

## The Artios Home Companion Series

### Unit 17: Old Values vs. New Values

#### Special Note

The original ideal of the Puritan City upon a hill seemed to be slipping away in the pursuit of materialism and self-gratification. The moral standards of the Victorian Age were forgotten in the age of Freud and the flapper. There were those who saw much to fear in the changes sweeping through their culture. They would not give up without a fight.

#### Teacher Overview

Not all Americans embraced the new way of life that became popular in the 1920s. Many saw the United States as a civilization in decline. Immigrants brought new cultures, religions, and languages to the increasingly complex American mosaic. The Communist takeover of Russia resulting from the Bolshevik Revolution produced a widespread suspicion of Socialists, radicals, and labor unions. There were those in America who saw much to fear in the changes sweeping through their culture. They would not give up without a fight.

The first group to feel the heat were suspected Socialists. The wave of postwar strikes touched off an anti-labor sentiment across America. Fears fueled by the Russian Revolution triggered a witch hunt for potential threats to national security. Immigrants, whose numbers had been transmuting the American ethnic fabric, became targets for intolerance. Ethnic purists succeeded at slamming shut the open door for immigrants. Hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan gained in popularity as working-class Americans took aim at African Americans, immigrants, Catholics, and Jews. The churches of America were similarly torn by the struggle between old and new. Modernists tried to reconcile the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin with Scripture, while orthodox Christians and Jews persisted in belief in Biblical creation.

Throughout the struggle, America's political leadership remained remarkably aloof. The White House was occupied by the most conservative presidents in a generation during the decade of change. Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover seemed content with the status quo, and delegated much of the decision-making to Congress and key Cabinet members. Businesses took advantage of this laissez-faire approach.

By the end of the decade, America seemed to be on the brink of abundant prosperity. An industrial revolution was now complete. The United States had proven itself a global power in building a new kind of nation governed by the people and by intervening in the First World War, yet lacked the physical destruction of the conflict that plagued the European continent. The standard of living was rising faster than anywhere in the world. Indeed, when Herbert Hoover took office, he predicted that America would soon see the end of poverty. No one predicted the sheer calamity that was so soon to follow.



*The Jazz Singer, 1927, Hollywood's first feature-length "Talkie"*

## Reading and Assignments

In this unit, students will:

- Complete five lessons in which they will learn about **the conflict between old and new values**, journaling and answering discussion questions as they read.
- Define vocabulary words.
- Conduct research on **the assassination of the entire Russian royal family**.
- Conduct research on **the Monkey Trial**.
- Visit [www.ArtiosHCS.com](http://www.ArtiosHCS.com) for additional resources.

## Leading Ideas

**All philosophies, values and belief systems should be viewed and judged in light of Scripture and not man's wisdom.**

*Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.*

— Proverbs 3:7

*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.*

— Colossians 2:8

## Vocabulary

### Lesson 1:

abdicate  
squelched  
hatchetman  
anarchist  
socialist  
capitalist

### Lesson 2:

none

### Lesson 3:

intolerance  
literacy

### Lesson 4:

provincial  
expatriate  
disaffection  
opulence

### Lesson 5:

tranquility  
laissez faire

## Key People, Places, and Events

Bolsheviks  
Tsar Nicholas II  
Vladimir Lenin  
Karl Marx  
Communist Labor Party  
Nicola Sacco  
Bartolomeo Vanzetti  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
J. Edgar Hoover  
IWW – Industrial Workers of the World  
Attorney General Palmer  
President Woodrow Wilson  
Charles Darwin  
Butler Law  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
John T. Scopes  
Theory of Natural Selection  
Clarence Darrow  
William Jennings Bryan  
Judge John Raulston  
National Origins Act of 1924  
Pan-Americanism  
Ku-Klux-Klan  
William Simmons  
United Negro Improvement Association  
Black Star Steamship Company  
F. Scott Fitzgerald

Ernest Hemingway  
*The Sun Also Rises*  
T.S. Eliot  
*The Waste Land*  
Eugene O'Neill  
*Desire Under the Elms*  
*A Long Day's Journey Into Night*  
Sinclair Lewis  
*Main Street*  
*Babbitt*  
Pulitzer Prize  
Charlie Chaplin  
Rudolph Valentino  
Mary Pickford  
Walt Disney  
The Hays Office  
President Warren Harding  
The Teapot Dome Scandal  
Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall  
President Calvin Coolidge  
President Herbert Hoover  
The Dawes Plan  
The Progressive Party  
Naval Arms Conference of 1921  
Open Door Policy  
Kellogg-Briand Pact

# Lesson One

## History Overview and Assignments The Red Scare

The ideas of Karl Marx had been known since 1848, but nowhere in the world had a successful Communist revolution taken place until this time in history. Along with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russian, a small group of radicals formed the Communist Labor Party in the United States.



