

THE 1920'S

Prosperity, good times, come on buddy-- have another drink, buy some stock on margin... It's ok... Everybody's doin' it!
History is BUNK! The Jazz Age will last FOREVER!...

Where am I? Why am I in this hand basket? Hello?...

CHANGE FOR WOMEN

- After the war, lifestyles for women changed dramatically.
- Flapper girls - rebellious, energetic, fun-loving, bold, informal women of the 1920s.
 - Wore shorter skirts, sleeveless tops, high heeled shoes, and lots of makeup.
 - Women's clothing began to be made from less: from 19.5 yards of fabric for old-fashioned dresses, to 7 yards for the new flapper fashions.
 - Wide brimmed hats were no longer fashionable, replaced with Cloche hats. Short bobbed hair was also in.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

- Women also began to smoke and drink in public.
- Production of cigarettes doubled.
- More single women were in the workforce. They had less time, needed products that were convenient.
- Many professions were either closed to women, or stuck women in entry level positions.

PUMP THAT ELECTORAL MUSCLE... FEEL THE BURN!

- Despite the 19th amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote, many did not avail themselves of the right.
- 35% of women voted in 1920. Many weren't interested. Some, did not feel women should have the right to vote.
- Despite this, women began to win power: Jeanette Rankin of Montana became the first woman in Congress. Texas and Wyoming elected female governors (wives of former governors). Across the country there were 145 women in 35 state legislatures.

DISCUSS

- Why, do you think, did women seek more freedom during the 1920s?
- Why did some women not want that freedom?
- Girls, would you consider yourself to be more of a flapper, or a "traditional" girl?

AMERICA ON THE MOVE

- Agricultural prices had been high through World War I. After the war, prices dropped dramatically, while costs increased.
- IN search of better paying jobs, 6 million americans moved from rural to urban areas.
- Also, more American young people began attending public high schools: from 2.2 million in 1920 to 4.4 million in 1930.

MINORITIES

- African-American migration from the south to the north and west continued.
- Few areas welcomed African-Americans with open arms, but opportunities were better in the North than in the South.
- Immigrants from the Americas came to the United States to take low paying jobs, often in agricultural areas, and in industrial cities.
- Suburbs grew as caucasian Americans sought to escape cities which were rapidly filling with minorities and immigrants.

DISCUSS

- Who was moving?
 - African Americans?
- Why, do you think, this trend was so important?

MASS MEDIA IS BORN

- Until the 1920s, silent movies were made in small studios and stages across the country, often in New York.
- Producer Cecil B. DeMille sought to build a studio in a place where filming could occur outdoors, with better weather and natural light.
- DeMille's studio was in the middle of what would become Hollywood, California.
- As more studios opened in Hollywood, movie stars moved to the area. As movies gained in popularity, reporters began to follow the movements of celebrities. Paparazzi is born!

AMERICAN CULTURE DEVELOPS

- Mass Media: Print, film, & broadcast methods of communicating information to large numbers of people.
- Americans, before the 1920s, had little shared cultural experience.
- Movies and other mass media gave Americans a sense of common culture and shared experience.

DISCUSS

- What is Mass Media?

- What are some examples of Mass Media from the 1920s?
- What are some examples of modern mass media?

MOVIES

- During the 1920s, Movies increased in popularity, eventually becoming the 4th largest industry in the United States.
- Started with "Silent Movies", where actors would act, but not speak. Music was played in the theater to match the mood of the story. Charlie Chaplin was the king of silent movies.
- Eventually "talking pictures" came into being, where a "sound-track was synced to a film, played on a "Vitaphone", an early record. Later, sound was able to be recorded onto the film.
- The Jazz Singer starring Al Jolson was the first "talking picture."

NEWSPAPERS

- Allowed Americans to follow news and activities of their favorite stars.
- Small locally owned newspapers began to give way to large companies that ran several newspapers.
- Larger cities had "Tabloid" newspapers, smaller papers with more words and pictures
- New York Daily Mirror; run by William Randolph Hearst: 90% entertainment, 10% information.

MAGAZINES & RADIO

- American readership of magazines increased as well.
- Saturday Evening Post, Reader's Digest, Ladies Home Journal, Harper's & Time Magazine were all popular.
- Radio also increased, allowing for the latest music, news and other cultural media to be spread long distances.
- As more americans began to share common information and other media, a national culture formed.

