

THE AGE OF THE RUM RUNNER PASSES WITH REPEAL

RUM RUNNING no longer is big business. The age of the rum runner, the heyday of the millionaire booze king and the millionaire beer baron, the stupendous profits from contraband whiskey and illegal brew—all have vanished with repeal. That colossal industry entirely outside of the law, which flourished through more than thirteen years of the so-called noble experiment, has departed with little possibility of return. The men who made fortunes in it, the rum rackets, the booze bandits, and the hoodlums, as typified by the rogues' gallery upon these pages, in the main are hounded and harmless. Most of those who escaped the machine gun's fatal spray or the silent "ride" through the night to some rendezvous with death beside a lonely road are either in prison, beaten and broke, in flight from the authorities, or too conspicuously notorious to be really dangerous.

What is left of rum running is an unorganized,

dispirited, and waning business, despite the recent report of Joseph H. Choate, Jr., director of the Federal Alcohol Control administration, who says that a large proportion, something like approximately half, of the liquor consumed in America today is manufactured illegally. The condition revealed by Mr. Choate is a natural one. Illicit distilling cannot be wiped out overnight. There are bound to be wholesale violations of the revenue laws and the regulations governing distillation of liquors until the nation can restore itself to order after the chaos of prohibition. But from now on rum running can be nothing more than a futile adventure. The "big shots" of the business when it was big cannot come back. Others know the futility of trying to imitate them.

Mr. Choate points a pessimistic picture, indeed, in his report on the illegal manufacture of liquor, but that he is hopeful is evidenced by a number of measures he advocates to eliminate illicit distilling as still practiced. He recommends increased appropriations for enforcement of a public campaign to enlist all law enforcing agencies, federal and state, in a nation wide war on the criminal industry of unlicensed distilling; adoption of every reasonable means for cheapening and improving legal liquor in order to induce citizens to withdraw support from bootleggers; reduction in taxes and duties on legal liquors; removal of import duties and importers to compete; and relaxation of such forms of sales control as make it harder for buyers to get legal beverages than illegal goods.

Mr. Choate presents figures, based on legal production of liquor, capacities of seized stills, and estimates of capacities of stills yet to be seized and of those that never will be seized, to show that the drinking habits of the people have increased since prohibition and that the government is being more in taxes than it collects. His figures are no surprise to those who expected no miracles to happen immediately after repeal. If after a year or two new reports do not show a marked reduction in illicit distilling, there will be cause for alarm. In the meanwhile the law respecting people of this nation can remain calm in the assurance that virtually all the dangerous rum gangs have been broken up and routed, their leaders either dead, imprisoned, or rendered harmless, and that the surviving lesser figures of the age of rum running have been driven into obscurity or locked up in places where they can do no harm.

During prohibition it was estimated that there were from 200,000 to 250,000 bootleggers plying their trade in various parts of the country. A vast majority of those were merely retail peddlers of whiskey or bathtub gin. The objectionable fellows whose faces appear here and who, of course, never could have become powerful figures and forces of evil without prohibition, were not common bootleggers. They were the most important of the booze gang leaders, the liquor profiteers, the killers, and the like, and they were only a handful as compared with the hundreds who accumulated fortunes in the nefarious business and directed or executed its murders by the wholesale.

Chicago, which, despite its great distance from the seashores upon which much of the smuggled foreign liquor was landed, was the center, in fact the capital, of the prohibition booze business, the golden city of the age of the rum runner. All roads from the east, from Florida, from Canada led to Chicago. Truckloads of whiskey roared down from the north by night, resting in friendly barns and garages from dawn till twilight. Other trucks came from east and south on unfrequented sideroads. Hidden stills within the city turned out "14-year-old bourbon" in fewer than that many days. Big breweries in abandoned warehouses turned out thousands of barrels of inferior beer. Chicago was the bloody battleground of a seven-year bootleg war that saw at least one killing a day over more than one considerable stretch of time and claimed hundreds of victims, as rival rum gangs staged a homicidal orgy beside which the most desperate western cattle war would have been as mild as a Sunday school picnic.

During the rum running era, whiskey and beer magnates and even their lieutenants and hired hoodlums were virtually immune from legal punishment. They made their own laws, organized their businesses on a comprehensive scale, bribed officers and officials, dealt out death to rivals, and ruled with a high hand in more than a few big cities. Chicago had its booze and beer syndicates. So did New York, and Detroit, and all other centers of population. It was only after their profits began to decline as a result of a combination of causes that some of the men who had made hundreds of thousands and even millions in the business finally were placed behind prison bars as income tax violators, a curious legal procedure that actually made the government a partner in the illicit whiskey and beer industry.

