

# The era of al capone

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



Al Capone greatly influenced organized crime in Chicago during the Prohibition Period by taking advantage of his city's desperation by bootlegging. Due to the cash received from this business, Al Capone and other opposing gangs became violent towards each other, but the police did not try to stop them, causing organized crime to grow.

Born in 1899 to Italian immigrants Gabriel and Teresina, Alphonse Capone was one of nine children. The Capone family did not make much money. Gabriel and Teresina lacked the ability to speak the English language and they both had not received a good education. Gabriel became a barber, but this was not enough money to provide for a growing family. In New York, the average pay per week of an Italian male ranged from \$9.71 to \$11.28. With this extremely low income, the Capone family found ways to make money by having Teresina work as a seamstress and even having their children do tasks to receive money. As a poor immigrant family in the slums of Brooklyn, the Capone family health was not ideal. In fact, Italian men in New York were often turned down by the military because of health issues.

The reasons for these health problems were due to insufficient amounts of fresh air, space, proper nourishment, and basic hygiene. Also, due to many children dropping out of school to help provide for their families, the Italian community was also lacking in standard education. Al Capone himself was not committed to school at all. He was a decent student at P. S. 133 until he began ditching classes in the sixth grade. He skipped so much class that he fell far behind and had to retake the grade. When he was getting lectured by a teacher for some classroom offense, his temper was unleashed and he struck the teacher. After being sent to the office and punished, he quit

school. He took on small jobs like working at a candy store or a bowling alley to be of use to his family. Gangs with young children were very common where Al was from, and he found himself in many of these street gangs until he was around 16. That's when he joined his first real gang, the Five Points. When Johnny Torrio's James Street Gang forged with Five Points, Al Capone idolized his new commander. He joined Torrio in Chicago during the year 1920.

Also during 1920, Jim Colosimo, Johnny Torrio's, was shot and killed. This made way for Torrio's rule. Prohibition had begun shortly before this. Torrio profited off the prohibition by bootlegging, which is the illegal manufacture and distribution of alcohol. He and his gang would make alcohol and sell it to many desperate Chicagoans. John Torrio was then shot by an opposing gang, but he lived. He was punished for his bootlegging by serving nine months in jail. Before he went to prison, he handed over his empire to the next master of organized crime, Al Capone.

In the late 1800s, mostly religious people believed alcohol was ruining America. They said it was ruining families and making people drunk. They founded different movements to protest alcohol and eventually, they got their wish. On January 17th, 1920, the 18th amendment was effective, forbidding the making and selling of alcoholic beverages. It actually never specifically stated that the consumption of liquor was illegal, but you can't drink it if you can't buy it. Not even an hour after this amendment was established in Chicago, six men with guns tied up a watchman and also trapped six engineers in a shed. They then broke into train cars and stole

approximately \$100, 000 worth of alcohol that was going to be used for medical purposes. Also in Chicago, at almost the same time, a gang stole four tubs of whiskey from a warehouse. Then, another gang stole a truck full of beer! All of these incidents happened in Chicago around the same time! None of the people who stole that night were ever caught. This was the first sign of Prohibition influencing organized crime in Chicago. Many citizens were struggling without their favorite beverage, and were desperate to find a way to get it. Seeing this weakness, street gangs took advantage of the situation and started bootlegging. Bootlegging was the new top crime. Due to the amounts of cash gangsters received for this business, gang violence broke out and the city was ridden with crime.

At the head of all this chaos was none other than Al Capone. He used his resources wisely and made connections in many different states in America and even Canada. Alcohol was imported from all these places and he also established different breweries, both throughout and outside of Chicago. With high amounts of illegal booze in a city starving for it, he needed protection. He hired bodyguards, salesmen, and truck drivers to deliver the drink. To make sure he did not get caught, he even paid off police. His wise playing made Al Capone the most powerful gangster in Chicago. One of the main reasons organized crime was able to grow was because the police did not try to stop it. Al Capone was so good at what he did, he thought about every element. He made deals with the officers so he could keep up his high profit business. His bribes ranged from around \$250, 000 dollars, which wasn't a very hard price to pay for him because of the cash he earned from

bootlegging. With the authorities being paid off, he was free to continue with his business.

However, there were side effects to no government involvement. Most of the crime in Chicago was bootlegging, and the police were paid to stay out of it, so it grew. Also, due to the high cash that bootlegging brought in, many opposing gangs started to fight with each other.

Al Capone did not just illegally brew and sell alcohol, he was also a fierce killer. Whenever someone was in his way, he would make sure that they were no longer a threat. For example, when state attorney William McSwiggin was coming close to prosecuting him, Capone and some other gang members drove past him and some friends and shot them all. When he heard that three of his friends were planning to kill him, Capone invited them to dinner and had them eat and drink until they were full. Then, his men tied them up and he took a bat and beat each of them to death. A similar multiple homicide happened on Saint Valentine's Day in 1929, when Capone's rival gang, George Moran's gang, was in a garage bootlegging. Men dressed as police walked in and told them they were being arrested. Then the seven men were lined up against the wall and shot. Everyone immediately thought this was Capone's doing, but he was in Florida during the whole incident. Although he did not commit the murders, it was assumed that he was responsible for arranging it. ' Only Capone kills like that,' said Moran himself, who had left the garage just minutes before the shooters showed up. Nobody was ever arrested for it.

In the 1928 presidential election, Herbert Hoover easily defeated Alfred Smith. When Hoover started in office on March 4, 1929, he had heard of the awful things Al Capone did. Every morning, he would ask his cabinet, When the answer was no, he would let everyone know, Some people think that President Hoover's desperation to catch Capone began in January of 1928 when both he and Capone were staying in a Florida hotel. The future president was in the lobby surrounded by people, until Al walked in and everyone rushed over to him, completely ditching Hoover. Perhaps this is why he hated him so much. Now people were really onto Al Capone. The Bureau of Prohibition hired Eliot Ness to form a team of police to arrest Capone once and for all. These men were known as The Untouchables and were put on the team for their integrity. They would turn down the bribes thrown at them from the enemy side. The Untouchables snuffed out Al's bootlegging business, but he was never charged for it. He was, however, charged for income tax evasion, which led to his downfall and sentencing to Alcatraz. Capone was unable to complete his sentence due to syphilis, and he died in his Florida estate on January 25, 1947. Al Capone's death marked an end of an era. Al Capone's era by: kaelyn sloan home the beginning the beginning the effects of prohibition the effects of prohibition the gang violence the gang violence the end of al capone the end of al capone In conclusion, Prohibition caused people to do crazy things and take desperate measures. By sneaking around the law for years, crime reached a new high. People like Al Capone changed the game in organized crime forever.