JAZZ!

- Jazz grew out of African American music of the south. Included syncopated rhythms and improvisation.
- Jazz gained prominence in the 1910s, but radio began to play Jazz in the 1920s. Soon it was the most popular music on the radio. The 1920s became known as The Jazz Age.
- Duke Ellington & Louis Armstrong, were important musicians at the time.

DISCUSS

- What was the first "talking picture"?
- How did magazines contribute to an expanding national culture?
- Why, do you think, Jazz is considered to be such an important musical form in America?
- Who were two important Jazz musicians?

ART & LITERATURE

- Edward Hopper & Rockwell Kent were important painters whose subjects included real life, gritty situations.
- Georgia O'Keefe, in contrast, painted nature paintings with deeper meaning.
- Sinclair Lewis was one of the age's best writers, and used irony to display the follies of modern life. Lewis refused a Pulitzer Prize and was eventually awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

PROHIBITION

- The 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlawed the sale, manufacture or transportation of alcohol.
- There were 3 Goals of Prohibition:
 - 1. Eliminate Drunkenness & the resulting abuse of families
 - 2. Getting rid of saloons - Where prostitution, gambling and other forms of vice thrived
 - 3. Prevention of absenteeism & on-the-job accidents stemming from drunkenness.

THE INVISIBLE HAND

- In economic terms, Prohibition dealt with the "supply" side of the alcohol problem, but did not really address the "demand".
- Some states obeyed the law better than others: Kansas was 95% obedient to the law, New York was about 5% obedient to the law.
- The worst offenders were often government officials who publicly supported prohibition, but privately kept massive stores of booze.
- Most people could find a way to get alcohol, despite the ban.

DISCUSS

- What were the three goals of prohibition?
- How, do you think, Americans could get ahold of liquor despite the ban? Was prohibition successful? Why or why not?

OBEDIENT AMERICA

- Bootlegger - supplier of illegal alcohol.
- Some bootleggers produced their own product, others smuggled liquor from Canada.
- Home-made product was distilled from corn, wheat, potatoes, barley and other materials. A person could make a reasonable substitute for wine by leaving grape juice to ferment on the kitchen counter.

- Speakeasies: were illegal bars or clubs where alcohol was served.

CRIME GETS ORGANIZED

- Americans did not lose their demand for alcohol, and bootleggers were often associated with larger groups that would become "organized crime".
- Organized crime: systematically unlawful activity for profit.
- From bootlegging, organized crime moved into gambling, prostitution, and racketeering (running of illegal businesses)
- Organized crime would buy off government officials, including police, to ignore or not prosecute their activities.
- Groups would also demand "protection" money from individuals and businesses. Failure to pay could have ugly consequences.

CAPONE

- Al Capone was the most prominent "gangster" of the period.
- Capone had the nickname "scarface" because of wounds he suffered as a child.
- Capone operated mainly in Chicago, and bribed officials on every level of government.
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) was formed, in part, to put Capone away. J. Edgar Hoover was the first leader of the FBI and ran it until his death in 1972.
- The FBI finally put Capone away in 1931

DISCUSS

- What is a "bootlegger"?
- What is a "speakeasy"?
- Who was Al Capone? Why was he such an important figure in the history of this time period?

RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

- Fundamentalism: Reaction to changes in society with a return to religious traditions.
- Challenges to traditional religious beliefs came from:
 - 1. Science and Technology taking a larger role in daily life
 - 2. War and other problems causing people to question God's active role in life, or even if God exists.
 - 3. Many scholars came to believe that the Bible was a document written by man, containing human errors, contradictions and inaccuracies.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

- Religious traditionalists published a 12 pamphlet series called *The Fundamentals*. The series outlined beliefs such as:
 - 1. God inspired the bible, therefore it has no errors or contradictions
 - 2. The bible is literally true, all stories contained in it actually happened as described.
- Fundamentalist preachers included Billy Sunday, a former baseball player who railed against alcohol and other vice. Also, Aimee Semple McPherson, whose followers amassed \$1.5 million to build the Angelus Temple in L.A. For her meetings, which were broadcast on radio for millions to hear.

