

How To Get A Drink

Citizens who wanted to have liquor at home or serve it at a party most often obtained it from a “retailer”, whose booze was furnished by a bootlegger. People bought whiskey in places such as soft drink stands, candy stores, barber shops, pool halls, gas stations, and other small businesses.

Mary Todd Lincoln’s girlhood home on West Main Street

fronted as a candy and soft drink store, but its main business was selling liquor out of the back rooms. Smaller quantities of liquor and particularly moonshine were also sold out of private residences, so-called “blind pigs.” The largest concentration was in an area locals called “the Jungle”-



a mixed race neighborhood on West Fifth Street where Smith and Jefferson streets cross. At times, Jungle residents openly solicited passers-by. In January 1927, an undercover police officers was fatally shot there while trying to arrest a seller.

Some saloons re-invented themselves as restaurants with a bar in the basement or a back room - the so-called “speakeasy”.

Known customers or persons with the right password were admitted. In addition, people formed private clubs where membership or vouching for guests gained entry. Periodically, dry agents would get sufficient evidence for a warrant and raid such places. Usually, after a short hiatus, the club would re-open. Later in the Prohibition era, the agents would seize the property for forfeit upon conviction.

Medicinal whiskey was another source for consumption. This category consisted of alcohol manufactured before 1920 or thereafter made under federal license by otherwise closed distilleries

The Volstead Act allowed physicians to prescribe (on government forms) up to 100 pints every three months for certain illnesses, but no patient could get more than one pint in 10 days time. Drug stores filled the prescriptions. Some doctors made money charging for prescriptions and others signed them for friends or patients who no illnesses. Although pharmacists’ pints were audited by the

Prohibition disappeared in without the

Bureau, some one way or another requisite prescription.

