

The spirit of the Roaring 20s was marked by a general feeling of discontinuity associated with modernity, a break from traditions.

1920, bomb explodes in the Financial District of New York City, killing 38 and injuring over 400. In spite of a three year investigation, no one is put on trial, although the military-anarchist group Galleanists are suspected.

January 1929, half of the United States population was living in poverty.

19th Amendment – Women gain political equity through the right to vote, 1920
“Flappers” are women who demonstrated several of the behaviors which represented a rebellion against the societal norms, including wearing short skirts, cutting their hair, wearing makeup, smoking and drinking in public, and throwing away their corsets.
Employment for women seem to shift, with more involved as doctors, bankers, lawyers, police and probation officers, social workers and hairdressers. To part of the country, this is seen as a sign of great freedom and progress; to others, it is a symptom of moral decay

Start of the Red Scare

Violent events in 1919 led to public unease:
○Seattle docks were idled by a strike; US Marines were sent in at the mayor’s request.
○Summer race riots throughout country
○September, Boston is paralyzed by a police strike; looting and theft were rampant
○Steelworkers strike (they wanted an eight hour work day) affected the nation’s economy.
○Mail bombs sent to leading American politicians and capitalists

Wilson appoints Palmer as Attorney General. Palmer hires J.Edgar Hoover.

Military-anarchist group Galleanists detonate a bomb outside Palmers home, a failed assassination attempt.

“Palmer Raids”: thousands of anarchists and communists were rounded up.
Palmer believes a plot is underway to overthrow the US government and culture; no evidence

Mass production of radio, which was affordable to the middle class. This opened the door to mass marketing. Regulation of the industry begins ’27

1921, 1st radio coverage of baseball World Series
1921, socialist Eugene Debs released from prison, his sentence commuted by the President.

New technologies led to an unprecedented need for new infrastructure, largely paid for by the government. (roads, electrification, phone lines)

1920 Matewan Massacre, West Virginia
Coal miners had begun to organize into a union; resisted by the Stone Mountain Coal Company. SMCC hires agents from the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to evict the workers from company-owned houses.

Leads to shootout, with most of the town (workers) against the 13 Agency members. 3 workers and 7 Agency members killed. Event celebrated by the workers, for the heavy numbers inflicted upon the Agency.
Five months later Sid Hatfield, the workers leader, is assassinated.
No one ever charged for the murder.

Government practiced political and economic isolationism on the world stage.

Sacco and Vanzetti trial
Ferdinando Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were two Italian-born American laborers and anarchists who were tried, convicted and executed in 1927 for the 1920 armed robbery and murder of a pay-clerk and a security guard in Massachusetts. Sacco and Vanzetti were members of the military Galleanists group.

“The Lost Generation”
This is a group of young people who came out of the World War I era were disillusioned and cynical about the world

Demographic shifts: Birth rates of immigrants and poor native-born Americans exceeded those of “old stock” By 1920 2-of-every-3 American schoolchildren had immigrant parents.

By 1929, 200 of the nation’s largest non-financial corporations controlled 45%-53% of the nations wealth.

Anglo-Saxon Protestant establishment controlled manufacturing, railroads and public utilities. This was the managerial class, maintaining a very exclusive membership in its social clubs, colleges and areas of residence.

Between 1920 and 1930, 6.5 million Americans moved from rural to urban areas (where majority of Electoral Votes were massed)

Average Americans in the 1920s became more enamored of wealth and everyday luxuries.

A significant increase in the number of women who attended college is noticed. But in this forum the courses they were allowed to take were often gendered.

US Senate refuses to ratify the Versailles Treaty, which ended World War I

Anti-Semitism was prevalent.
Some of the most virulent anti-Semitic attacks came from car maker Henry Ford in his newspaper ‘The Dearborn Independent.’ Ford once said “I know who makes wars. The international Jewish bankers arrange them so they can make money out of them.”

“Blue-collar workers” – members of the working class who perform manual labor for an hourly-wage.

