

The Roaring Life of the 1920s

American History

Chapter 13

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Americans as Consumers

- ❖ Between 1923-1929, real income grew by 11%
- ❖ Americans could consume the goods that they produced
- ❖ Luxuries and necessities were more available and affordable
- ❖ Americans were experiencing a rise in their **standard of living**
- ❖ The United States was becoming a vast consumer society!

Growth of the Middle Class

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ New Consumer Products

- Year around fresh fruits and vegetables
- Prepackaged Foods
- Sliced Bread
- Factory made clothing
- Electric Irons, Vacuum Cleaners, Toasters, Radios, Washing Machines, & Refrigerators

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ New Consumer Products

- ❖ Labor Saving Devices meant more time for leisure
- ❖ Telephones made communication easier
- ❖ Electricity became common in people's homes
- ❖ Indoor plumbing became more abundant

Growth of the Middle Class

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Poverty in the Midst of Plenty

- ❖ Increased production resulted in lower prices
- ❖ Tractors replaced horses, and production increased
- ❖ Farmers suffered when overproduction led to low prices

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Poverty in the midst of plenty

- ❖ More electricity meant less demand for coal
- ❖ Shorter skirts and silk stockings reduced the demand for cotton
- ❖ Textile mills shut down and overall factory employment decreased

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ America Hits the Road

- ❖ Between 1908 and 1927, 15 Million Model Ts were produced
- ❖ There was one automobile for every 5.3 persons
- ❖ You could buy a new car for less than \$300

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Shifting the Economy

- ❖ Automobile manufacturing stimulated industries such as steel, rubber, petroleum, glass, lead, & nickel
- ❖ Garages, filling stations, road construction, roadside parks, restaurants, and motels were products of the automobile culture.

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Shifting the Economy

- ❖ By 1927 The U.S. had 50,000 miles of hard surfaced roads and that number was growing by 10,000 miles per year
- ❖ East-West Routes had Even Numbers, North-South Routes had odd numbers

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ The Romance of the Automobile

- ❖ The automobile became part of the American dream
- ❖ Ford introduced the Model A in a variety of colors
- ❖ Cars made a statement about the people who owned them

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ The Driving Culture

- ❖ The car changed American culture
 - ❖ Dating habits, family outings, shopping, vacations, Sunday drives, driving into the city to work
- ❖ Cultural changes are still with us today

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ The Driving Culture

- ❖ In the 1920s, many people went in debt to buy their first car
- ❖ By 1927 2 out of 3 cars purchased were bought with installment payments
- ❖ Put money down and drive away with easy monthly payments

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Buying on Time

- ❖ For the first time in American history, debt was not viewed as “shameful”
- ❖ In 1928, credit purchases accounted for 85% of furniture, 80% of phonographs, 75% of washing machines and radios, and 70% of refrigerators
- ❖ Buying on credit could add 40% to the total purchase price

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Chain Stores

- ❖ New “chain stores” opened up in the 1920s
 - ❖ Grocery stores– A & P, Safeway, Piggly Wiggly
 - ❖ Department stores– Sears & Roebuck, J.C. Penny, F.W. Woolworth
 - ❖ By 1929 there were 160,000 chain stores offering lower prices and greater selection

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ Buy, Buy, Buy! The Growth of Advertising

- ❖ In the 1920s, advertisement was used to create public demand
- ❖ It changed what we ate, what we wore, and our work and play
- ❖ The new “mass media” reached large numbers of people
 - ❖ Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, & Billboards
 - ❖ 70% of the cost of goods went to pay for advertising

Growth of the Middle Class

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ A Decade of Fads and Fashion

- ❖ The focus of the 20s was on youth
- ❖ Young people symbolized fashion, dress, music and language
- ❖ Fads started on college campuses spread nationally
- ❖ Fads spread quickly with the growing national media

Growth of the Middle Class

❖ New Ideas of Beauty

- ❖ The 1920s Girl– The Flapper
- ❖ Flapper refers to the open galoshes she wore
- ❖ The Flapper:
 - ❖ Bound her chest to flatten it
 - ❖ Had shorter skirts
 - ❖ Bobbed her hair short
 - ❖ Wore tight hats

