit, or the Bureau of Prohibition, to enforce the law and regulate searches and seizures.²⁰ After Prohibition passed, Congress influenced by pressure politics, developed new agencies and additional acts to enforce the law.

The WTUC and the National Anti-Saloon League's anti-immigration attitudes blindly led them to believe most immigrants had liquor problems. Most of the brewers in the U.S. were of German descent, and activists supporting Prohibition utilized them as an example of the evils of liquor. The activists pushed the idea that supporting the liquor industry would be supporting the Germans who fought against the U.S. during WWI. The groups argued that U.S. patriotism and loyalty should be at the forefront, thus encouraging nativist citizens against liquor as tied to the Germans and in favor of the United States.²¹

The Prohibition laws most unforeseen impact was the economic one. Supporters of the ratification believed and predicted the eighteenth amendment would benefit the amusement, entertainment, and real estate industries. However, the impact was quite the contrary. Prohibition deeply impacted these areas. Restaurants ceased to exist. Neighborhoods did not improve like the real estate advocates believed they would. Saloons ceased to exist, but the areas around the prior establishments did not improve.²² The government lost significant tax revenues because of the immediate end of liquor taxes. The federal government lost an estimated revenue of more than

¹⁹ Mendelson and Mondavi, 60.

²⁰ Mendelson and Mondavi, 60.

²¹ "Post-Ratification: Educate or Enforce"

²² "Prohibition | PBS." 2011. Pbs.org. 2011. <https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/prohibition/>.

\$483 million, the amount of money collected in 1919 the last year before Prohibition.²³ The economic revenue of the United States nationally lost about \$11 million in tax revenue, and another \$300 million spent enforcing the law. Thus, leading to the federal governments within states to rely on income tax revenues to support their finances.²⁴

E.C. Moore, along with other historians' detail saloons as establishments for the workingman; a club or social establishment where unskilled workers connected and socialized.²⁵ Workingmen ranging in ages and ethnicities had a common place where they could visit and drink after a long workday. The saloons provided men with opportunities to interact and socialize with others sympathizing and understanding their family situations and monetary struggles. Historians Mintz and McNeil state that at midnight on January 16th, 1920, saloons shut their doors and closed their establishments.²⁶ Although the saloons closed, the law allowed citizens to privately possess intoxicating liquors. The law did give saloons over a year of advance notice to adapt to keep their businesses and stay afloat and many establishments continued to profit during that last year, choosing to close at the last second. Brewers and wineries believed the law did not impact them directly since the amendment did not state beer and wine explicitly.²⁷ The Volstead Act became the enforcing mechanism of the law, with an objective to eliminate all confusion, the act clarified stating intoxicating liquors in the U.S. were all liquor with over 0.5 percent of alcohol.

The law impacted breweries more than distilleries. Milwaukee Brewery lost over two-thirds of their overall revenue. Anheuser Busch in St. Louis, considered the largest lager producer

²³ Lerner, 271.

²⁴ "Prohibition | PBS."

²⁵ E. C. Moore, "The Social Value of the Saloon," *American Journal of Sociology* 3, no. 1 (1897): 4-5.

²⁶ S. McNeil and S. Mintz, (2018). Prohibition. *Digital History*. from https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3383

²⁷ McNeil and Mintz

worldwide, lost over \$40 million in revenue.²⁸ The liquor industries did not benefit from the illegal black market during prohibition; the illegal alcohol distributors were able to sell and distribute tax-free.²⁹ The breweries, distilleries and vineyards were forced to find innovative ways to adapt or close permanently. Breweries created products which were like beer but included no alcohol, manufactured syrups, and yeast; the yeast and syrup could mature into a homebrew when aged and mixed properly. Vineyards produced cakes, or bricks, made from raisins and grapes which would produce wine if fermented; ironically sold with a label which stated the fact. Distilleries found it a bit harder to survive, and only six adapted by registering with medical licenses.³⁰ Prohibition impacted liquor industry companies the hardest because the law targeted them specifically, forcing them to find groundbreaking ways to stay in production while being within the parameters of the law. Brewers, distillers, and liquor distributors brought forth seven individual cases, *The National Prohibition Cases*, aimed at Congress challenging the XVIII amendment.³¹

Prohibition stated that the United States would not allow liquor sales, manufacture, or transportation, but what followed on January 16, 1920, was the unexpected opposite. Various scholars and historians agree that the law did not significantly reduce the alcohol consumption in the United States since drinking only dropped by 30% percent.³² Daniel Okrent describes how within the first seven months of 1920, over 900,000 cases of liquor moved from various Canadian distilleries to the border city of Windsor, Ontario, for distribution in the U.S.³³ One particular

²⁸ Günter Schmölders, *Die Prohibition in den Vereinigten Staaten: Triebkräfte und Auswirkungen des amerikanischen Alkoholverbots* (Leipzig: Kohlhammer, 1931), 223-225.