DISCUSS

- Where were challenges to traditional religion coming from?
- What were two ideals outlined in *The Fundamentals*?
- Name two prominent religious figures of this time?

EVOLUTION

- Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution was at odds with fundamentalist beliefs in the creation of man.
- Some states, including Tennessee, banned the teaching of evolution in schools.
- In 1925, science teacher John Scopes challenged the law, teaching the theory of evolution to his Tennessee students.
- Tennessee arrested Scopes and put him on trial, setting up what became known as "The Scopes Monkey Trial".

THE SCOPES TRIAL

- Each side in the case was represented by one of America's most renowned lawyers:
 - Prosecution: William Jennings Bryan - fundamentalist former presidential candidate
 - Defense: Clarence Darrow - Free speech supporter who had defended socialist leader Eugene V. Debs.
- The trial became a national phenomenon, with reporters covering every moment of it.
- Scopes was convicted despite a damaging examination of Bryan, by Darrow. Under examination, Bryan admitted that he did not believe that all parts of the bible are 100% true. Bryan would die days after the trial ended.

DISCUSS

- What is evolution? How does it conflict with traditional religious teachings?
- Who was John Scopes? Why was he important?
- Who were the two prominent lawyers involved in the Scopes trial?

RACE RELATIONS

- The 1920s continued to be a low point for race relations in America
- Mob violence reached epic levels in 25 cities between whites and blacks. The worst of these were the Chicago riots. The riots were caused by growing numbers of African Americans in urban areas coming into conflict with whites.
- The Ku Klux Klan had been revived in 1915, and by 1922 boasted 100,000 members. This number would grow to 4.4 million by 1924.
- The Klan went after many minorities, including blacks, Jews, Catholics, Hispanic immigrants and more.

NAACP & UNIA

- As violence and unrest spread, two divergent groups came to the forefront for African Americans:
 - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) fought for anti-lynching laws and other legal protections for African Americans. They attempted to reform the present system
 - The Universal Negro Improvement Association, led by Marcus Garvey, sought a homeland for African blacks where they could be away from racial tensions, as well as building black-owned businesses to develop black economic power.

DISCUSS

- Why, do you think, violence between Whites and African Americans increased in the 1920s?
- What Civil Rights group fought for anti-lynching laws in the 1920s?
- Who was Marcus Garvey and what was his vision for African Americans?

RED SCARE

- The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia had frightened Americans.
- The revolution became a civil war between the Bolshevik "Red" army, and opposition "white" army.
- Britain, France, Japan and the United States supported the White army with supplies, money and military advisors.
- The Bolsheviks seized foreign investments in Russia when they came to power.
- The Bolsheviks won in 1920, and turned Communism into Russia's official ideology. In 1922, Russia became the Soviet Union.

COMMUNISM

- Government owned all land and property
- Single political party controlled the country
- The needs of the country outweigh the needs of the individual
- Classless society
- Goal is to form a workers utopia, where money is no longer needed and all people have what they need to live and flourish.

U.S. RESPONSE

- The Soviet Union made it a stated goal to spread communism to other countries in the world.
- This terrified Americans, especially those with wealth and power, who cherished their capitalist system.
- Americans feared that European immigrants would be communist operatives or spies, and that Labor unions harbored communist sympathies.
- This fear became known as **The Red Scare**: an intense fear of communism and other politically radical ideas.

DISCUSS

- What was America afraid of during the Red Scare?
- Why, do you think, Americans were so terrified of Communism? Do we have modern fears comparable to this?

SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES

- Charles Schenck convicted of violating the Espionage Act, by encouraging drafted soldiers not to report.
- Schenck appealed to the Supreme Court arguing that the action was protected as free speech.
- Supreme Court upheld the conviction. Claimed that Schenck's actions constituted a "Clear and present danger" against the United States.
- **Gitlow v. New York**: Cannot call for violent overthrow of government.

PALMER RAIDS

- Attorney General Mitchell Palmer's house was bombed by an anarchist group in June 1919.
- In response, Palmer ordered the breakup of suspected radical, communist and socialist groups.
- His actions became known as The Palmer Raids, which extended from November 1919 to January 1920.
- The raids resulted in the deportation of over 500 foreign citizens, and the arrest of hundreds of Americans.
- After Palmer's predictions of mass attacks on May Day 1920 failed to occur, Palmer's raids were denounced as mob action.