- ❖ Rolled down silk stockings
- ❖ Wore a lot of makeup

Growth of the Middle Class

- ❖ Women's New Freedoms
 - ❖ Women enjoyed new freedoms that ten years earlier would have got them arrested
 - ❖ Society encouraged the new liberated behavior
 - ❖ The Women's Movement gave women new freedom
 - ❖ The increased use of the automobile also led to new freedoms

Growth of the Middle Class

- ❖ School Days
 - ❖ Families could afford to keep their kids in school longer in the 1920s
 - ❖ By 1930 over half of high school aged kids were still in school
 - ❖ Many communities build new schools in the 1920s
 - ❖ Only one out of eight kids went to college in the 1920s

The Jazz Age

- ❖ At the Movies
 - ❖ Films were silent until "*The Jazz Singer*" in 1927
 - ❖ The cost of a movie was 10¢
 - ❖ Movies appealed to all ages, but especially the young
 - ❖ Each seat cost the same, so class differences were lessened
 - ❖ The same films were shown nationally, breaking down regional differences

The Jazz Age

- ❖ At the Movies
 - ❖ Many people questioned the morality of the films
 - ❖ Movies encouraged immoral behavior
 - ❖ Most had a moral message at the end
 - ❖ Films were carefully censored for the content shown

The Jazz Age

- ❖ At the Movies
 - ❖ Movie stars became national celebrities
 - ❖ Stories were publicized about their private lives
 - ❖ Stars transformed American tastes and behaviors
 - ❖ 30,000 Women mourned the death of Rudolph Valentino in 1926

The Jazz Age

❖ New American Heroes

- ❖ In the 1920s people had the money to play
 - ❖ Golf Courses, Tennis Courts, Baseball Diamonds, Swimming Pools, Summer Camps, & Playgrounds were opened to the public

The Jazz Age

❖ Sports Stars

- ❖ Increasingly in the 1920s Americans cheered for professional sports heroes like baseball's Babe Ruth, golf's Bobby Jones, and boxing's Jack Dempsey
 - ❖ When Dempsey lost his title in 1926 he told his wife "honey, I forgot to duck"

The Jazz Age

❖ Sports Stars

- ❖ 19 Year Old Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the English Channel
- ❖ Her determination to accomplish that feat inspired all Americans
- ❖ She was welcomed home with a "ticker tape" parade in New York City

The Jazz Age

The Jazz Age

❖ The Lone Eagle

- ❖ 1927– Lindberg made the first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean
- ❖ To Americans, Lindberg's accomplishment was an act of individual heroism
- ❖ Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic in 1928

The Jazz Age

The Jazz Age

❖ New Rhythms in the Air

- ❖ Jazz and the Blues originated in New Orleans by African Americans, and moved north during World War I
- ❖ Singers such as Bessie Smith and Gertrude Rainey sang in clubs on the south side of Chicago

The Jazz Age

❖ New Rhythms in the Air

- ❖ In 1920 King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band moved to Chicago
- ❖ The band featured trumpet player Louis Armstrong

- ❖ Armstrong became the nation's most famous jazz musician of all time
- ❖ "Satchmo" continued to perform until his death in 1971

The Jazz Age

The Jazz Age

- ❖ New Rhythms in the Air
 - ❖ The Charleston was the dance of the age
 - ❖ The Charleston craze swept the nation
 - ❖ It was a high energy dance with flying beads and crossed hands
 - ❖ Older people considered the dance immoral, shocking, and scandalous

The Jazz Age

- ❖ New Rhythms in the Air
 - ❖ As electricity became more common, radios and phonographs appeared in homes across the country
 - ❖ By the mid 1920s, most people had radios in their homes
 - ❖ Radio brought entertainment and advertising to the mass market and helped stimulate the mass-market economy

The Jazz Age

- ❖ Time to Read
 - ❖ Magazines and newspapers were popular in the 1920s
 - ❖ Chains of newspapers called "syndicates" appealed to national audiences
 - ❖ Tabloids swept the country publicizing scandals and fads
 - ❖ Major publishing houses such as Simon and Schuster also developed

