

**Temperance
was the Key Issue
in Tennessee Politics
in the
Early Twentieth Century**

Alcohol would "bring down upon us, as a State, Sodom's guilt and Sodom's doom."



Governor (1865-69) William G. ("Parson") Brownlow, a Methodist minister, editor, and longtime supporter of temperance

PROHIBITION TIMELINE IN TENNESSEE

- **1824** The State restricted liquor sales near churches.
- **1829** The first Tennessee temperance societies met in Kingsport and Nashville.
- **1831** The Tennessee General Assembly began to regulate the liquor trade by authorizing licenses for operating saloons.

The number of saloons increased fivefold under the law.

- **1838** The general assembly repealed the 1831 law and passed a "Quart Law," which restricted the sale of alcohol to containers of one quart or more. This law applied only to liquor. Wine, beer, and cider could be sold without restriction, as had been the case under the old law.

- **1846** The 1838 law was replaced by a law which again licensed saloons to sell liquor by the drink. Saloon keepers could not sell to minors, if their parents forbade it in writing, or to slaves without permission from their owners.
- **1877** The legislature enacted a law forbidding the sale of alcohol within four miles of chartered rural schools.
- **1887** The legislature amended the Four-Mile Law to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors within four miles of any country school, virtually banning the liquor business in rural Tennessee.
- **1899** The Peeler Act extended the Four-Mile Law to towns "hereinafter incorporated" with populations less than 2,000.
- **1903** The Adams Bill extended the restrictions of four miles to all towns of 5,000 population or less. **The nine larger cities remained wet.**

- **1907** The Pendleton Act extended the Four-Mile Law to the larger cities.

By the end of the year only Memphis, Chattanooga, Nashville, and LaFollette were wet.



KNOXVILLE BECOMES DRY

- **1909** The legislature passes a bill to forbid the sale of liquor within four miles of any school in the state, over the Governor's veto. A second law prohibited the manufacture of intoxicating beverages.

- **1912** Memphis and Nashville again licensed liquor dealers.

One alcohol trade newspaper claimed that more liquor was being sold in Tennessee than before prohibition.

- **1916** The Mayors of Memphis and Nashville were removed from office for refusal to enforce prohibition.

- **1917** The "bone-dry bill" of Governor Thomas C. Rye completed the prohibitionist campaign in Tennessee. This legislation made illegal the receipt or possession of liquor and prohibited the transportation of liquor into or out of the state.



TENNESSEE BECOMES DRY

- **1919** The Tennessee General Assembly approved national prohibition and the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified.



THE U.S.A. BECOMES DRY

- **1920s** National prohibition did not work in Tennessee in the 1920s any better than state prohibition had since 1909.

- **1933** The Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is repealed.



PROHIBITION ENDS