Of all the human products of prohibition, the most notorious was Alphonse Capone of Chicago, who now, not because he was a bad man and a money No. 1, but because he cheated the men out of income taxes due on his profits from rum and rackets, is merely No. 2 at Atlanta prison. Capone once was said to amass a fortune of 20 million dollars. He was said of him that he controlled sources of income estimated at 100 million dollars. He was underworld boss of Chicago. His playground, Miami, Fla., where he maintained a private club, was a high wall.

He was a graduate of the Five Points, Brooklyn, appearing first in Chicago as a bartender in a South Wabash avenue cafe and as a lieutenant of Johnny Torrio, successor to Big Jim Connelley and gambling boss of the last ward. He put Capone into a lucrative business, not long after the supreme triumph of the Saloon League that Capone was the head of a gang. His gangsters were tougher than the huns of many of his rivals, so more than one position gang was absorbed or wiped out by leaders with well organized followings. Capone's courage to stand against him in the fight for his whiskey and beer business, which on Oct. 12, 1923, with the slaying of Jerry O'Connor, O'Banion's partner, ended the early victims of bootleg war. As a front for his unlawful business he operated a florist's shop at 738 North Dearborn street, across from Holy Name cathedral, was in that shop on Nov. 10, 1924, that he was killed by three mysterious callers. His estate was valued at only \$27,000.

By Torrio, Al Capone's predecessor in the underworld. He fled Chicago in fear of vengeance of O'Banion's friends. He appeared in Chicago for a short while, and then fled to Long Island, where he is said to be in retirement.

George J. Druggan, who is scheduled to enter Atlanta prison soon. He went to Leavenworth, Mo., on Feb. 12, 1932, as an income tax evader, was considerable favoritism in the Kansas prison, and to the Georgia lock-up. He was an expert in illicit breweries.

Augustus Lake, partner in the beer business with Druggan, who served 14 months and 13 days in federal prison for income tax frauds. He was in the ice business in Detroit, and is seen here in Chicago.

McErlane, Chicago's "most vicious gangster" and alleged originator of the "death ride," was a victim of booze in a hospital in Beardsville, in October, 1932. His police record in 1912. He entered the bootleg business under the name of Rothstein, the gambler, became a member of a gang engaged in liquor traffic, and at one time accused of crime served only two years in prison. A year before he was slain he was trading a New York City hotel by rival gangsters for five times.

Capone's principal rival in his own city was George "Bugs" Moran, who set himself up as underworld boss on the north side and pro-

duces until Saint Valentine's day, 1929, when his lieutenants were mowed down with machine guns in a North Clark street garage. Capone kills like that," said "Bugs," who mentioned in the newspapers in connection with his retirement recently as vice president of Central Cleaners and Dyers of 2705 Fullerton.

Capone was more than an organizer of rum runners and other desperadoes. He was a brother, Ralph "Bottles" Capone, who was freed from McNeil Island penitentiary in 1928, was an income tax evader.

Ralph first came to unfavorable notice in connection with gun toting and election fraud cases. His main business was the handling of illicit liquor and the management of hidden breweries. He applied the syndicate with beer, and hundreds of evildoers in Chicago who were in the age of the rum runner on profits from bottle or on rewards for crimes committed in connection with the rum business were called "Bugs" Moran, who was machine gunned Oct. 23, 1930, and buried in an \$11,800 casket.

Danny Stanton, Capone gangster and hoodlum. Joseph "Peppi" Genero, notorious south side gangster and Capone lieutenant. His brother, Johnny, was killed in 1931.

Jack Zuta, vice monger and ally of Moran and Aiello, who was killed by a rival gang in a quiet resort hotel in Deland, Fla., Aug. 1, 1930. William "Three Fingers" Jack White, ex-convict and killer, who strove to rise to fortune on the ruins of the crumpled Capone gangland empire, but who was killed by two enemies in the apartment of his bride, a former night club entertainer, at 920 Wesley avenue, Oak Park, Jan. 23 of this year.

Frank Diamond, brother-in-law of Al Capone and a member of the Capone gang. George "Red" Barker, ex-convict, labor racketeer, and gunman, who was killed June 17, 1932, by a rain of bullets from a machine gun nest at 1502 North Crawford avenue. He had entertained ambitions to succeed Capone as underworld boss.

James "Fur" Sammons, hired gunman associated with the Capones. Freed from prison by two Illinois governors, he now is in prison in Indiana under a life sentence.

The six Genna brothers, west side bootleg and Mafia gangsters. Angelo Genna was the first of the three brothers slain. Mike Genna was killed in June, 1925, just a month after Angelo's murder. Tony was shot to death in July, 1925. Surviving brothers are Peter Genna, who no longer figures in the news, and Sam Genna, who is reported to be back in Italy. James Genna, head of an alcohol cooking clan, died Nov. 8, 1931. All of the Genna murders were reprisals for the killing of O'Banion.