²⁹ Schmölders, 208.

³⁰ Prohibition, An Interactive Museum, <https://prohibition.themobmuseum.org/the-history/prohibition-potpourri/prohibition-products/#:~:text=When%20Prohibition%20took%20effect%2C%20thousands,the%2013%20years%20of%20Prohibition.>

³¹ Mendelson and Mondavi, 62.

³² Okrent, 119.

³³ Okrent, 124.

example, The Canadian Bronfman Family, (known as Seagrams today)³⁴ developed a smuggling business where they bought whiskey barrels from American distilleries, mixed the alcohol with water, and smuggled the barrels back into the U.S. The Bronfman's created a network of export houses called boozoriums, these locations prepared the alcohol and stored the barrels until export.³⁵ Illegal smuggling of intoxicating liquors from border countries like Canada and Mexico became more common as smugglers took advantage of American Prohibition.³⁶

Consequently, the Canadian liquor companies contributed to the creation of rumrunners and bootlegger industries in the United States. Bootleggers and rumrunners made, sold, and distributed intoxicating liquors illegally during Prohibition. Bootleggers mixed alcohol with other juices and labeled it as Canadian or English spirits.³⁷ Immigrants who distributed illegal liquor fell into the first category of bootleggers and found themselves more vulnerable than the rumrunners. Bootleggers used locations like the Bahamas, and the French Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, as the base of their operations.³⁸ On the contrary, rumrunners tended to be from higher ranks in society, and officers often overlooked their activities. Historian Stephen T. Moore describes how some public officials and government members used their positions to avoid prosecution as undercover rumrunners.³⁹ Since most rumrunners were in high-ranking positions within the government or society, law enforcement gave only minor warnings.

The bootleggers and the rumrunners identified the need for establishments which could secretly sell alcohol leading to the creation of the speakeasies. Historian Walter Anderson

³⁴ Harry G. Levine and Craig Reinerman. "From Prohibition to Regulation: Lessons from Alcohol Policy for Drug Policy." *The Milbank Quarterly* 69, 3 (1991): 472.

³⁵ Okrent, 149.

³⁶ Levine & Reinerman, 471.

³⁷ Moore, 57.

³⁸ Stephen T. Moore, "The Halcyon Days of Rum-Running." In *Bootleggers and Borders: The Paradox of Prohibition on a Canada-U.S. Borderland*. University of Nebraska Press. (2014): 56-57.

³⁹ Moore, "The Halcyon Days of Rum-Running," 58.

describes how speakeasies did not begin during Prohibition; these establishments have origins traced back to a century prior in the state of Maine. Speakeasys grew allowing specific individuals to distribute intoxicating liquors without a license.⁴⁰ During Prohibition, bootleggers and rumrunners adopted the speakeasy structure. Speakeasy owners turned to bootleggers to provide the alcohol needed and the men used their knowledge to avoid federal and state police.⁴¹ Anderson claims that speakeasies catered to the middle- and upper-class Americans with a surplus of money. These select places, the speakeasies, catered to their clientele accustomed to attending fancy dance places select places. Owners disguised the establishments as clubs, where paid memberships covered the fees for recurrent entry; speakeasies allowed and encouraged female patrons to join unlike its predecessor.⁴²

Furthermore, in cities like Cleveland and New York, the number of speakeasies significantly grew within the first years of Prohibition. Mintz and McNeil explain how within Cleveland alone the number of illegal speakeasies grew from zero to 3,000 by 1923.⁴³ Likewise, Anderson and Okrent both find that New York City contained around 32,000 illegal speakeasy by the end of the 1920s.⁴⁴ Speakeasys grew in direct response to the XVIII amendment, heavy and casual drinkers alike demanded their liquor fill. Speakeasys flourished and replaced saloons during the Prohibition era and served as a place for socializing and enjoyment of intoxicating liquors; the establishments met a demand with minimal punishment from federal or state police.

