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**Nationally Touring Exhibition, *Spirited: Prohibition in America* Opens
In November at Ella Sharp Museum**

3225 Fourth Street, Jackson, MI – October 22, 2020 – During the era of Prohibition, Americans no longer could manufacture, sell, or transport intoxicating beverages from 1920 until 1933. *Spirited: Prohibition in America*, a new exhibition on view from November 11 - January 7, 2021 at Ella Sharp Museum explores this tumultuous time in American history, when flappers and suffragists, bootleggers and temperance lobbyists, and legends, such as Al Capone and Carry Nation, took sides in this battle against the bottle.

Organized by the National Constitution Center, Philadelphia, PA, in partnership with Mid-America Arts Alliance, Kansas City, MO, *Spirited: Prohibition in America* explores the era of Prohibition, when America went “dry.” Visitors will learn about the complex issues that led America to adopt Prohibition through the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 1919 until its repeal through the 21st Amendment in 1933. Through the exhibition, visitors will learn about the amendment process, the changing role of liquor in American culture, Prohibition’s impact on the roaring ‘20s, and the role of women, and how current liquor laws vary from state to state.

In 1830, the average American consumed 90 bottles—or about four shots a day—of 80-proof liquor each year. Saloons gained notoriety as the most destructive force in American culture, where men would drink away their families’ money. Following extensive campaigning and lobbying by the Anti-Saloon League along with groups representing women’s suffrage and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, on January 16, 1919, the 18th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, and beginning

January 17, 1920, Americans could no longer manufacture, sell, or transport intoxicating beverages. However, the Volstead act, the law enforcing the amendment, made exceptions for sacramental, medicinal, and industrial purposes as well as allowing families to “preserve fruit” through fermentation.

In the years following, the country was split between “wets” and “drys,” speakeasies flourished, legal authorities gave chase to gangsters, and many created inventive ways to circumvent the law. Governmental agencies, including the Prohibition Bureau and the Justice Department, charged with enforcing the Volstead act were ill equipped to deal with the flood of illegal booze. Along with rampant law breaking, Prohibition brought unexpected cultural and societal shifts from the development of mixed-gendered speakeasies to the growth of organized crime syndicated into national enterprises.

The exhibition draws on the histories told from both sides of this divisive issue that riled passions and created volatile situations. In the end after a decade of widespread corruption, wavering public opinion, and the need to generate revenue from an alcohol tax, the 18th Amendment became the first ever repealed. With the passing of the 21st Amendment, Prohibition ended on December 5, 1933 to a very different America. Today, Prohibition’s legacy can be traced through state laws regulating alcohol, created to avoid the excesses before Prohibition and the corruption and lawlessness experienced during the roaring ‘20s.

Ella Sharp Museum will host three exhibit events that include two prohibition lectures and a virtual mixology workshop. The two lectures will cover gender and alcohol in American history and the Temperance movement as a radical social movement. Details and tickets for the lectures can be found at **ellasharpmuseum.org/exhibits/spirited-prohibition-in-america**.

In conjunction with the *Spirited: Prohibition in America*, Ella Sharp Museum opens *Jackson & The Roaring 20s* on November 14. *Jackson & The Roaring 20s* is an exhibit that explores a decade driven by prosperity, shifting social norms, and new technology which made Jackson, Michigan roar during the 1920s. The exhibit will be up through October 17, 2021. Learn more about future exhibits at **ellasharpmuseum.org/exhibits**.

Spirited: Prohibition in America is based on the exhibition *American Spirits: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, organized by the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, PA, in collaboration with Daniel Okrent, author of *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. *Spirited* has been made possible through NEH on the Road, a special initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities. It has been adapted and toured by Mid-America Arts Alliance. Founded in 1972, Mid-America Arts Alliance is the oldest regional nonprofit arts organization in the United States. For more information, visit www.maaa.org or www.nehontheroad.org.

About the Ella Sharp Museum

The Ella Sharp Museum, a 501(c)(3), was founded in 1965 and offers programs, exhibits, and experiences preserving community history, advancing art appreciation, and connecting children with science. Our 6-acre campus includes the Hadwin Center with exhibit galleries, program spaces, rental facilities, and offices; the Merriman Sharp farmhouse, a one-room schoolhouse, a log cabin, barn and the Hurst Planetarium. Our mission focuses on providing opportunities to connect our community with history and the arts.

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