SACCO & VANZETTI TRIAL

- At the height of the Red Scare, a double murder at a shoe factory in South Braintree, MA, shocked the nation.
- The suspects were a shoemaker - Nicola Sacco - and a fishmonger - Bartolomeo Vanzetti.
- Sacco and Vanzetti had radical leanings and were members of a local radical group.

- The pair were tried and convicted on little evidence and sentenced to die. August 1927, electrocuted.

DISCUSS

- Do you feel there should be limits to our freedom of speech? If so, what do you think they should be? DO we have limits on speech today?
- Should the government be allowed to deny constitutional protections to immigrants and foreign citizens suspected of crimes?

LABOR STRIKES

- March 1919 - 175 strikes. August 1919 - 370.
- Most of the public felt that "communist agitators" were behind the strikes.
- The strikes caused inflation to soar, raising prices.
- September 1919, Boston Police go on strike, despite the department's refusal to allow a union, after 19 officers were fired for Union activity.
- Governor Coolidge sent the state guard to restore order, and the police were denounced for engaging in union activity.

REPUBLICAN DOMINATION

- Labor strikes helped to fuel the Red Scare, which led to Republican Party domination of the 1920s.
- Warren G. Harding became president in 1921. Harding appointed qualified men for cabinet positions, including Calvin Coolidge for Vice President, Herbert Hoover for Commerce Secretary, Former Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes for Secretary of State, and businessman Andrew Mellon for Treasury Secretary.
- Harding also made bad choices by giving positions to his friends, or party members. Many of these men were grossly unqualified, and became corrupt.

FOREIGN POLICY

- Isolationism - Avoidance of engagement with other countries.
- Harding echoed American desire not to join the League of Nations. Did attempt to negotiate a disarmament deal with other nations.
- Harding sought foreign markets for American goods, but also supported the Fordney-McCumber Tariff, raising taxes on imports to historically high levels. European nations, eager to settle their war debts to the U.S. were outraged by the tariff.
- Congress agreed to forgive portions of European debts to the United States. The U.S. and its war-time allies also restructured German debts through the Dawes Act.

DISCUSS

- Why, do you think, did America grow more isolationist in the 1920s?
- Is America an isolationist nation today? Should we be?

NATIVISM

- In the 1920s, Nativism (movement favoring native born over immigrants) flared up again for the following reasons:
 - 1. Patriotism: foreigners could not be fully loyal to America
 - 2. Religion: Nativists were mostly protestants, while new immigrants tended to be Catholic, Jewish, or Orthodox Christians.
 - 3. Urban conditions: bad conditions in cities blamed on immigrants.
 - 4. Jobs: workers feared immigrants would take jobs from them.
 - 5. Red Scare: Immigrants came from Southern and Eastern Europe, Nativists feared they were communists or radicals.

LIMITS ON IMMIGRATION

- In 1921, President Harding requested Congress pass reforms on immigration.
- Congress passed a measure imposing a quota, or numerical limit, on immigration from certain areas or groups.
- Congress also shut down immigration from Japan.

DISCUSS

- What is Nativism?
- Why did America feel the need to impose further immigration restrictions during the 1920s?

TEAPOT DOME SCANDAL

- In 1923, stories of corruption in Harding's administration came to light.
- Harding was not personally linked to the scandals, but worry over them contributed to his death from a heart attack in August 1923.
- Albert Fall, Secretary of interior, gave secret oil drilling rights to two companies on federal land in California and Teapot Dome, Wyoming. In return Fall received payments of over \$300,000.

"SILENT CAL" COOLIDGE

- Calvin Coolidge came to the presidency after the death of Harding in 1923.

- Coolidge's policy of **laissez-faire capitalism** was popular with businesses. Under this policy, government kept a distance from business.
- Congress lowered income and inheritance taxes and passed higher tariffs to protect American business.
- America negotiated the Kellogg-Briand pact with 15 nations all pledging not to declare war on one another.