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Lost Generation
 - ❖ Writers started questioning American materialism
 - ❖ They questioned a society that placed a greater emphasis on money and goods than it did on intellectual, spiritual, or artistic concerns (they did so from France)
 - ❖ Prime examples were Earnest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Lost Generation
 - ❖ Hemingway's "The Sun also Rises" talks about the despair of the "lost generation"

- ❖ The Great Gatsby is considered F. Scott Fitzgerald's greatest work tells of the empty lives of Americans with too much money

The Jazz Age

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Lost Generation

- ❖ Within the United States we experienced one of the greatest literary periods in history
- ❖ John Dos Passos suggested two nations, one for the rich and one for the poor

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Lost Generation

- ❖ Sinclair Lewis attacked American materialism in novels such as "*Babbitt*" and "*Main Street*"
 - ❖ Babbitt is still used to refer to a person that is influenced and driven by advertising

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Lost Generation

- ❖ Some critics called the South a "wasteland of the fine arts"
- ❖ A native of Mississippi, William Faulkner would eventually win a Nobel Prize for literature

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Harlem Renaissance

- ❖ A literary, artistic, and performing arts movement of African Americans in Harlem, New York
- ❖ Many African American writers began to express their anger over Northern racism

The Jazz Age

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Harlem Renaissance

- ❖ One of the best known authors of the movement was Langston Hughes
- ❖ The poet Hughes used blues and jazz rhythms in his poetry
- ❖ "If white people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not it doesn't matter."

The Jazz Age

- ❖ The Harlem Renaissance

- ❖ Claude McKay challenged African Americans to fight for their rights

- ❖ In 1928 McKay expressed his fascination with the different shades of people that were all considered black

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Power of Religion– The Scopes Monkey Trial
 - ❖ John Scopes, a Tennessee biology teacher had violated the state law by teaching evolution
 - ❖ The Butler Act, passed in 1925 mandated divine creation
 - ❖ The trial symbolized many struggles in the U.S. over religion, alcohol, morality, and national loyalty
 - ❖ The national media turned all eyes to Tennessee

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Power of Religion– The Scopes Monkey Trial
 - ❖ Liberal urban attorney Clarence Darrow defended Scopes, while conservative William Jennings Bryan from Nebraska joined the prosecution as an expert on the Bible

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Power of Religion– The Scopes Monkey Trial
 - ❖ Darrow questioned Bryan about the Bible's account of creation
 - ❖ The jury found Scopes guilty and fined him \$100
 - ❖ Biology teachers continued to violate the law and teach evolution

Cultural Conflicts

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Power of Religion– The Scopes Monkey Trial
 - ❖ Many saw the outcome of the Scopes trial as a victory for religious fundamentalism
 - ❖ Fundamentalism– movement that affirmed the literal truth of the Bible

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Religious Fundamentalism
 - ❖ William Jennings Bryan died a week after the trial
 - ❖ The Fundamentalist movement continued to flourish in rural areas of the country
 - ❖ The South and Midwest became known as the “Bible Belt”

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Religious Fundamentalism
 - ❖ During the 1920s large numbers of people migrated out of the Bible Belt to cities in the North

- ❖ Traditional religion helped them make that transition

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Religious Fundamentalism
 - ❖ In California, radio preachers called evangelists reached out to many people
 - ❖ Aimee Semple McPherson attracted a large following to her “Foursquare Gospel”
 - ❖ Barnstorming the country, she raised \$1.5 million to build her Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, California

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Religious Fundamentalism
 - ❖ Completed in 1923, Aimee McPherson preached to a full house almost every night in her Angelus Temple

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Failure of Prohibition
 - ❖ Volstead Act– Passed to enforce Prohibition, made it illegal to manufacture, sell, possess, transport, or consume alcoholic beverages
 - ❖ People went to the speakeasies where liquor was available illegally

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Failure of Prohibition
 - ❖ Enforcement Problems
 - ❖ People who made, smuggled, sold or transported liquor illegally were called bootleggers
 - ❖ Bootleggers could make up to a 400% profit
 - ❖ The estimated value of liquor smuggled into the U.S. in 1924 was \$40 million
 - ❖ Hundreds of ships manufactured liquor in international waters off the coast of the United States
 - ❖ Doctors prescribed alcohol to their patients