Immigrants whose saloons closed, seized the opportunities in speakeasies to continue their revenue stream. Immigrant bootleggers took advantage of states abolishing their enforcement acts

⁴⁰ Anderson, 417.

⁴¹ Anderson, 418.

⁴² Anderson, 419.

⁴³ McNeil and Mintz

⁴⁴ Okrent, 208.

in 1923 to open their own speakeasy businesses.⁴⁵ Motivated by financial incentives, immigrant owned speakeasies grew during Prohibition. Due to the club's low overhead cost and secretive nature, the speakeasies offered previous saloon owners and new immigrant entrepreneurs a way to make money during Prohibition. Repurposed abandoned buildings converted into dance halls offered opportunities for clientele to purchase alcohol.

As a result of states nullifying their enforcement laws for prohibition, the government identified the real need for better federal patrol within the United States. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, (FBI), founded on July 26, 1908; originated as an extension of the Department of Justice. President Roosevelt's Attorney General Charles J. Bonaparte designed the program to conduct investigations. The Bureau worked to aid the Department of Justice under their authority. Historian James S. Pula details how the original group called "special agent force" consisted of only thirty-four agents with investigative backgrounds, twelve of them were new hires. One year later in 1909, the program branched off from the Department of Justice; the Bureau of Investigation was born.⁴⁶ The department's secretive nature allowed it to investigate without being well known. Not until the 1920s when Prohibition hit did the department become popularly recognized.

Prohibition radically changed the bureau's mission to focus on combatting domestic problems. Historian Daniel Okrent clarifies how the Bureau of Internal Revenue conducted the first arrest after the passage of prohibition. The arrest led to the confiscation of two truckloads of whiskey departing from an Illinois warehouse, thought to have been produced by the company's officials.⁴⁷ The power and prestige of the FBI only grew and developed over time as big named mobsters responsible for illegally transporting, selling, and manufacturing of intoxicating liquors

⁴⁵ Anderson, 418-419.

⁴⁶ James S. Pula, "Bruce Bielaski and the Origin of the FBI." *Polish American Studies* 68, no. 1 (2011): 43.

⁴⁷ Okrent, 119.

were locked up. The FBI focused on the capture of what they considered “public enemies,” mostly immigrant men running deep undercover gangs moving alcohol within the states. Big names included on the “public enemies” list were John Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd, and Machine Gun Kelly. The label of the FBI, G-Men, short for Government Men, a name which stuck to the organization, accredited to Machine Gun Kelly.⁴⁸

Historian Mitchel P. Roth expresses the significance of special FBI agents whose limelight helped highlight the astounding work accomplished by the Bureau. Eliot Ness led a special unit named the “Untouchables,” responsible for prosecuting Al Capone, an American gangster who provided intoxicating liquors to various speakeasies during Prohibition. Similarly, Izzy Einstein and Moe Smith were Prohibition agents accredited with bringing down “5,000 liquor scofflaws.”⁴⁹ The FBI allowed these agents to be thrown into the limelight because not only did it provide good publicity; the public became aware of what the bureau was capable of accomplishing. Additionally, President Hoover produced a plan in which Hollywood movies displayed the Bureau on the big screen. Even though Hollywood was reluctant to include the FBI in movies at first; in the end they complied.⁵⁰

Even though the FBI’s main agenda consisted of prohibition, their secondary agenda consisted of spying and deporting activists and leaders said to be threats to the public because of their political views. The FBI targeted Irish Nationalist, Eamon de Valera because of his nationality and liberal views; the Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917 and 1918 allowed for the FBI to validate their targeting of individuals.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Mitchel P. Roth, “Crime and Criminal Justice in the Crisis Decades (1920–1940).” In *A History of Crime and the American Criminal Justice System*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2019): 316.

⁴⁹ Roth, 319.

⁵⁰ Roth, 315.

⁵¹ Athan G. Theoharis, “Dissent and the State: Unleashing the FBI, 1917-1985.” *The History Teacher* 24, no. 1 (1990): 42.

