The Roaring Twenties

(1918-1929)
Post WWI, (return to *isolation*) Americans are ready to make money and enjoy themselves!!

Reasons for Prosperity in the 1920s.....

1. The Automobile

2. The Development of New Industries

3. More Efficient Production Techniques
Reason #1 -- Impact of the Automobile – Henry Ford developed the assembly line (parts can be made faster and can be made by unskilled workers)

What impact did Ford’s assembly line have on the U.S.?

**Ford’s assembly line makes car production cheaper

**Cars are much more affordable – no longer just toys for the wealthy

**Gas station, restaurant, and tourism businesses boom and it becomes easy to live in rural areas

Ford and his Model T
Reasons for Prosperity in the 1920s…

**Reason #2 – The development of New Industries**

**widespread use of electricity allows for many new industries, jobs, and profits**

What are some of the new industries in the 1920s?

1. The automobile industry – (advertising, real-estate boom in the suburbs, social equality, gasoline and oil sales…)
2. The Electrical Industry – (changes homes, businesses, leisure activities, stimulates installment buying…)
3. Radio and Motion Picture Industries – (entertainment, advertising, sports, politics…)
Reasons for Prosperity in the 1920s…

**Reasons #3 – More Efficient Production Techniques**
New techniques in manufacturing and industrial production (such as the assembly line) allow industry to be more efficient.

What is an assembly line?

*Workers stay in one place doing the same job, as products come to them on a conveyor belt.*

**Efficient Production Techniques make huge quantities of goods available and people have money to spend on them – It is a time of MASS CONSUMPTION!!!!**
During the 1920s, there are many changes within the United States...

We will examine 3 forms of changes in American Society:

1. What were some political changes?

2. What were some economic changes?

3. What were some social changes?
Political Changes during the 1920s

Politically, the U.S. was led between 1920-1930 by 3 Republican Presidents... Can you name them??

Warren Harding (1921-1923) -- Republican

Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929) -- Republican

Herbert Hoover (1929-1933) -- Republican
The Republican Presidents of the 1920s

*These presidents followed policies favorable to American business, such as:

- **High Tariffs**—raising the taxes placed on goods imported to the U.S., helps American manufacturers by discouraging foreign business

- Presidents did not enforce laws against monopolies (big business grows)

- **Tax Cuts** – taxes on big businesses and the wealthy were reduced (hurt the middle and working class people)

Let’s look at each President…
President Warren Harding (1920-1923)

What do you know about Harding???

“A Return to Normalcy” – Harding’s campaign motto when he won the 1920 election: promises to get America back to normal after the war and to run a government less involved in business and foreign affairs (wants to end the postwar recession)

Harding’s Presidency is most remembered for it’s scandals:

What was the most famous scandal?

Teapot Dome Scandal: Government officials accepted bribes from business men (money in exchange for government oil fields in Teapot Dome, Wyoming)
President Calvin Coolidge 1923-1929

"Stay Cool with Coolidge"

• Took over after Harding's death
• Committed to business
• Laissez Faire approach to the economy
• "Coolidge Prosperity" -- the economy improves under Coolidge

The Kellogg-Briand Pact -- passed in 1928 during Coolidge's presidency. This was an agreement among nations to outlaw war except in self-defense. Nations agree to settle disputes through peaceful means and not through war.

(Problem: there was no way to enforce the pact)
President Herbert Hoover (1929-1933)

• Promised to help end poverty and unequal distribution of wealth in the U.S.
• Laissez faire government
• Wanted to "help people help themselves"

PROBLEM!!!!!!
What major economic downfall was Hoover President for?

Hoover was President during the Stockmarket Crash in October of 1929 (Black Tuesday) --- leading to the start of the great depression
Economic Changes during the 1920s

Republican presidents are Pro-business and follow a laissez-faire policy.

Many people experience economic prosperity.

An Economic Boom!!!

Did everyone experience economic prosperity? Who didn't?

- Farmers
- Native Americans
- African Americans

Let's talk about each group a little more...
Who didn't prosper from the economy during the 1920s?

1. **Farmers** -- Small farmers are hurt by the economy. Post WWI when European farmers begin producing again, American farmers are producing too much and prices fall.
   - Farm incomes drop steadily
   - Farmers can't afford all of the luxury consumer goods and technology

2. **Native Americans** -- Most live on reservations and have few luxury goods
   - high unemployment rate and short lifespan
   - face discrimination

3. **African Americans** -- faced discrimination, unemployment, and lower wages than white workers
   - The KKK becomes active again (against African Americans)

Big corporations and the wealthy benefited the most from the economy!!
Social Changes during the 1920s

Socially, how did society and cultural values change?

Examples of social and cultural changes:

• Passage of the 18th and 19th Amendments
• Equality of Women
• Clash between science and religion
• An increase in nativism/racism
• Harlem Renaissance/Jazz Age
• New Technology and Consumer Habits

Let's look more closely at the social changes influencing the 1920s to be known as the "Roaring Twenties"
Social Changes during the 1920's

18th Amendment -- passed in 1919, made the sale and consumption of alcohol illegal

Why were people for prohibition?

• People blame high crime rates on alcohol
• People believe alcohol is evil
• Traditional, Rural, and religious people most often supported prohibition

Famous gangster: Al Capone
What was the problem with prohibition?

