

The Americans

Chapter 21: The Roaring Life of the 1920s, 1920–1929

The Roaring Life of the 1920s, 1920–1929

Chapter Opener: The Roaring Life of the 1920s, 1920–1929

Americans confront changes in society as women enter new roles and the mass media gains a growing audience. The Harlem Renaissance signals the flourishing of African-American culture.

Section 0: Changing Ways of Life

Section Opener: Changing Ways of Life

Americans experience cultural conflicts as customs and values change in the 1920s.

Slide 3: Rural and Urban Differences [continued]

The New Urban Scene

- * 1920 census: 51.2% of Americans in communities of 2,500 or more
 - * 1922–1929, nearly 2 million people leave farms, towns each year
 - * Largest cities are New York, Chicago, Philadelphia
 - 65 other cities with 100,000 people or more
 - * In 1920s, people caught between rural, urban cultures
 - close ties, hard work, strict morals of small towns
 - anonymous crowds, moneymaking, pleasure seeking of cities
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Slide 4: Rural and Urban Differences [continued]

The Prohibition Experiment

- * 18th Amendment launches Prohibition era
 - supported by religious groups, rural South, West
 - * Prohibition—production, sale, transportation of alcohol illegal
 - * Government does not budget enough money to enforce the law
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Slide 5: Rural and Urban Differences [continued]

Speakeasies and Bootleggers

- * Speakeasies (hidden saloons, nightclubs) become fashionable
 - * People distill liquor, buy prescription alcohol, sacramental wine
 - * Bootleggers smuggle alcohol from surrounding countries
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Slide 6: Rural and Urban Differences

Organized Crime

- * Prohibition contributes to organized crime in major cities
 - * Al Capone controls Chicago liquor business by killing competitors
 - * By mid-1920s, only 19% support Prohibition
 - * 18th Amendment in force until 1933; repealed by 21st Amendment
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Slide 7: Science and Religion Clash [continued]

American Fundamentalism

- * Fundamentalism—movement based on literal interpretation of Bible
 - * Fundamentalists skeptical of some scientific discoveries, theories
 - reject theory of evolution
 - * Believe all important knowledge can be found in Bible
 - * Fundamentalist preachers lead religious revivals in South, West
 - Billy Sunday holds emotional meetings
 - Aimee Semple McPherson uses showmanship while preaching on radio
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Slide 8: Science and Religion Clash

The Scopes Trial

- * 1925, Tennessee passes law making it a crime to teach evolution
- * American Civil Liberties Union backs John T. Scopes challenge of law
- * Clarence Darrow, most famous trial lawyer of day, defends Scopes
- * Fundamentalist William Jennings Bryan is special prosecutor
- * Scopes trial—debates evolution, role of science, religion in school
 - national sensation; thousands attend
- * Bryan admits Bible open to interpretation; Scopes found guilty

Section 1: The Twenties Woman

Section Opener: The Twenties Woman

American women pursue new lifestyles and assume new jobs and different roles in society during the 1920s.

Slide 10: Young Women Change the Rules [continued]

The Flapper

- * Flapper—emancipated young woman, adopts new fashions, attitudes
- * Many young women want equal status with men, become assertive
- * Middle-class men, women begin to see marriage as equal partnership
 - housework, child-rearing still woman's job

Slide 11: Young Women Change the Rules

The Double Standard

- * Elders disapprove new behavior and its promotion by periodicals, ads
- * Casual dating begins to replace formal courtship
- * Women subject to double standard (less sexual freedom than men)
 - must observe stricter standards of behavior

Slide 12: Women Shed Old Roles at Home and at Work [continued]

New Work Opportunities

- * After war, employers replace female workers with men
 - * Female college graduates become teachers, nurses, librarians
 - * Many women become clerical workers as demand rises
 - * Some become sales clerks, factory workers
 - * Few become managers; always paid less than men
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Slide 13: Women Shed Old Roles at Home and at Work

The Changing Family

- * Birthrate drops partly due to more birth-control information
 - * Manufactured products, public services give homemakers freedom
 - * Housewives can focus more on families, pastimes, not housework
 - * Marriages increasingly based on romantic love, companionship
 - * Children spend most of day at school, organized activities
 - adolescents resist parental control
 - * Working-class, college-educated women juggle family, work
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Section 2: Education and Popular Culture

***Section Opener:* Education and Popular Culture**

The mass media, movies, and spectator sports play important roles in creating the popular culture of the 1920s—a culture that many artists and writers criticize.