ELECTION OF 1928

- Coolidge declined to run for a 2nd term.
- Republicans nominated Herbert Hoover, who was a cabinet secretary under Harding and Coolidge. Hoover had also run war reconstruction programs in Europe.
- Democrats nominated Alfred E. Smith, Governor of New York. Smith became the first Catholic to ever earn a major party nomination for President.
- Smith did well in the cities, while Hoover's strength lay in small towns. Smith won 15 million votes to Hoover's 21 million. Voters expected that Hoover's policies would continue the "Coolidge Prosperity".

DISCUSS

- Why, do you think, Calvin Coolidge appealed to many Americans?
- Why did Americans support Hoover over Al Smith?

CONSUMER ECONOMY

- In the 1920s, America developed into a **consumer economy**, or one that depends upon spending by individuals.
- The 1920s saw average Americans begin to buy homes, land, consumer appliances and cars on **installment plans**, or credit: fueling consumer spending and the economy.
- Advertising convinced Americans that buying on credit was good, despite interest rates that fluctuated between 11-40%.

CONSUMER ECONOMY

- New consumer appliances ran on electricity. Much of the country still did not have this new convenience, especially in rural areas, but in cities electricity was becoming standard.
- Advertising in the 1920s emphasized products for a "better life", but did not emphasize thrift. Consumers were urged to buy products that they did not necessarily need.
- Products were seen as an enhancement to a consumer's image. Products from face cream to vacuum cleaners were sold this way.
- The new consumer economy grew rapidly, with Gross National Product increasing at 6% per year.

DISCUSS

- How did America develop into a consumer economy in the 1920s?
- Is America still a consumer economy?

HENRY FORD

- Personal cars had been around in the U.S. since 1892, but Henry Ford made cars an item the average American could afford (on payments).
- Ford developed the Model T, a new type of car, and refined the **assembly line** to make them. Ford pioneered a moving belt to move products from worker to worker, rather than workers going from product to product.
- Ford paid many workers the rate of \$5/day, but also used violence to keep unions out. He also ran "Americanization" programs at his factories to make foreign workers into "Americans" with English and culture classes.

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

- Ford's less expensive automobiles sold well, and soon an entire industry sprung up to support them.
- Thanks to cars, suburbs flourished and trucks began to haul the nation's freight.
- Limited government regulations caused businesses to soar.
- Between 1919 and 1929, the top 200 American businesses almost doubled their total worth - from \$43 billion to \$81 billion.

DISCUSS

- How did Henry Ford's innovation change America?

NOT-SO GOOD

- While many Americans enjoyed a better life than they had 10 years ago, the boom largely bypassed unskilled laborers, African Americans, and farmers.
- Demand for American agricultural goods dried up as European farming resumed. Farmers, who had bought new machinery on credit during and just after the war, now could not pay off those loans.

BEGINNING OF THE END

- Hoover took office with the economy soaring. In 1928 stock value jumped by \$11 billion.
- To fight labor unions, many companies introduced the idea of "Welfare capitalism", the idea of paying higher wages and benefits to your employees to increase morale and production.

- For the most part, however, it was the wealthy that achieved great success, as the "disparity of wealth" increased.

BEGINNING OF THE END

- Large companies, rather than small businesses, dominated the marketplace.
- 71% of Americans earned less than \$2,500 per year.
- Congress cut taxes on the wealthy to encourage expansion of businesses and investments.
- Many Americans had purchased large items on credit, counting on future earnings to pay them off.

STOCK SPECULATION

- Americans had "get-rich-quick" fever.
- Massive increases in stock prices fueled "speculation" or high risk investments seeking a great return.
- To attract less-wealthy investors, brokers offered to allow investors to buy stocks "on margin", allowing them to pay only a fraction of the cost and borrow the rest. If the stock went up the broker could use the earnings to pay off the loan with interest and still make money.

TOO MUCH PRODUCTION

- American manufacturing was producing high levels of product, but many Americans could not afford to buy the goods.
- Automobile production slowed in 1925, and housing construction fell 25% between 1928 and 1929. These caused ripples through the economy.
- Farmers, unable to pay their loans, sought relief from the government. Congress passed the "McNary-Haugen Farm relief Act", but President Coolidge vetoed it.
- Factory workers also suffered working long hours for low wages.