Prohibition was very hard to enforce, illegal drinking created a billion dollar industry (bootlegging), and speakeasies opened up

Which Amendment made alcohol consumption legal again?

The 21st Amendment, which was ratified in 1933, repealed the 18th Amendment making alcohol consumption legal again
Social Changes in the 1920s

Women are Changing!!!!!!!

How did the lives of women change during the 1920s?

1. **19th Amendment** is passed: (1920) Women gain the right to vote

2. Many more women join the workforce (although many still believed a woman's place was in the home, and women had a hard time finding jobs outside of traditional roles such as teaching and clerical work)
   - face discrimination and low wages

3. Rebellious, independent women were given the name **flappers**

What did flappers look like?
Flappers were very modern and rebellious for this time period.
- short hair cuts
- short skirts
- visited speakeasies
- danced
- wanted the same freedom as men

However!!!!!!!

Most women WERE NOT flappers and still were very restricted by economic, political and social limits!!!
Social Changes during the 1920s

Clash between Science and Religion

What was the Scopes Trial?

In 1925 -- A biology teacher John Scopes, was illegally teaching about the theory of evolution in his classroom. America is dominated by strong Christian people who do not want Darwinian theory of evolution taught in the classroom.

- Scopes is convicted and charged $100
- **Trial symbolizes tension in the 1920s between those for change and those in favor of traditional, older beliefs and values**
Social Changes during the 1920s

**Threats to Civil Liberties**

During the 1920s, Americans were divided between modern and traditional beliefs and values. This differing in opinions as well as the Red Scare and rise of the KKK resulted in the threatening of some Americans civil liberties. Racism and Nativism increased during the 1920s.

**What is Nativism?**
Believing that the way of life in your country is superior to other countries and people. Distrusting and disliking foreigners, led to a desire to limit immigration in the U.S.

**What was the Red Scare?**
A fear that communists would take over America (as they had in Russia), people thought to be communists were arrested. Communists want private property abolished, want collective ownership of property.
Nativism and Racism effect everyday life in the U.S.

1. Rise in the activities of the Ku Klux Klan (against African Americans, Jews, Catholics, and Immigrants). Many people are victims of mob-lynchings and racial prejudice at the hands of the KKK.

2. Immigration Laws are passed -- The National Origins Act and the Emergency Quota Act are passed to limit immigration into the U.S. These quotas kept immigration numbers from Eastern and Southern Europe and Asia low.

3. Feelings of Nativism make the Sacco and Venzetti case very famous. What was the case about? Why was it important?
The issue: Two Italian immigrants, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were accused of robbery and murder. The men were convicted and executed in 1927.

The problem: The two men were convicted with little evidence. Many believe they were convicted because of their beliefs and because they were immigrants. This court case contributed to the rise of *nativism* (distrust of foreigners)
WHAT WAS THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE?

Harlem Renaissance -- A rebirth in African American culture and pride that began in Harlem, NY.

• African Americans express their views
• Poetry and Literature become an important form of expression (Langston Hughes is a famous poet)
• Jazz music becomes very popular, (developed from African American spirituals) and the 20's is sometimes called the "Jazz Age"
Social Changes during the 1920s

New Technology and Consumer Habits

- People who have wealth are spending their money on many new products
- Many of the first department stores open (i.e., JCPenny's)
- People begin installment buying (buying on credit)
- The advertising industry grows

Popular Items to Buy: cars, radios, washing machines, stoves, vacuum cleaners...

Let's go to the Movies!!!!!

Films really blossomed in the 1920s, expanding upon the foundations of film from earlier years. Most US film production at the start of the decade occurred in or near Hollywood on the West Coast. By the mid-20s, movies were big business (with a capital investment totaling over $2 billion). By the end of the decade, there were 20 Hollywood studios, and the demand for films was greater than ever.

Throughout most of the decade, silent films were the predominant product of the film industry, having evolved from vaudevillian roots. But the films were becoming bigger, costlier, and more polished. They were being manufactured, assembly-line style, in Hollywood's 'entertainment factories', in which production was broken down and organized into its various components (writing, costuming, makeup, directing, etc.).

Charlie Chaplin is a famous actor during the 1920's
Leisure Activities during the 1920s

An increase in wealth, variety and free time allows for leisure activities, especially sports and movies to become popular during the 1920's.

Sports

- Tennis, boxing, collegiate football and especially baseball become very popular during the 1920s.
- Sports become a part of public education
- Babe Ruth and Lou Gerhig are some of the most popular baseball players ever

Lou Gerhig and Babe Ruth
The 1920's.....Why was there a conflict in cultural values during the 1920's?

Some people took full advantage of the new music, freedoms, clothing, technology and beliefs.

Others:

Are upset by the changes in the 1920s and feel that traditional values and beliefs are being threatened

How would you have felt?
In October 1929 -- The NY Stock Market Crashed (marking the beginning of the Great Depression and an end to the Roaring Twenties)

Why did it crash?
• Everyone wanted to sell stocks and no one wanted to buy them (investors panicked)
• People spent too much during the 1920's and couldn't pay off debts and loans (so they sold their stocks)
What were some weaknesses of the economy during the 1920's?

• poor agriculture during the 1920's -- overproduction = drop in prices

• High unemployment in some industries

• slow in automobile sales

• In some cases, too much is being produced and not enough is being consumed!

• The prosperity of the 1920's did not include everyone, there was a very unequal distribution of wealth
The End!!