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Failure of Prohibition
 - ❖ Women who couldn’t drink in saloons, drank openly in the speakeasies
 - ❖ The cocktail appeared and catered especially to women
 - ❖ Many Americans began to have a casual attitude about breaking the law

Cultural Conflicts

❖ The Failure of Prohibition

- ❖ Prohibition agents had to enforce the law
 - ❖ It took an agent 3 minutes to get a drink in Detroit, and only 35 seconds in New Orleans
 - ❖ A San Francisco jury in a prohibition case drank the liquor that was used as evidence

Cultural Conflicts

❖ The Failure of Prohibition

- ❖ The growth of organized crime was the most devastating effect of prohibition
- ❖ Scarface Al Capone ran a gang of Chicago bootleggers
- ❖ Capone became a multimillionaire driving around in a bulletproof car

Cultural Conflicts

❖ The Failure of Prohibition

- ❖ Prohibition saw a rapid increase of gang related violence
- ❖ Rival gangs hijacked shipments of liquor and massacred other gang members
- ❖ Capone eventually went to prison for tax evasion

Cultural Conflicts

❖ Crosses in the Night

- ❖ The Klan of the 1920s began in the rural south, but spread into other parts of the nation
- ❖ The Klan of the 1920s found new enemies
 - ❖ Mexicans in Texas
 - ❖ Japanese in California
 - ❖ Jews and European Immigrants in New York
 - ❖ French Canadians in New England

Cultural Conflicts

❖ Crosses in the Night

- ❖ The Klan provided a fellowship of prejudice for ill-educated men whose lives offered few other satisfactions
- ❖ In the 1920s the Klan had its greatest strength in the state of Indiana—nearly a half-million members

Cultural Conflicts

❖ Crosses in the Night

- ❖ Cross burnings occurred in New Jersey and California

- ❖ Klan membership was almost 5 million
- ❖ Klan sought a return of power to average Americans and away from Eastern intellectuals

Cultural Conflicts

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Crosses in the Night
 - ❖ The Klan began to decline in 1925 when Indiana leader David Stephenson was jailed for the murder and abuse on a woman he had kidnapped
 - ❖ His actions contradicted the Klan's belief in chastity and morality

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Closing the Doors
 - ❖ Many Americans associated immigrants with radicalism and disloyalty
 - ❖ The Klan, the Palmer Raids, the Red Scare, and the Sacco and Vanzetti case all fed these fears
 - ❖ Many people called for restrictions on immigration

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Closing the Doors
 - ❖ 1921 Immigration laws established a "quota" for the number of immigrants that could come to the U.S.
 - ❖ The number of immigrants could not exceed 3% of the number of persons living in the U.S. from that nation based on the 1910 census
 - ❖ This law favored immigrants from Northern and Western Europe

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Closing the Doors
 - ❖ 1924– National Origins Act
 - ❖ Measure closed the door to Asian Immigration
 - ❖ It also reduced the quota from 3% to 2% and based that number on the 1890 census
 - ❖ The law was an attempt to maintain the ethnic mixture of 1890
 - ❖ The law favored Irish and German immigrants

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ Closing the Doors
 - ❖ The National Origins Act made it hard for people from countries with low quotas to migrate to the United States

- ❖ In the 1930s immigration slowed to a trickle

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Challenge of Change

- ❖ In the 1920s, America underwent the transition from a rural to an urban society
- ❖ By 1930, only 44% of Americans still lived on the farm
- ❖ Many battles of the 1920s were fought over what cities seemed to offer
 - ❖ Decline of religion, alcohol, radicalism, diversity, lack of morality, and crime were all part of city life

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Challenge of Change

- ❖ City vs. Country– The Election of 1928
 - ❖ Democrat Al Smith– Son of immigrants, from New York City, a devout Catholic represented everything urban
 - ❖ Republican Herbert Hoover– Passed himself off as an Iowa farm boy, but had made himself a millionaire and served under two Republican presidents

Cultural Conflicts

- ❖ The Challenge of Change

- ❖ The Election of 1928
- ❖ Voter turnout was heavy, and Hoover won in a landslide
- ❖ Hoover failed to win America's twelve largest cities
- ❖ Political change was in the air in the United States

Cultural Conflicts