Protests sparked by the conviction of anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti

### Vocabulary

abdicate  
squelched  
hatchetman  
anarchist  
socialist  
capitalist

### Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *The Red Scare*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Define the vocabulary words in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Do additional research on the assassination of the entire Russian royal family. Be prepared to share with the class.
- Be sure to visit [www.ArtiosHCS.com](http://www.ArtiosHCS.com) for additional resources.

### Key People, Places, and Events

Bolsheviks  
Tsar Nicholas II  
Vladimir Lenin  
Karl Marx  
Communist Labor Party  
Nicola Sacco

Bartolomeo Vanzetti  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
J. Edgar Hoover  
IWW – Industrial Workers of the World  
Attorney General Palmer  
President Woodrow Wilson

## Discussion Questions

1. What was America's attitude toward labor activism after World War I?
2. Who was President Wilson's "hatchetman" chosen to deal with the issues with labor activism?
3. Who were Sacco and Vanzetti? What were they accused of?
4. Why is there controversy surrounding their trial and verdict?
5. Under Attorney General Palmer's leadership, what was created in the United States?
6. List some of the constitutionally questionable things that Attorney General Palmer did while in power.

*Adapted for High School from the book:*

### ***U.S. History Online Textbook***

*source: ushistory.org*

#### ***The Red Scare***

World War I was over, but the hysteria lingered. The Eastern Front operations had not gone well for Russia. The pressures of their losing effort forced the Russian tsar, Nicholas II, to abdicate. The new government had not fared much better. Finally in November 1917, Vladimir Lenin led a successful revolution of the Bolshevik workers. The ideas of Karl Marx had been known since 1848, but nowhere in the world until now had a successful communist revolution taken place. Once the war against Germany was over, the Western powers focused their energies at restoring Tsar Nicholas. Even the United States sent troops to Russia hoping the White Russians could oust the communist Reds. All this effort was in vain. The Bolsheviks murdered the entire royal family and slowly secured control of the entire nation.

#### **The Communist Party Forms**

Back in the United States, veterans were returning home. Workers who avoided striking during the war were now demanding wage increases to keep pace

with spiraling inflation. Over 3,300 postwar strikes swept the land. A small group of radicals formed the Communist Labor Party in 1919. Both progressive and conservative Americans believed that labor activism was becoming excessive and must be squelched. The hatchetman against American radicals was President Wilson's Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer. Palmer was determined that no Bolshevik Revolution would take place in the United States.



Original logo of the  
Communist Labor Party of America



### **The Sacco-Vanzetti Case**

On April 15, 1921, two employees of a shoe warehouse in South Braintree, Massachusetts, were murdered during a robbery. The police investigating the crime arrested two Italian immigrants named Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

Many people, particularly fellow socialists, protested the verdict, asserting the two men were convicted more on political and ethnic prejudice than on any real evidence. Indeed, four years later, another man confessed he had committed the crime with a local gang.

Despite appeals, Sacco and Vanzetti were never granted a retrial. When they were sentenced to death on April 9, 1927, protests erupted around the country. But this was to no avail—the men were executed on Aug. 23, 1927. They claimed they were innocent until the moment of their deaths.

Scholars still debate the guilt and innocence of Sacco and Vanzetti, but there is little question that the trial was biased against them.

### **Palmer's Efforts**

From 1919 to 1920, Attorney General Palmer conducted a series of raids on individuals he believed were dangerous to American security. He deported 249 Russian Immigrants without just cause. The so-called “Soviet Ark” (the USAT Buford, a Spanish-War era ship) was pressed into service to send them back to Mother Russia. With Palmer's sponsorship, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was created under

the leadership of J. Edgar Hoover. In January of 1920, federal agents broke into the homes of suspected anarchists without search warrants, jailed labor leaders, and held about 5,000 citizens without respecting their right to legal counsel. Palmer felt that American civil liberties were less important than rooting out potential wrongdoers. Eventually most of the detainees were released, but some were deported.

The spark of suspicion ignited by Palmer and Hoover could not be contained. Still agitated by wartime propaganda, members of the American public took matters into their own hands.

American Legionnaires in Centralia, Washington attacked members of the Industrial Workers of the World, an international industrial labor organization commonly known as “the Wobblies.” The IWW promotes the concept of “One Big Union,” contending that all workers should be united as a single social class and that capitalism and wage labor should be abolished. Twelve radicals were arrested; one of them was beaten, castrated, and then shot. The New York State Legislature expelled five Socialist representatives from their ranks. Twenty-eight states banned the public display of red flags. It seemed as though the witch hunt would never end. Responsible Americans began to speak out against Palmer's raids and demand that American civil liberties be respected. By the summer of 1920, the worst of the furor had subsided.