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Nick Cramer, south side beer runner and associate of Joe Salts, Paddy Sullivan, and Ralph Buglio.

Hymie "Loud Mouth" Levin, loop collector for the Capone syndicate in the era of the rum runner. He was sent to Leavenworth prison May 18, last, to begin an 18-month stretch for income tax evasion.

Anthony "Tough Tony" Capozio, Capone gunman once sought as suspect in the St. Valentine's day massacre.

John "Dingbat" Oberta, south side gangster and politician "taken for a ride" in his own automobile March 5, 1930. He and his chauffeur, Sam Malega, were found murdered at 103d street and Roberts road, west of Chicago Ridge. Like O'Banion, Oberta, who was a Salts hoodlum and the swankiest of all Chicago gangsters, often appearing in evening clothes, maintained a flower shop as a false front for his criminal activities.

Earl "Hymie" Weiss, who succeeded to the leadership of the O'Banion gang and who was killed Oct. 11, 1926, in a machine gun ambush in North State street, near the florist's shop in which O'Banion was murdered.

"Machine Gun Jack" McGurn, golf playing gangster whose real name is Vincent Gebhardt. Though the reputed executioner of the Capone gang, he has managed to go unscathed since he was shot down in a hotel at Rush and Ontario streets six years ago.

Frank Nitti, business man of the Capone gang. He served time in Leavenworth for income tax evasion and later received a bullet in his lungs from Detective Sergeant Harry Lang's revolver in a police raid on the Nitti headquarters in a loop building. The bullet did not kill him.

Among those conspicuous in New York City in rum and racketeering activities were: William V. "Big Bill" Dwyer, turfman and booze overlord, who

is said to have made 40 million dollars in the illicit liquor business and who was sentenced to Atlanta prison in 1927 and paroled 21 months later; Wasey Gordon, whose real name is Irving Wexler, a stolid beer baron with breweries in New Jersey, who was sentenced to federal prison recently for income tax frauds; Vincent Coll, a youthful killer who was trapped and slain by rivals in a drug store telephone booth in February, 1932; Owen "Owey" Madden, night club owner and all around hand in the liquor business, who has been in and out of prisons a number of times and who was paroled from Sing Sing last on July 2, 1933; and Larry Fay, night club owner, who was shot to death by one of his employes in his club Casa Blanca, Jan. 1, 1933.

William "Klondike" O'Donnell, notorious booze racketeer and brother of Myles and Steve O'Donnell. He went to Leavenworth for siphoning government whiskey out of Morand Brothers' warehouse at 823 Norton street. His recent activities are said to have to do with labor racketeering.

Edward J. "Spike" O'Donnell, unrelated to "Klondike," and for years a prominent figure in the south side beer business.

Ralph Buglio, Capone gunman. His automobile was the "death car" of the murder of Maurice "Mossy" Enright.

Michael "Bubs" Quinlan, south side gangster and beer runner and rival of Salts.