Daniel Okrent describes a similar incident where federal agent Leo J. Grove confiscated wine during an unwarranted search in the basement of a grocery store belonging to the Scalcucci Brothers. The brothers owned a grocery store whose clientele were immigrants working among the iron mines. Oddly enough, the District Attorney, Martin S. McDonough, called the bureau out on their racial search and seizure; Mr. McDonough would not tolerate the racially motivated event and prosecuted the federal agent for illegally transporting alcoholic beverages.⁵²

In addition to the FBI, the federal government developed an enforcement agency to manage the borders and the quota laws established by the government. In 1921, the Emergency Quota Act placed a cap on the number of immigrant admissions from the Eastern Hemisphere but exempted relatives. The first quota law focused on families instead of the economy.⁵³ The Border Patrol established May 28, 1924. Congress instituted the enforcement agency as part of the Immigration Bureau. One year later, in 1925, the United States gave the Border Patrol law enforcement authority, allowing them to make arrests without warrants for any immigration laws violated. The department chose to utilize its newfound power to arrest suspicious unauthorized immigrants throughout the country. This allowed for unwarranted arrests and deportations to occur throughout Prohibition.⁵⁴

The Labor Appropriation Act of 1924 established the Border Patrol as an agency, for the purpose of securing the borders between inspection stations. The agency expanded its reign over the patrol of the seacoast in 1925.⁵⁵ Once the agency was set, they recruited more than 450 men from organizations like the Texas Rangers, local sheriff offices and appointees from the Civil

⁵² Okrent, 123

⁵³ Andrew M. Baxter and Alex Nowrasteh, "A Brief History of U.S. Immigration Policy from the Colonial Period to the Present Day." Cato Institute (2021): 10.

⁵⁴ Amada Armenta, "Who Polices Immigration?" In *Protect, Serve, and Deport: The Rise of Policing as Immigration Enforcement*, 1st ed. University of California Press (2017): 22.

⁵⁵ U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "Border Patrol History." U.S. Customs and Border Protection, July 21, 2020.

Service Register of Railroad Mail Clerks. The agency only gave newly appointed officers a gun and a badge, the uniforms developed until 1928.⁵⁶

On April 1, 1925, a man by the name of Lincoln C. Andrews, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, appointed to administer Customs, Coast Guard, and Prohibition, reconstructing the enforcement agencies. The agency included three separate Border Patrol agencies: U.S. Customs Border Patrol, U.S. Immigration Border Patrol, U.S. Prohibition Border Patrol. The U.S. Prohibition Border Patrol was established in 1927 under the Bureau of Prohibition. While the Bureau of Customs and Coast Guard enforced narcotics laws during this time, the Bureau of Prohibition oversaw administering narcotics laws. Confusion arose between both departments since the assignments overlapped. In 1930, Bureau of Prohibition disassembled when alcohol taxation and became the obligation of Treasury Department's Internal Revenue Bureau; the arrests went to the Justice Department.⁵⁷

While speaking before Congress in 1930, Henry Hull, the commissioner general of immigration, explained the Border Patrol did not operate on the actual border but instead about 100 miles away from the Border. He explained how the agents posted on roads made unwarranted arrests solely based on looks and immigration status. The Border Patrol arrested persons unable to identify their citizenship, moving them to headquarters for deportation. George Harris, the assistant commissioner general, backed the claims against the agents stating that the United States Congress allowed for agents to make arrests without warrants of aliens, (or immigrants).⁵⁸

⁵⁶ "Border Patrol History"

⁵⁷ U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, "Did You Know... during the Prohibition Era There Were 3 Federal Border Patrols?" U.S. Customs and Border Protection, December 20, 2019. <https://www.cbp.gov/about/history/did-you-know/prohibition-era>.

⁵⁸ Ngai, 56.

The Border Patrol agency resulted from the government beginning to limit European immigration into the U.S. through quota laws passed by Congress in 1921.⁵⁹ In 1924, the Johnson-Reed Act further limited the quota per country of immigrant admissions, excluding Asians, considering them unqualified to become citizens.⁶⁰ Directly after the ratification of the XVIII amendment, the laws passed; anti-immigration views influenced the government who began to limit the amount of people allowed into the U.S. The law impacted the government's position on the thousands of immigrants arriving for war and liquor industries work. The immigrants entering the United States were coming from Southern and Eastern Europe, a shift from previous immigrants from Western Europe.

Immigrants' distinct facial features, speech and motions resulted in constant harassment by nativist Americans threatened by their presence. Many Americans targeted immigrants for their excessive drinking habits, believed to be the cause and influence of others excessive heavy drinking habits. Saloons became hospitable places for immigrants and provided help to struggling families. The FBI and the Border Patrol made immigrant lives difficult and focused on incarcerating or deporting them. Three big immigrant groups which struggled in the United States throughout Prohibition were the Germans, the Italians, and the Irish.

