

## Book Reviews

Author, Title	Reviewer
Daniel Okrent <i>Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition</i>	Orley Ashenfelter
Tom Standage <i>An Edible History of Humanity</i>	Karl Storchmann
Wiglaf Droste, Nikolaus Heidelbach and Vincent Klink <i>Wein</i>	Peter Musolf

DANIEL OKRENT: *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. Scribner, New York, 2010, 468 pp., ISBN 978-0-7432-7702-0, \$30.00

Prohibition, that period between 1920 and 1933 when the manufacture, sale, import or export of “intoxicating liquors” was forbidden in the U.S., has produced a remarkable set of historical myths. Daniel Okrent’s inspiring new book reveals many of them. Here are some examples:

Myth 1—“Eliot Ness and the Untouchables put Al Capone out of business.” Well, actually, Capone’s bootlegging operation in Chicago was never shut down. Moreover, Ness, who died as a semi-drunken mess, had nothing to do with Capone’s final conviction, which was for income tax evasion.

One of the most interesting facts about Prohibition is that alcoholic beverage consumption and production continued during the entire period of its existence. Although Okrent refers to the work of Miron and Zweibel on alcoholic beverage consumption during Prohibition, his quite exhaustive research seems to have missed the main basis for their work: a truly remarkable book, *The Economic Results of Prohibition*, by Clark Warburton. This book, published in 1932, was Warburton’s doctoral dissertation at Columbia University. His advisors Arthur Burns, Wesley Claire Mitchell, Harold Hotelling, and Joseph Dorfman make up an all star economic team if ever there was one. The primary finding of the book, which is based on a careful examination of indirect indicators of production and consumption, is that alcohol consumption by the late 1920s was only about one-third below its pre-World War I high. From my reading of Warburton’s work, it is not even clear that