The **18th Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in **1919**, instituted **Prohibition**, banning the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages in the United States. It was a significant social and political experiment that lasted until its repeal by the **21st Amendment** in **1933**.

**Background and Causes**

1. **Temperance Movement**:
   * The Prohibition movement emerged from the **temperance movement**, which had been active since the early 19th century.
   * Advocates believed alcohol was responsible for societal problems, including crime, domestic violence, and poverty.
   * Groups like the **Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)** and the **Anti-Saloon League** were instrumental in pushing for prohibition.
2. **Religious and Moral Grounds**:
   * Many Protestant groups supported Prohibition, viewing it as a moral imperative to purify society.
3. **World War I Influence**:
   * Anti-German sentiment during WWI bolstered support for Prohibition, as many breweries were owned by German Americans.
   * Grain and resources were seen as better used for the war effort than for alcohol production.

**The 18th Amendment**

1. **Text**:
   * Ratified on **January 16, 1919**, the amendment stated:
     + *“After one year from the ratification of this article, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.”*
   * It did not outlaw the **consumption** of alcohol.
2. **Volstead Act**:
   * Passed in **1919**, this law defined "intoxicating liquor" as beverages containing more than **0.5% alcohol by volume**.
   * The Act established enforcement measures for Prohibition but lacked adequate funding and resources for widespread compliance.

**Effects of Prohibition**

1. **Positive Outcomes**:
   * Alcohol consumption initially dropped, and some proponents cited decreases in arrests for public drunkenness and certain types of crime.
2. **Negative Consequences**:
   * **Rise of Organized Crime**:
     + Criminal enterprises thrived by smuggling and producing alcohol. Figures like **Al Capone** became infamous for bootlegging.
   * **Speakeasies**:
     + Underground bars, known as speakeasies, proliferated in cities, defying the ban.
   * **Corruption**:
     + Law enforcement and politicians were often bribed to ignore violations, undermining public trust in the government.
   * **Economic Impact**:
     + The loss of jobs and tax revenue from the alcohol industry hurt the economy, especially during the Great Depression.
3. **Public Backlash**:
   * By the late 1920s, Prohibition was widely seen as a failure, as alcohol consumption began to rise again and enforcement efforts faltered.

**Repeal of Prohibition**

1. **21st Amendment**:
   * Growing opposition to Prohibition led to the ratification of the **21st Amendment** on **December 5, 1933**, repealing the 18th Amendment.
   * It remains the only constitutional amendment ever repealed.
2. **Legacy**:
   * Prohibition highlighted the challenges of legislating morality and the unintended consequences of broad restrictions on personal behavior.
   * It also had a lasting impact on law enforcement, organized crime, and American attitudes toward alcohol regulation.