Following the end of World War I, anti-German sentiments grew exponentially around the world. Society viewed the Germans in a negative light after the cruel actions which their country took to conquer surrounding countries in Europe. Historian Susanne Schenk Watts explains prohibitionists targeted the German American cultural traditions like the beer gardens.⁶¹ Beer

⁵⁹ Ngai, 12.

⁶⁰ Ngai, 12-13.

⁶¹ Susanne Schenk Watts, "Gemütlichkeit Verboten: The Influence of World War I Anti-German Sentiments on Prohibition." *Thesis and Dissertations* (2020): 2.

gardens were popular places where immigrant Germans would go to enjoy a drink and feel at home. Most decorated beer gardens looked like establishments back in Germany.

The Anti-Saloon League produced anti-German propaganda after WWI. Watts describes how the league produced propaganda posters which portrayed Germans as producers of alcohol within the U.S. However, the propaganda did not stop the German Americans from successfully producing alcohol, in breweries like Pabst Blue Ribbon, Miller, Anheuser-Busch. The Anti-Saloon League claimed that anyone who supported the brewers supported Germany's war efforts and drinking beer meant that citizens of the United States supported the enemy of the United States.⁶²

Watts continues her examination by explaining that Prohibition became a second war front which the United States was fighting against the German Americans. Within Minnesota, the Germans controlled most of the beer brewing industries' meaning Prohibition affected many German American jobs.⁶³ Pro-German sentiments grew while the government lost major federal revenue from the loss of alcohol taxes.⁶⁴ German owned distilleries attempted to produce dealcoholized beer, allowing the equipment to continue operation and staff employed. One specific Germany brewery, Anheuser-Busch invested in trucks; the company-built truck bodies later helping their distribution lines in the post-prohibition United States.⁶⁵

Unlike the German Americans, the Irish Americans experienced Prohibition differently. Since the 1880s Irish steadily emigrated into the United States; the Irish began assimilating and establishing themselves within society quickly as most of them knew the English language and looked like the Anglo Americans. The Irish began joining the job market as policeman, fireman,

⁶² Watts, 116.

⁶³ Watts, 138-139.

⁶⁴ Watts, 158.

⁶⁵ Michael Agnew. "The Rise of the Megabreweries After Prohibition." In *A Perfect Pint's Beer Guide to the Heartland*, University of Illinois Press, (2014): 6.

ball players, union officers, Catholic priests, and shop stewards. Immigrant men became policeman because it paid well however, society did not consider the job as respectable at this time since the men tended to be corrupt. Politicians in office contributed to the corruption by appointing policeman to benefit themselves within neighborhoods.⁶⁶ By the 1920s entire cities seemed controlled by Irish Americans with any new immigrants moving through rooted Irish to enter saloons, attend church services, find a job, and even take a walk.⁶⁷

Additionally, Irish American integrated themselves within the political scene, “the boss and urban machines.”⁶⁸ Bosses and machines aided each other in winning elections and influencing immigrant communities to push reforms and bills to pass. Tammany Hall, a New York City political organization, provided newly arrived immigrants with employment, shelter, and citizenship became a popular location for political machines and bosses. The Irish supported and were common attendees in Tammany Hall supporting the political machines.⁶⁹ Once Prohibition began, the Irish political machines could no longer operate within saloons; financed by German brewers.

Throughout Prohibition, Irish within Ireland received news from the U.S. about the excessive law changes and changes which immigrants endured resulting from the ratification of the XVIII amendment. An Irish reporter who traveled to the United States in 1928, reported back to *The Irish Times* explained that there was more intoxication occurring in the U.S. in the twelve days he was visiting than in all of Ireland. He could not grasp onto the idea of how uncaring the

⁶⁶ Willard M. Oliver, and James F Hilgenberg Jr. *A History of Crime and Criminal Justice in America*. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, (2006): 192-195.

⁶⁷ James R. Barrett, and David R. Roediger. “The Irish and the ‘Americanization’ of the ‘New Immigrants’ in the Streets and in the Churches of the Urban United States, 1900-1930.” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 24, no. 4 (2005): 3.

⁶⁸ David R. Colburn, and George E. Pozzetta. “Bosses and Machines: Changing Interpretations in American History.” *The History Teacher*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1976): 445–63.