## Lesson Two

### History Overview and Assignments The Monkey Trial

When Charles Darwin announced his theory of man's evolution from apes, he sent shockwaves throughout the Western world. These shockwaves eventually ended in a court conflict known as The Monkey Trial where John T. Scopes was on trial for having read a chapter from Darwin's book in his class and William Jennings Bryan represented conservative values.



Legendary defense lawyer Clarence Darrow faces off against William Jennings Bryan in the Dayton, Tennessee trial of schoolteacher John Scopes. Bryan died in Dayton five days after the trial ended.

#### Reading and Assignments

- Read the article: *The Monkey Trial*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Using the information in today's article and additional research you do on your own, write a five paragraph essay describing the events surrounding *The Monkey Trial*.
- Be sure to visit [www.ArtiosHCS.com](http://www.ArtiosHCS.com) for additional resources.

#### Key People, Places, and Events

Charles Darwin  
Butler Law  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
John T. Scopes

Theory of Natural Selection  
Clarence Darrow  
William Jennings Bryan  
Judge John Raulston

## ***U.S. History Online Textbook***

source: ushistory.org

### ***The Monkey Trial***

When English naturalist Charles Darwin announced his theory that humans had descended from apes, he sent shock waves through the Western world.

In the years that followed his 1859 declaration, America's churches hotly

debated whether to accept the theories of modern science or continue to follow the teachings of scripture. By the 1920s, many liberal churches had made attempts to reconcile Darwin's theory with the Bible, but conservative churches refused to do so.

PUBLIC ACTS OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE  
PASSED BY THE SIXTY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
1925

CHAPTER NO. 27  
House Bill No. 185  
(By Mr. Butler)

AN ACT prohibiting the teaching of the Evolution Theory in all the Universities, Normals and all other public schools of Tennessee, which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the State, and to provide penalties for the violations thereof.

Section 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee,* That it shall be unlawful for any teacher in any of the Universities, Normals and all other public schools of the State which are supported in whole or in part by the public school funds of the State, to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals.

Section 2. *Be it further enacted,* That any teacher found guilty of the violation of this Act, Shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction, shall be fined not less than One Hundred \$ (100.00) Dollars nor more than Five Hundred (\$ 500.00) Dollars for each offense.

Section 3. *Be it further enacted,* That this Act take effect from and after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed March 13, 1925

W.F. Barry, Speaker of the House of Representatives

L.D. Hill, Speaker of the Senate

Approved March 21, 1925.

Austin Peay, Governor.



## Darwin Banned

In 1925, the Tennessee legislature passed the Butler Law, which forbade the teaching of Darwin's theory of evolution in any public school or university. Other southern states followed suit.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) led the charge of evolution's supporters. It offered to fund the legal defense of any Tennessee teacher willing to fight the law in court. Another showdown between modernity and tradition was unfolding.



This political cartoon appeared during the Scopes monkey trial. Bryan is portrayed as Don Quixote, tilting at the windmill of evolution. The caption reads: "He's Always Seeing Things."

The man who accepted the challenge was John T. Scopes, a science teacher and football coach in Dayton, Tennessee. In the spring of 1925, he walked into his classroom and read, from Dayton's Tennessee-approved textbook *Hunter's Civic Biology*, part of a chapter on the evolution of humankind and Darwin's theory of natural selection. His arrest soon followed, and a trial date was set.

## Darrow versus Bryan

Representing Scopes was the famed trial lawyer Clarence Darrow. Slick and sophisticated, Darrow epitomized the urban society in which he lived.

The prosecution was led by William Jennings Bryan, three-time presidential candidate and former secretary of state. The "Great Commoner" was the perfect representative of the conservative values he dedicated his life to defend.

Bryan was a Christian who lobbied for a constitutional amendment banning the teaching of evolution throughout the nation.



The teacher at the center of proceedings, John Thomas Scopes

## A Media Circus — With Monkeys

The trial turned into a media circus. When the case was opened on July 14, journalists from across the land descended upon the mountain hamlet of Dayton. Preachers and fortune seekers filled the streets. Entrepreneurs sold everything from food to Bibles to stuffed monkeys. The trial

became the first ever to be broadcast on radio.

Scopes himself played a rather small role in the case: the trial was reduced to a verbal contest between Darrow and Bryan. When Judge John Raulston refused to admit expert testimony on the validity of evolutionary theory, Darrow lost his best defense.