Societal Transformations Witnessed During the ‘Roaring 20’s’ abt.1919-1929

1923, Rosewood Massacre
Following a dubious rape charge made by a white woman against an unidentified black assailant, as many as 300 whites invade the town of Rosewood, Florida, and kill at least eight residents and burn down the town.
No one is prosecuted for this outrage.

Introduction of a wide array of consumer goods, as the economy transitions from wartime back to normalcy.

The Jazz Age – Jazz was developed from a combination of African rhythms and European harmonic structure.

1921, the country was in a recession with an unemployment rate of 20% and runaway inflation
Federal Reserve began a series of policies which allowed for easy credit borrowing with low interest rates.

American Immigration Act of 1924 limited immigration from countries where 2% of the total US population (per the 1890 census) were immigrants from that country.
This limited European, Irish and Jewish visitors, and Asians and Indians were banned outright.

The 1920s witnessed the rise of sports as a leisure activity.

1923, First wireless telephone call, from New York City to London

American literature is marked by themes of societal (class, wealth, politics) criticism.

President Warren Harding, 1921-1923
Republican

When 3 solid presidential candidates became deadlocked at the nominating convention, powerful Republican conservatives decided on Harding as a compromise candidate.

○Calvin Coolidge chosen as vice-president as retaliation for Harding’s nomination.
Defeats Democrat James Cox, 60%-34%
Elected on a platform ‘return to normalcy’.
His presidency was undistinguished, aside for being known for corruption and scandals.

○His staff engaged in violating prohibition laws, accepting bribes and fraud.
Additionally, he...

○Created a federal budget system
○Encouraged protective tariffs
○Revised wartime taxes
○Restricted immigration
○Appointed unqualified people to government positions (some were in prison at the time of their appointment!)

He died from either heart attack or stroke (there were conspiracy theories suggesting his wife murdered him; no evidence for this)

Teapot Dome Scandal, 1921

It began as a conservation effort to create a naval fuel reserve in California and Wyoming; Senator Albert Fall received gifts in exchange for access.

1923, first transcontinental airplane flight, New York City to San Diego. Took 26 hours, 50 min.

1923, first issue of Time magazine

1923, Proctor and Gamble guarantees employees at least 48 weeks of employment a year (effectively guaranteeing year-around employment)

1927 Supreme Court Decision: Buck v. Bell
Court rules that a ‘mentally feeble’ woman may be sterilized to protect the projected welfare of the state. Case supports eugenics and racism.

1923, Mass exodus of southern blacks northward
Blacks are leaving agricultural jobs for northern industrial jobs.

Georgia loses 13% of black farm labors in 1 year!

18th Amendment – prohibition, 1919

Prohibition leaders thought that once licenses to do business limited alcohol distribution/sales, the churches and reform organizations would enjoy an opportunity to persuade people to give up drinking. Instead, all the previously-legal bars and shops went underground.

Homosexuals in large cities saw a degree of acceptance not seen against for four decades.

- Silent film star Charles Haines lives an openly gay life, and knowledge of his orientation did not affect his profitability at the theater. (However, the studio strove to keep his domestic partnership with Jim Shields a secret, even requiring Haines to have a ‘sham marriage’ when in public.)
- Actress May West was an early advocate for gay equality.

Adkin v. Children’s Hospital, 1923

Supreme Court ruled a minimum wage illegal.

People were investing in a stock market which had little regulation.

Harlem Renaissance

A period of outstanding literary vigor and creativity which took place throughout the 20s, changing the characteristics of literature created by African Americans, from quaint dialect works and conventional imitations of white writers to sophisticated explorations of black life and culture which revealed and stimulated a new confidence and racial pride..

Movement centered in Harlem, New York City, where aspiring black artists, writers and musicians gathered, shared experiences and provided mutual support and encouragement. Major figures include: W.E.B. Dubois, James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Booker T. Washington

President Calvin Coolidge, 1923-1928

Republican *His presidency is noteworthy for the government’s inaction toward domestic and international problems.*

Pursued policies of non-interference with business and industry.

