

PROHIBITION AND THE KKK

When my grandma was a girl during Prohibition, her family made wine in the basement. Grandma used to cover it up and take it in a wheelbarrow to people's houses and distribute it.

There was a guy had a speakeasy down The Run, back of the old Greenfield School. You went to his house, you got a drink in his kitchen.

SPEAKEASIES AND PROHIBITION?

Prohibition was instituted by an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that made it illegal to manufacture, sell or transport liquor. A **speakeasy** was a “secret” place to buy alcoholic beverages during Prohibition. They weren’t really secret. In most towns, everyone knew where they were, including the police who did little to enforce the law and who might stop by for a few drinks themselves.

Many taverns converted into speakeasies during Prohibition and kept a thriving business. Regulars drank bootleg liquor or bathtub gin at the bar from coffee cups. Because serving alcohol was against the law, some taverns became private clubs where you had to know someone to get in, using a password or a secret knock.

Nightclubs became speakeasies, too, offering entertainment and dancing. They served coffee that could be spiked with bootleg liquor or bathtub gin if you requested it in a whisper (spoke easy) from the waiter.

The Prohibition Amendment was a miserable failure and was repealed after only 13 years.

Even if they had wanted to, it would have been difficult to enforce the prohibition law in Greenfield. There was liquor any which way you turned. And if an occasional law-abiding citizen took it upon himself to call the police, there would be plenty of time to clear out before an officer arrived, since he would have to take a streetcar from the No. 4 station in Oakland.

Not everybody complained about the Prohibition law, because bootlegging was a lucrative endeavor. Greenfield Jimmy Smith, a pro ballplayer with a .219 lifetime batting average, was smuggling

Bathtub gin was an illegal drink consisting of either homemade moonshine or grain alcohol (which was available “for industrial use only”) flavored with oil of juniper. Bootleg whiskey was made in a similar fashion and colored with sugar heated in a saucepan on the stove until it turned brown.