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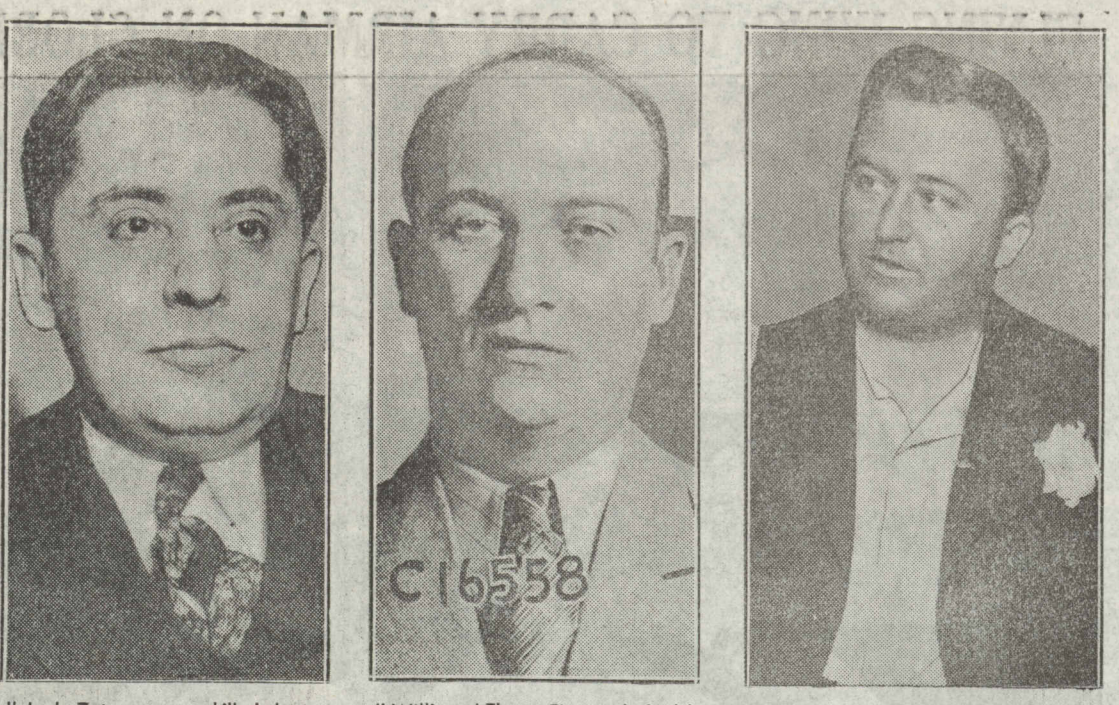
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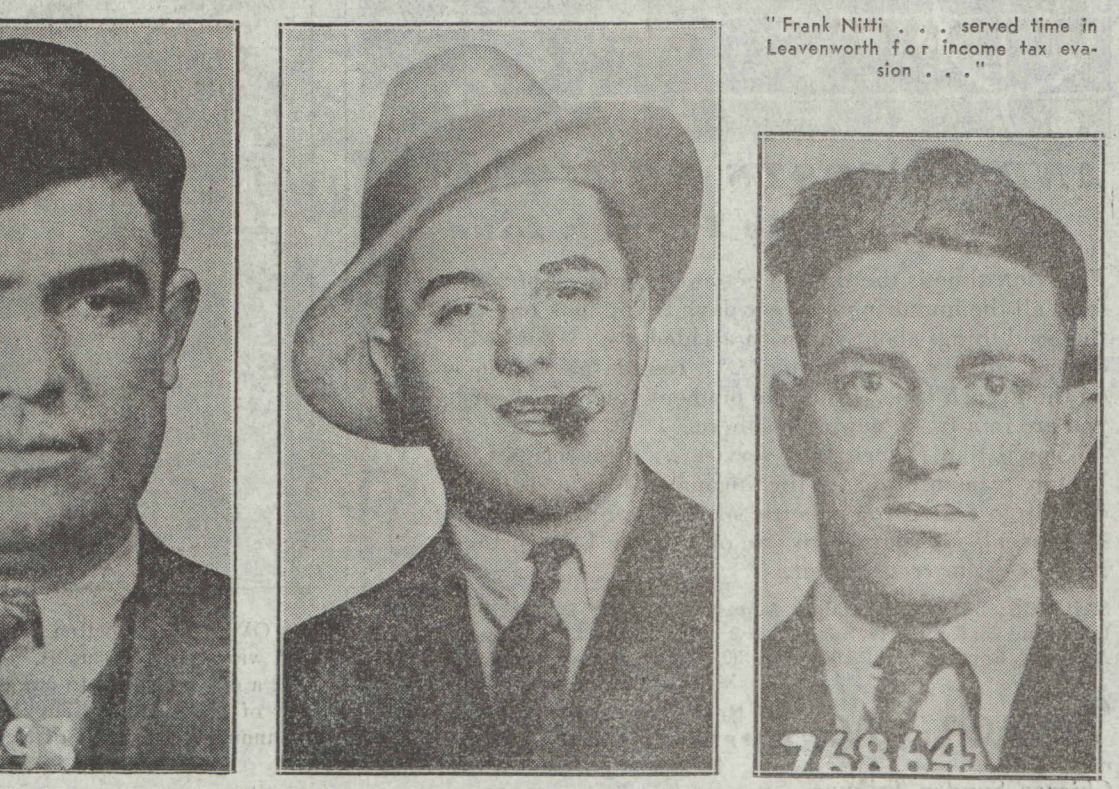
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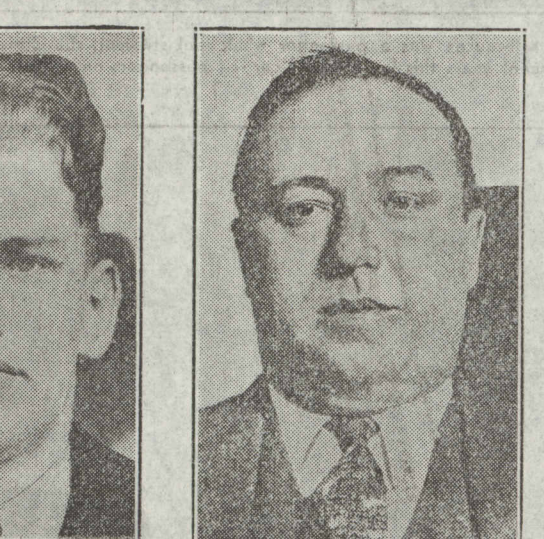
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