

SECTION-TOPIC	BOOM AND BUST – PROHIBITION
SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD	Standard 5: <i>Analyze the effects of the changing social, political, and economic conditions of the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression.</i> SS.912.A.5.12: <i>Examine key events and people in Florida history as they relate to United States history.</i>
VOCABULARY	Prohibition, Moonshine, Bootlegging
REQUIRED MATERIALS	Prohibition Reading, SUM IT UP Chart
DURATION	1 – 50 minute period

DO NOW OR PRE-READING –

- Teacher will post the 18th Amendment on the board for all students to see.
 - Students will spend 5-10 minutes assessing the meaning of the 18th Amendment and answering the following question.
1. What does Prohibition mean?

LESSON –

- Teacher will make copies or project the reading on the board for students to read.
- Students will complete the **SUM IT UP Chart (see attached)**
- Students will write 1 sentence summing up each of the subsections: **Prohibition, Moonshine, Build it and they will Come: Bradley’s Beach Club, and Avoiding the Law.**

Prohibition

During Prohibition (1920 to 1933), it was illegal to make, transport, or sell liquor in the United States. Because Prohibition was an unpopular law, breaking it was acceptable to many ordinary citizens, without violence. Moon shining and bootlegging were lucrative businesses, especially during the difficult years after the boom ended.

Berlin Griffin introduced Zell Davis Sr. to the “fun and games” of bootlegging, explained his son, Zell Davis Jr., who became state’s attorney:

Berlin ... would go out at the crack of dawn to go king fishing. ... As the day wore on, he would slowly keep drifting further and further away from the king fishing fleet, and when he felt like it was safe, he would slip over to the Bahamas, get his load of liquor loaded in the middle of the night back into his king fishing boat, come back over, and get there about daybreak. ... [T]hen he would go in with the fleet and unload his booze.

Moonshine

Illegal liquor, or moonshine, was produced in homemade stills, usually at night to hide the smoke they emitted. In 1928 *The Palm Beach Post* reported that "one of the largest stills ever," of about 1,000-gallon capacity, had been seized by Prohibition agents northeast of Kelsey City (now Lake Park) after a brief gunfight; five people were arrested. Another still of about 500 gallons had been seized near Jupiter, where residents later spoke of the woods being filled with the moonshine makers.¹

Build It and They Will Come: Bradley's Beach Club²

Beginning in 1898, the guests of the Royal Poinciana Hotel and The Breakers were within walking distance of a major new attraction: Bradley's Beach Club, a gambling casino and restaurant. Colonel Edward Riley "E. R." Bradley and his brother, John "Jack" Bradley, built the Beach Club just north of today's Flagler Memorial Bridge, on land purchased from then-State Senator Elisha Dimick. E. R. Bradley was most associated with the club and eventually bought out his brother.

Once Bradley decided to let women gamble, the venture prospered and became what many considered the world's finest gambling casino. In the earlier years, roulette and hazard were the only games offered. Later *chemin de fer* was added, a variation of baccarat, with a \$5,000 limit. Although gambling was illegal in Florida, the Beach Club circumvented that technicality by operating as a private club. Security was provided by men recruited from the Tennessee Mountains.

The club was very simply decorated in green and white, with lighting that Bradley said flattered a woman's complexion more than harsh bright lights.

Drinking and smoking were not allowed in the gambling rooms, only in the dining room, where the headwaiter would oversee the consumption of alcohol. It was difficult to control, said Bohne, especially during Prohibition, when diners brought their own beverages: "*They would be called to telephone [and Bradley would] meet 'em and say, 'Young man, you're drinking a little heavy tonight. Come back tomorrow and everything will be settled.' If the fella got unruly, he was out. But it was done in a nice manner.*"

At E. R. Bradley's Beach Club in Palm Beach, Thomas Tipton "T. T." Reese Sr. was in charge of securing liquor for the club from the Bahamas Islands, just 66 miles away, according to his son, T. T. Reese Jr.:

My Dada reached Captain [Irving] Hiscock and sent him to Nassau to charter a schooner, load it with the inventory listed, take it to the west end of Grand Bahama [Island], and set it up for delivery into Palm Beach. Fishing skiffs were secured and loaded and came over in broad daylight and unloaded into A[lexander] B. Otwell's trucks at the foot of Sunset Avenue, thence into storage at the club. ... They first used chicken wire to enclose the cargo ashore; later they constructed a warehouse.

¹ Kevin Hemstock, "Jupiter was the Hub for Illegal Booze," *The Jupiter Courier*, 2-9-2000, including citation of *The Palm Beach Post*, 2-3-1928.

² Oral Histories of Harry Redifer, Tom Bohne (HSPBC 1962); T. T. Reese Jr., "Notes on happenings connected with the Beach Club" (HSPBC); By-Laws of the Beach Club (1899).

Avoiding the Law

Everyone seems to think, and he probably did, [E. R. Bradley] had to pay off officials, but I was with him 20 years and during that time, I could swear that I never saw him pay anyone a penny of [bribery]. Yes, he was raided several times, but they was [sic] always tipped off and he had everything hid away, and ... the guests would sit down and drink tea at the tables. ... And they would all join in the fun while the inspector from the governor's office would go around and search the place—not too methodically, but search the place. The [gambling] tables all folded up and looked like a tea table when they took the layout off of them. Harry Redifer built the [hiding] places for them.

Tom Bohne, secretary to E. R. Bradley

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION -

- Students will answer the following questions following completion of the reading.

PROHIBITION QUESTION

Directions: Answer the following question concerning the quotation from the *Avoiding the Law* paragraph.

1. According to the quotation by Tom Bohne about E.R. Bradley's Beach Club, Bradley never paid a bribe to anyone; however he did serve alcohol during Prohibition.

Assess the quotation and make a judgment based on your opinion. Should E.R. Bradley be seen as a local hero for providing alcohol during Prohibition or should he be considered a common law breaker who circumvented the system?

SUM IT UP CHART

Directions: For each of the sections below, write 1 sentence summarizing the following paragraphs.

Prohibition	
Moonshine	
Build it and they will come: Bradley's Beach Club	
Avoiding the Law	