## "We Sure Weren't Dry": Uncovering Apex's Culture of Alcohol in the Prohibition Era

Abstract: This poster, part of the Historical Archaeology exhibit, delves into the history of alcohol consumption at the Apex logging site. Occupied through the Prohibition era, archaeological assemblages at Apex are chock-full of whiskey and wine bottles, cone-top beer cans, and Budweiser hops syrup - workers weren't as "dry" as you'd think!

### Rachael E. O'Hara Northern Arizona University

#### The Context of Apex

From 1928 to 1936, Apex operated as a logging camp nestled within what is today known as the Kaibab National Forest. Constructed by the Saginaw and Manistee Lumber Company, Apex was home to roughly 150 residents including loggers, engineers, a cook, schoolteachers, wives, and children. Apex was a temporary living space; all buildings were easily collapsible or were constructed from train cars, allowing them to be hauled off down the tracks to the next work site. The Apex camp was bisected by the logging spur, with management, select married workers, and their families living on the western side of the camp, and single male laborers living communally on the eastern side (Richmond 1988). Today, Apex is an archaeological site marked by wooden foundations, milled lumber scatters, large can dumps, and scattered assemblages of discarded historic objects. Interestingly, this includes broken whiskey bottles, beer cans, and possible brewing implements, all pointing to a rampant culture of alcohol consumption by the camp's residents.

#### "Federal Law Prohibits"

Arizona was the 13th state to pass a Prohibition law before the national Volstead Act took effect. Arizona Prohibition began on New Years Day 1915 and ended when the national laws were repealed in 1933 (Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses & Control). This puts Apex's occupation almost entirely within the era of strict alcohol regulations and illicit trade. Bootlegging operations and speakeasies were common throughout Arizona. In proximity to Apex, both the towns of Williams and Flagstaff had systems of underground tunnels and basements that were used to house speakeasies and to transport moonshine. The railway system was also known to transport moonshine from Flagstaff out to the smaller towns in Northern Arizona, as corroborated by one Apex resident who stated the camp "wasn't dry, I'll tell you that" (Setterland 1984).



#### There's Beer A'Brewin'

Prohibition did not stop Apex's residents from drinking. A common find at the site is malt syrup extracts, which were produced by large brewing companies and were a key ingredient in homebrewed beer. Three brands of malt syrup are present at the Apex archaeological site: two Puritan Malt Extract Company, one Schlitz, and a whopping fourteen "Budweiser Hop Flavored Barley Malt Syrup" (Figure 1) and "Malt Extract" cans are found across the site, including at the kitchen, laborer bunkhouse, and near management housing. Additionally, the presence of washtubs (Figure 2), barrel hoops, glass jugs, and mason jars point to likely brewing operations at the camp.

Another possible strategy for drinking during Prohibition at Apex was to obtain a prescription. Two American Medicinal Spirits bottles were found at the superintendent's home (Figure 3). AMS Co. was founded in 1920 and sold alcohol, mostly whiskey, for medicinal purposes, one of the exceptions to Prohibition's alcohol ban (Biggs







**Figure 7:** A 1935 Old

Quaker whiskey bottle

The bottle displays the

Federal Law Forbids on

the shoulder, the D-134

Schenley's Old Quaker

liquor permit plant code

62, for their Terre Haute,

Brand, and Owens Illinois

Distiller code for

Indiana factory.

Figure 4 (left): A Pabst brand bottle opener Figure 5 (center): Whiskey bottle from Rectifier 19 Figure 6 (right): A post-Prohibition "Vai Bros. Wines" bottle

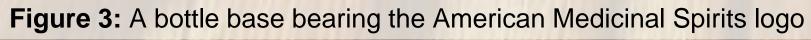
#### Post-Prohibition Consumption

Apex's culture of drinking continued after Prohibition ended in 1933, as revealed by the presence of numerous bottles bearing the "Federal Law Forbids" warning or Distiller, Rectifier, or liquor plant code permit numbers (Whitten). Cone-top beer cans, including Acme and Pabst brands, and a Pabst bottle opener (Figure 4) point to continued beer consumption. Acme advertised their "Non-Fattening" beer towards women, suggesting alcohol consumption was practiced by both men and women at Apex. Three Vai Brothers Wine bottles date to immediately following the re-legalization of alcohol (Figure 5).

Whiskey, though, was the most common alcohol at Apex. Bottles of Seagram's, Hiram Walker & Sons, National Distiller's, Continental Distilling Corporation, Old Quaker (Figure 7), and Old Thompson Whiskey were all found at the site. Five bottles from the Latchford Glass Company of Los Angeles all bear the unidentified Rectifier number of R-19 (Figure 6). Rectifiers purchased whiskey from a distiller than added something to it to change the taste, such as creating blended whiskeys (Veach 2016).

The site's largest concentration of alcohol bottle fragments is near where the camp's superintendent lived, indicating that the lumber company did not care about or enforce drinking regulations. A localized deposit like this can also indicate social drinking practices as opposed to individuals going off on their own to drink.







Conclusions & Future Directions

- The residents of Apex consumed alcohol both during and after Prohibition
- The Saginaw and Manistee Lumber Company did not seem to care about their employees drinking, as seen by management's involvement in alcohol consumption
- Preferred drinks include beer and whiskey, with wine being a less popular

The Apex, Arizona Archaeology Project will be holding its next season this upcoming summer. For my Master's thesis, I will be looking further into the alcohol assemblages at the Apex site, illegal alcohol trade routes through Northern Arizona, and brand presence. I will argue that alcohol consumption was pivotal in the development of shared identity among the camp's population, both as members of a unified working class, and as a means of Americanization for the immigrant residents.

Figure 2: A metal washtub, potentially used for brewing.

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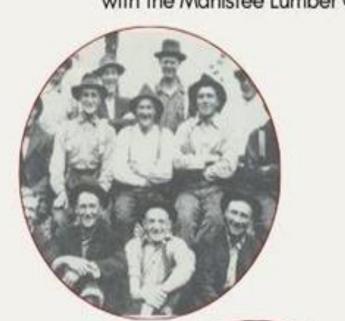
Whitten, David. "Federal Law Forbids Sale or Reuse of This Bottle" Marking. Glass Bottle Marks. https://glassbottlemarks.com/federal-law-forbids-sale-or-reuse-of-this-bottle-marking/

## U.S. PROHIBITION

a Prohibition law on the manufacture and sale of alcohol

The Saginaw Lumber Company secures logging rights for the South

The Saginaw Lumber Company merges with the Manistee Lumber Company



The 18th Amendment and Volstead Acts are passed, prohibiting the sale and manufacture of "intoxicating liquids"

Arizona becomes the 13th state to pass a

prohibition on alcoholic products

Prohibition officially begins for the U.S.

The Saginaw and Manistee Lumbe Company signs a contract to grade a logging spur in the Tusayan distric

Apex School District #3 opens inside of a re-purposed train car

The U.S. Census Bureau records 150 residents of the "Saginaw Logging Camp"



Prohibition is repealed by the 21st Amendment

Alcohol bottles must be labeled with "Federal Law Forbids Sale or Reuse of This Bottle" along with distiller and rectifier

The last two locomotives at Apex



and the Williams Historic Photo Project; historian Al Richmond; generous funding

and Arizona



# HISTORY OF APEX HISTORY 1851 Maine becomes the first state to implement The Anti-Saloon League is founded