Significant increase in advertising spending

“Taylorism”

Named after Frederick Taylor who devised a means of detailing a division of labor in time-and-motion studies and a wage system based on performance. He advocated task allocation (the idea of breaking workings into groups who specialized on one aspect of production)

Throughout the 1920s, there was a rapid increase in worker productivity.

Notable events from 1924:

- Membership in the Ku Klux Klan peaks. While estimates vary, five million is the most cited number. Why? Racism, hope for (or fear of) violence, and get-rich pyramid schemes all enhance recruitment.
- First around-the-world flight. Four US military planes start the journey from Seattle, only two make it. Total time: 35 hours including 57 stops
- Marx Brothers are the center of entertainment.
- Congress declares Native American Indians to be US citizens.
- First female governor of any US state is elected, Nellie Taylor Ross of Wyoming.
- Scandal created when the press reveals that film star Charlie Chaplin (age 36) had married 16 year old Lita Grey. Marriage lasts 3 years.

Prohibition led directly to the rise of organized crime throughout the 1920s, as gang competed to control the alcohol due to its high profit.

1927, Al Capone’s income reportedly \$105 million (average annual income was \$2,400)

1925 events:

- F. Scott Fitzgerald writes ‘The Great Gatsby’, a book which focuses on the affluent side of American society.
- 74% of all automobile sales were through a payment-installment plan (pay the cost in installments; not all at one time)
- Scopes Trial in Tennessee
Teacher John Scopes violates the Dawes Act (can’t teach evolution in schools) and is put on trial. Defended by Clarence Darrow and prosecuted by William Jennings Bryan. He is found guilty.

1926, Henry Ford institutes a five day work week and eight hour work day at his auto plants. This is intended to reduce overproduction.

1926, magician and entertainer Harry Houdini dies in Detroit

1926, officials estimate over 32,000 speakeasies are operating in New York City alone! (Double the number of taverns in the pre-Prohibition era)

1927, ‘Daddy and Peaches’ separation trial is a sensation in society. This is a divorce proceeding between millionaire Edward West Browning (age 52) and Frances Belle Heenan (age 15).

The scandal shined a spotlight on wealth, sex, courtship and marriage. Judge rules against Frances, allows for separation but not divorce!

1927, Charles Lindbergh makes first successful non-stop transatlantic flight, New York to Paris

1928 cultural notations include...

- Mickey Mouse makes first appearance in ‘Plane Crazy’, a silent cartoon parody of the Lindbergh craze
- Amelia Earhart is first woman to make transAtlantic flight
- Television sent go on sale for the first time
- First completely talking feature-length motion picture

1929, St. Valentine’s Day Massacre

Gangland hit ordered by Al Capone on rival gang leader Bugs Moran. In this year, there were over 400 gang-related murderers

1929, US Supreme Court bars Hungarian immigrant Rusika Schwimmer from US citizenship due to her pacifist ideals.

Oliver Wendell Holmes writes famous dissent.

1929 witnessed major literary works:

- William Faulkner writes ‘Sound and the Fury’
- Earnest Hemmingway writes ‘A Farewell to Arms’
- Erich Maria Remarque writes the anti-war book ‘All Quiet On The Western Front’

By the late-1920s, European demand for American goods is in decline.

“Conspicuous consumption”.

This is a term used to describe the lavish spending on goods and services acquired mainly for the purpose of displaying income or wealth. In the mind of the conspicuous consumer, such display serves as a means for attaining or maintaining a preferred social status. Term originally coined by Thorstein Veblen.

Between 1923-1929, the nation’s total income increased from 74.3 billion to \$89 billion.

A fledgling industry before World War I, the motion picture industry took off in the 1920s. In 1922, 40 million tickets/week were sold by theaters; by 1929, that number had grown to 100 million tickets/week

New appliances affect daily life:

- Vacuum cleaners, toasters, refrigerators, washing machines

Social and economic affects of the Automobile

- Promoted growth in other industries (fuel, rubber, steel)
- The use of automobiles freed people from the limits of their geography.
- A national system of highways was created
- Created new service facilities (roadside restaurants, motels, fuel stations)
- Created a more mobile society
- Broke down the stability of family life
- Broke down traditional morality (youth outside traditional supervision of parents)

‘Babbit’ (1922) by Sinclair Lewis poked fun at the average businessman as materialistic, amoral, superficial and conformist.

