

HISTORY OF ALCOHOL IN AMERICA



This is a quick overview of the history of alcohol in America. Any area could be taken and researched in depth.

ALCOHOL IN AMERICA:

Drinking of alcohol was acceptable and a common practice in Colonial America. It was often safer to drink alcoholic beverages than water which might have contaminants in it. Early laws about alcohol addressed excessive public drinking and drunkenness, not the legality of alcohol as a drink. Alcohol was used for its medicinal properties during colonial times and especially during the Civil War. It was used as an antiseptic to prevent infection, to cure ailments and to treat internal diseases.

Organizations Promoting Prohibition

- These organizations promoted Prohibition and played an important role in the development of the 18th Amendment and its implementation:
- The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)
 - The President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was Frances Willard, born in Churchville, New York.
 - Carry A. Nation, a key figure in the WCTU whose efforts led to National Prohibition, smashed illegal saloons in Kansas with a hatchet so they would close.
- The Anti-Saloon League
 - Founded in Oberlin, Ohio in 1893, it soon became a powerful, national organization.
 - Supporters included John D. Rockefeller and Mark Hanna. The Anti-Saloon League worked closely with many churches and the WCTU.
- The Prohibition Party
- A political party in the United States known for its opposition to the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages.

ALCOHOL RELATED LAWS AND PROHIBITION LAWS:

In 1697, the first American alcohol regulation law was put into effect in New York. The law said that all saloons must close on Sundays because Sunday is a day for worship, not for drinking.

In 1735, Georgia passed the first statewide prohibition law. This law proved to be a failure and was abandoned seven years later, in 1742.

In 1851, Maine became the 2nd state in America to pass a statewide prohibition law.

By 1855, 12 other states had joined Maine in enacting prohibition laws.

EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL



HISTORY OF ALCOHOL IN AMERICA (Continued)



In 1880, after the Civil War, women joined the “dry supporters” and soon the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement was in full force. The WCTU and the Prohibition Party became more powerful.

By 1900 more than half of the States adopted prohibition laws.

The Prohibitionists thought the prohibition laws would prevent the purchase of alcohol in their states. Because the United States Postal Service was run by the federal government, instead of state government, alcohol could be mailed from a “wet state”. This infuriated the states that had enacted prohibition laws. In 1913, the Interstate Liquor Act was passed, which made it illegal to send liquor to a dry state. This act caused crime to increase as people found ways to obtain alcohol illegally.

In 1917 the 18th Amendment was proposed to ban the manufacture, sale and transportation of liquor. Many states did not agree with this view. The debate over this amendment continued for 2 years.

January 29, 1919 the 18th Amendment was ratified. The manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes was banned.

In October of 1919 the Volstead Act was passed to implement the Eighteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages.

On February 20, 1933 Congress passed the Twenty-first Amendment, which repealed the 18th Amendment.

On December 5, 1933 the Twenty-first Amendment was ratified, ending the era of "Prohibition".

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