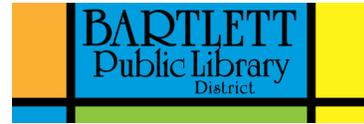


For Immediate Release  
April 21, 2017



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### **Al Capone, famous gangster, had history told at Bartlett Library**

On Thursday, April 20, Highway Historian and Author David G. Clark brought 31 Bartlett Library patrons back to the era of prohibition and Al Capone's time as a Chicago mob boss.

Clark began the program by explaining that Capone's story is highly elaborated in the media. This has been done due to movie and TV show portrayals. The highly vamped depiction of Capone was due in large part to a man named Oscar Fraley.

Fraley was given a 22 page, single-spaced true story on Al Capone's gang related history by Eliot Ness, a law enforcement agent who brought Capone down as part of a group called The Untouchables. Taking the 22 page account from Ness, Fraley turned the story roughly into a 200 page novel.

The novel was what the 1959 TV series "The Untouchables" and the 1987 film of the same name (starring Kevin Costner, Robert De Niro and Sean Connery) was based on.

Clark then explained the history of how Capone came to Chicago in the first place.

In 1920, Big Jim Colosimo of Chicago was assassinated. To take his place at the top of the Chicago mob scene was a man named Johnny Torrio. Torrio needed someone he could trust to help run the Chicago scene with him, so he called up Capone and "essentially gave him an offer he couldn't refuse," Clark explained.

Capone moved to Chicago from Brooklyn, New York in 1921 at the young age of 22.

Now prohibition was already in full swing at this time, and Torrio and Capone had to be smart about running their bootlegging businesses.

Their method for gaining successful locations to make and sell alcohol was:

- Purchase or lease local breweries
- Assume all risk, so brewery owners wouldn't be in danger
- Share profit with brewery owners

They had a plan in place for if and when the police showed up:

- There was a well-paid "flunky" given the title of Brew Master or Manager

- The flunky takes the fall in a raid
- There'd be a janitor in the building that hides the supplies and himself away
- When the police took the flunky off the premises, the janitor would take everything back out and continue making the product

In total, Capone and Torrio had control over 65 breweries. But, in 1925, a rival gang decided they want to take out the two men. One group follows Capone's car to a restaurant and shoots it, thinking he is inside when in reality he is in the restaurant already. Torrio isn't so lucky, as they find him walking home from a day of shopping with his wife.

Torrio is shot in the throat and just as he is about to get shot in the head, the gun jams up. The police come and the men run off. It is at that point that Torrio decides to retire from the business due to his near run-in with death. He leaves Chicago to go to Italy with his wife and mother.

This now leaves Capone as the top guy in the Chicago mob scene.

Capone had many businesses along the famed Route 66, one of which was a dog race track run by a man named Edward J. O'Hare.

It was O'Hare that became the secret weapon in taking Capone down as he served as an informant for the U.S. Treasury Department. O'Hare gave IRS Investigator Frank J. Wilson the name of Capone's bookkeeper. This bit of information led to Capone being put away for tax evasion in 1931.

If you missed this program, an upcoming Adult Services program at the Bartlett Library is "Medicare Made Clear" on Thursday, April 27 at 7 p.m. Moving from group health coverage to Medicare can be quite a task. Learn about your choices, estimated costs and timelines to enroll in Medicare Supplements, Part D Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans. Understand your guarantee issue periods, how to avoid the Part D Drug Penalty and timelines for planning so you don't incur a lapse in health coverage.

For more information and a complete listing of scheduled programs, call 630.837.2855 or visit [www.bartlettlibrary.org](http://www.bartlettlibrary.org).

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*The Bartlett Public Library District, located at 800 S. Bartlett Rd., provides programs and services to meet the needs of the community. For more information and a complete listing of scheduled programs, call 630.837.2855 or visit [www.bartlettlibrary.org](http://www.bartlettlibrary.org).*