

Chapter 31: American Life in the Roaring Twenties, 1919-1929

You should be able to:

1. analyze the movement toward social conservatism following World War I
2. describe the cultural conflicts over such issues as immigration, cultural pluralism, prohibition, and evolution
3. discuss the rise of the mass consumption economy, led by the automobile industry
4. describe the cultural revolution brought about by radio, films, and changing sexual standards
5. explain how new ideas and values were reflected and promoted in the American literary renaissance of the 1920s
6. explain how the era's cultural changes affected women and African Americans

Define:

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|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. syndicalism | 7. installment plan |
| 2. Bible Belt | 8. magnate |
| 3. provincial | 9. repression |
| 4. racketeer | 10. charismatic |
| 5. underworld | 11. functionalism |
| 6. credit | 12. surtax |

Answer:

1. How and why did America turn toward domestic isolation and social conservatism in the 1920s?
2. How was the character of American culture affected by the social and political changes of the 1920s? (Include both white and black ethnic groups in your discussion)
3. Why was immigration, which had existed for many generations, seen as such a great threat to American identity and culture in the prosperous 1920s?
4. Why did critics like Horace Kallen and Randolph Bourne dislike the pressure on immigrants to "Americanize" and join the "melting pot?"
5. What did they envision that America should be like under their ideals of "Cultural Pluralism?"
6. How did some of the events of the 1920s reflect national conflicts over social, cultural, and religious values?
7. How did the automobile and other new products create a mass consumption economy in the 1920s?
8. How did the new films, literature, and music of the 1920s affect American values in areas of religion, sexuality, and family life? Were African American cultural developments fundamentally different, or were they part of the same cultural movement?
9. In what ways were the twenties a social and cultural reaction against the progressive idealism that held sway before and during World War I?