⁶⁹ Barrett and Roediger, 12.

government acted to prohibition not working.⁷⁰ The Irish journalist continued his observations by explaining the rise of speakeasies and his surprise upon discovering police officers as offenders of the prohibition law. Hidden speakeasies saved people from killing themselves from home brews gone wrong. Back home in Ireland, citizens received the journalists' observations in good spirits by the brewers and distillers back in Ireland giving them hope for the future. Brewers and distillers could sense transportation and exportation of their whiskey resuming soon.

Like the Germans, Italian Americans were strongly against the prohibition law. Wine was a staple in their households and a huge part of their dietary meals. Italians viewed wine as a necessity to live, much like Americans viewed coffee as a necessity to survive every day. Within the city of Cleveland, Italians were constantly involved in the liquor trades and arrested for violations. However, even though anti-Italian sentiment was high, and blamed for much of the smuggling, the Italians only made a small percentage of those incarcerated. The police only imprisoned a small percent of Italians because the main mob families controlled the police force allowing for less incarcerations.⁷¹

The main mob families who controlled Chicago and New York allowed for organized crime operations and liquor trading to succeed during Prohibition. Some entrepreneurs who side-stepped federal law in Sicily moved to the U.S. when Mussolini came to power. Historians explain how these affluent entrepreneurs flourished in the U.S., involving themselves in businesses of bootlegging and illegal alcohol distribution. Italian traditions established in the U.S. among Italian communities included *omerta*. *Omerta* was a code of conduct and secrecy which forbid

⁷⁰ Dean Ruxton, "Prohibition America Trumped Ireland for Drunkenness 'Three Times over'." *The Irish Times*, (July 29, 2018).

⁷¹ Annual Report of the City of Cleveland, *Report of the House of Corrections*, (1928).

cooperation with the government authorities like police or FBI.⁷² The Italians did not associate themselves with the authorities, unless to bribe them.

Italian families were able to succeed and thrive during Prohibition because of their entrepreneurships with New York and Chicago. These families organized themselves and developed an organization which served the community speakeasies and bootleggers provided illegal alcohol. Five central families ran all distribution operations overseeing the bootleggers and rumrunners attempting to make ends meet throughout other states in the United States.⁷³ The five families of New York who ran the Italian mob include: Gambino, Genovese, Lucchese, Bonnano and Colombo. Unlike the Irish who had deep ties within the political sphere, Italians ties involved the criminal sphere.⁷⁴ During Prohibition Italians criminal activities included making, selling, and distributing “dago red,” a liquor home brew; gambling, and running disorderly houses, Italian version of speakeasies.⁷⁵

The Prohibition Era, 1920s-1930s, drastically changed the United States and altered society irrevocably. Formal movements achieved their visions of eliminating liquor consumption in society. The economy took a toll on the yearly economic revenue with the obliteration of liquor taxes. Breweries, distilleries, and wineries tried to adapt but most unfortunately closed with the stop of liquor sales. The law forced saloon owners to close their doors and the immigrant communities felt the impact resulting from no more additional aid to new migrants and struggling families. Law enforcement agencies, like the FBI, developed by the government to help fight the constant smuggling and bootlegging of liquor, also facilitated the closure of illegal speakeasy

⁷² History.com Editors. “Mafia in the United States.” History.com. A&E Television Networks, October 22, 2009. <https://www.history.com/topics/crime/mafia-in-the-united-states>.

⁷³ “Mafia in the United States”

⁷⁴ Luciano Iorizzo and Salvatore Mondello. “Origins of Italian-American Criminality: From New Orleans Through Prohibition.” *Italian Americana* 1, no. 2 (1975): 227.

⁷⁵ Iorizzo & Mondello, 227.

establishments. The Border Patrol agency aided the government with deportations, arrests of illegal citizens, and measuring quota laws. Immigrant communities of Germans, Irish and Italians all struggled with Prohibition differently. Germans dealt with closing down or adapting their breweries to stay afloat; the Irish dealt with the elimination of the political influences within saloons; and the Italians sidestepped federal law leading to illegal criminal activities throughout the era. Further research on the topic would dive deeper into the immigrant groups differing experiences during Prohibition. Diving deeper in explain how the German owned breweries survived Prohibition and were able succeeding afterwards. Exploring the way Irish political bosses and machines terrorized and influenced families leading to criminal activity of mobsters. Investigating the Italian mob and the five central families who controlled New York City during Prohibition and their development of the thousands of speakeasies over the course of thirteen years.