Slide 15: Schools and the Mass Media Shape Culture [continued]

School Enrollments

- * High school population increases dramatically in 1920s due to:
 - prosperity
 - higher standards for industry jobs
 - * Pre-1920s, high school for college-bound students
 - * In 1920s, high schools also offer vocational training
 - * Public schools prepare immigrant children who speak no English
 - * School taxes increase as school costs rise sharply
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Slide 16: Schools and the Mass Media Shape Culture

Expanding News Coverage

- * Mass media shapes mass culture; takes advantage of greater literacy
- * By 1914, hundreds of local newspapers replaced by national chains
- * 1920s, mass-market magazines thrive; *Reader's Digest*, *Time* founded

Radio Comes of Age

- * Radio is most powerful communications medium of 1920s
 - * Networks provide shared national experience
 - can hear news as it happens
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Slide 17: America Chases New Heroes and Old Dreams [continued]

New-Found Leisure Time

- * In 1920s, many people have extra money, leisure time to enjoy it
- * Crowds attend sports events; athletes glorified by mass media

Lindbergh's Flight

- * Charles A. Lindbergh makes first solo nonstop flight across Atlantic
 - * Small-town Minnesotan symbolizes honesty, bravery in age of excess
 - * Lindbergh paves the way for other pilots
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Slide 18: America Chases New Heroes and Old Dreams [continued]

Entertainment and the Arts

- * Silent movies already a national pastime
 - * Introduction of sound leads millions to attend every week
 - * Playwrights, composers break away from European traditions
 - * George Gershwin uses jazz to create American music
 - * Painters portray American realities, dreams
 - * Georgia O'Keeffe paints intensely colored canvases of New York
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Slide 19: America Chases New Heroes and Old Dreams

Writers of the 1920s

- * Sinclair Lewis is first American to win Nobel Prize for literature
- criticizes conformity, materialism
- * F. Scott Fitzgerald reveals negative side of era's gaiety, freedom
- * Edna St. Vincent Millay celebrates youth, independence in her poems
- * Writers soured by American culture, war settle in Europe
- called Lost Generation
- * Expatriate Ernest Hemingway introduces simple, tough, American style

Section 3: The Harlem Renaissance

Section Opener: The Harlem Renaissance

African-American ideas, politics, art, literature, and music flourish in Harlem and elsewhere in the United States.

Slide 21: African-American Voices in the 1920s [continued]

The Move North

- * 1910–1920, Great Migration of thousands of African Americans
 - move from South to Northern cities
 - * By 1920, over 40% of African Americans live in cities
 - * Racial tensions escalate in North; about 25 urban race riots in 1919
 - * African-Americans continue to migrate in large numbers in 1920s
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Slide 22: African-American Voices in the 1920s [continued]

African-American Goals

- * National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
 - protests racial violence
 - * NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson fights for civil rights legislation
 - * NAACP antilynching campaign leads to drop in number of lynchings
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Slide 23: African-American Voices in the 1920s

Marcus Garvey and the UNIA

- * Marcus Garvey founds Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)
 - believes African Americans should build separate society
 - * Garvey promotes black pride, black businesses, return to Africa
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Slide 24: The Harlem Renaissance Flowers in New York [continued]

African-American Writers

- * Harlem world's largest black urban area; people from U.S., Caribbean
 - * Harlem Renaissance—African-American literary, artistic movement
 - express pride in African-American experience
 - * Claude McKay's poems urge blacks to resist prejudice, discrimination
 - * Langston Hughes's poems describe difficult lives of working class
 - many written in jazz, blues tempo
 - * Zora Neale Hurston shows folkways, values of poor, Southern blacks
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Slide 25: The Harlem Renaissance Flowers in New York [continued]

African-American Performers

- * Influence, popularity of Harlem Renaissance go beyond black audience
 - * Musical comedy *Shuffle Along* launches movement
 - is popular with white audiences
 - * African-American performers win large followings
 - * Paul Robeson—major dramatic actor in London, New York
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Slide 26: The Harlem Renaissance Flowers in New York

African Americans and Jazz

- * Jazz born in early 20th century New Orleans, spreads across U.S.
 - * Trumpeter Louis Armstrong makes personal expression key part of jazz
 - most influential musician in jazz history
 - * Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington—jazz pianist, orchestra leader
 - one of America's greatest composers
 - * Cab Calloway, Armstrong popularize scat (improvised jazz singing)
 - * Bessie Smith—blues singer, perhaps best vocalist of decade
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Slide 27: Let the Games Begin!

Play the Review Game

Compete with your classmates in this show-what-you-know game. Rack up points, reveal an image, and earn more points in a bonus round.