‘The Man Nobody Knows: a Biography of Jesus’ (1925) by Bruce Barton, an advertising figure. In it, he portrays Jesus as the “founder of modern business and the apostles as the “greatest sales force in history”

‘Middletown’ (1929) by sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd, based on field research done 1924-1925 in Indiana. They showed how, under the influence of industrialization, traditional values and customs were changing, including peoples’ attitudes toward the automobile.

The found that, at all income levels, the automobile had come to seem a necessity, rather than an economic luxury. People were willing to sacrifice food, clothing and their savings in order to keep the family car.

Businessman had two major propaganda sources: the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. Both groups preached a return to laissez-faire economics, less regulation in business, and less support for labor unions.

1928, Kellogg-Brand Pact reinforces

isolationist policies,

- War is not an instrument of national policy.

Name: _____

Period: _____ Date: _____

Brainstorm review – Roaring Twenties

Please answer the following on a separate piece of paper, and attach this as your coversheet to what you turn in.

1. The spirit of the Roaring Twenties was marked by a . . .
2. What were the Galleanists?
3. In January 1929, what percentage of the United States population was living in poverty?
4. What did the 19th Amendment (1920) to the United States Constitution do?
5. The 19th Amendment was viewed differently by the traditionalists and progressives in the country. How so?
6. What occurs to start the Red Scare climate in the United States?
7. What does Palmer believe?
8. What happened in the 1920 Matewan Massacre?
9. Who were Ferdinando Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, and what happened to them?
10. To what does ‘The Lost Generation’ refer?
11. The 1920s experienced a significant demographic shift. What statistic from 1920 reflects this?
12. There is an increase in the number of women attending college in the 1920s, but this does not mean they were treated equally. What type of courses were they allowed to take?
13. Anti-Semitism (anti-Jewish behavior) was frequent. Name one prominent anti-Semite from the era.
14. To what does the term ‘blue collar workers’ refer?
15. What happened during the Rosewood Massacre?
16. How much of the population was unemployed in 1921?
17. How did the Federal Reserve respond to this high unemployment?
18. What did the American Immigration Act of 1924 do?
19. How did Warren Harding get the Republican nomination for president?
20. Why was Calvin Coolidge names vice president?
- 21-26. Please identify five things President Harding did while in office.
 - 21.
 - 22.
 - 23.
 - 24.
 - 25.
26. What was the Teapot Dome Scandal?
27. Who first guaranteed their employees at least 48 weeks of employment?
28. What was the decision in Buck v. Bell (1927)?
29. In 1923, there was a mass movement of African Americans in 1923. Why?
30. What did prohibition do?
- 31-32. Homosexuals in large cities had some acceptance. Identity two facts which support this.
 - 31.
 - 32.
33. What did Adkins v.Children’s Hospital (1923) do?
34. What was the Harlem Renaissance? (please write the full explanation here)
35. Calvin Coolidge’s presidency was known for what?
36. What did Frederick Taylor advocate?
37. What percentage of auto sales were through a payment-installment plan?
38. What was the Scopes Trail?
39. Why did Henry Ford institute a five day work wee and a eight hour work day in his automobile plants?
40. What statistic from 1926 is evidence that prohibition was not being successful in reducing drinking?
41. How many gang related murders were there in 1929?
42. Why did the United states bar Rusika Schwimmer from gaining American citizenship?
43. To what does ‘conspicuous consumption’ refer?
- 44-47. Identify four new appliances which affected daily life.
 - 44.
 - 45.
 - 46.
 - 47.
- 48-54. Identify seven social and economic effects of the automobile.
 - 48.
 - 49.
 - 50.
 - 51.
 - 52.
 - 53.
 - 54.
55. How did the book ‘Babbit’ portray the average businessman?
56. What was the message of the book ‘The Man Nobody Knows’?
57. What was the message of the Kellogg-Brand Pack?