He decided that if he was not permitted to validate Darwin, his best shot was to attack the literal interpretation of the Bible. The climax of the trial came when Darrow asked Bryan to take the stand as an expert on the Bible. Darrow hammered Bryan with tough questions on his strict acceptance of several Bible's stories from the creation of Eve from Adam's rib to the swallowing of Jonah by a whale. While on the witness stand, William Jennings Bryan frustrated Darrow by not directly answering the defense attorney's questions. Bryan was a Christian, but he did not necessarily interpret the Bible literally. He would not give in, however, to Darrow on the subject of miracles. Bryan believed that miracles happen, though he could not explain how.

The "Great Commoner" felt it important for an articulate defender of the Bible to speak on its behalf. At one point in the testimony, Bryan claimed that the defense had "no other purpose than ridiculing every Christian who believes in the Bible."

Bryan was not opposed to science. He was well regarded in some scientific circles and belonged to several national science organizations.

## Darrow's Defense

The key to Clarence Darrow's defense strategy was to have scientists testify. On the trial's sixth day, Judge Raulston stated, "*It is not within the province of the court under these issues to decide and determine which is true, the story of divine creation as taught in the Bible, or the story of the creation of man as taught by evolution.*" In short, no experts were needed to understand the simple language of the Butler law. Darrow's scientific experts were barred from testifying. By day's end, the sardonic Darrow had been charged with contempt of court.

The trial's seventh day featured charged exchanges between Darrow and Bryan, who was on the stand. But on the trial's eighth day, Judge Raulston ruled that Bryan's testimony would not be allowed to stand on the record.

It was clear to Darrow that all was lost in this courtroom. In order to appeal the case to a higher court, Darrow asked the jury to find his client guilty. On July 21, 1925, it did.

It is interesting to speculate how history would have played out had Bryan been able to examine Darrow on the witness stand, which was Bryan's intention. But the trial concluded before Bryan had the chance.

The jury sided with the law. Clearly, Scopes was in violation of Tennessee statute by teaching that humans descended from monkeys. He was fined \$100 and released. But the battle that played out before the nation continues to rage today.

Clearly, the 1920s did not see the end to these conflicts or the answers to their major questions.

## Lesson Three

# History Overview and Assignments

## Intolerance

Immigration to the United States vastly increased during the early part of the twentieth century, and cultural battles often became ugly. In an effort to preserve true American values, the forces against change sometimes displayed intolerance ranging from restrictive legislation to outright violence.



A rise in immigration stirs resentment over economic and social problems

### Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *Intolerance*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Define the vocabulary words in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Be sure to visit [www.ArtiosHCS.com](http://www.ArtiosHCS.com) for additional resources.

### Vocabulary

intolerance  
literacy

### Key People, Places, and Events

National Origins Act of 1924  
Ku-Klux-Klan  
Black Star Steamship Company  
United Negro Improvement Association  
Pan-Americanism  
William Simmons

### Discussion Questions

1. What objections did some Americans have towards the large influx of immigrants into the U.S.?
2. What was the purpose of the National Origins Acts of 1924? What restrictions did it contain?
3. Describe the Ku-Klux-Klan and its purpose.
4. How would you describe the concept of intolerance as it pertains to this article?
5. Is being intolerant always a bad thing?

## ***U.S. History Online Textbook***

source: ushistory.org

### ***Intolerance***

Immigration to the United States vastly increased during the early part of the twentieth century, and cultural battles often became ugly. Old versus new was not a topic to be discussed calmly at the nation's dinner tables. In an effort to preserve so-called true American values, the forces against change sometimes displayed intolerance ranging from restrictive legislation to outright violence. Immigrants from areas outside northern and western Europe became targets of prejudice, and African Americans faced new threats from a resurgent Ku Klux Klan.

#### **Restricting Immigration**

Since the 1880s, America's shores had been flooded with immigrants primarily from southern and eastern Europe. Opposition became increasingly vocal during the first two decades of the 20th century. Critics of an open immigration policy decried social and economic woes brought on by the influx of large numbers of poverty-stricken immigrants from various cultures whose values often clashed with theirs. Labor leaders claimed that immigration lowered wages. As a result, Congress slowly built walls against the newcomers. The first line of defense was a literacy test, passed in 1917. The results were not as encouraging as the anti-immigrationists had hoped. About 1.25 million immigrants still entered America during the first two years of the twenties. An outright cap on immigrant numbers, setting restrictions for the annual number to be

admitted from each country based on the number from that country currently living in the U.S., was enacted in 1921. Ethnic nationalists claimed that these conditions still favored southern and eastern immigrants too favorably. The result was the National Origins Act of 1924. This law based admission to America on nationality. Immigrants from northern and western Europe were granted higher quotas than from other parts of the world. Asian immigration was banned completely. As a sign of pan-Americanism, there were no restrictions placed on immigrants from the western hemisphere.

#### **Resurgence of the KKK**

By 1915, the Ku Klux Klan was almost dead. But William Simmons of Atlanta, a college history teacher, summoned a secret gathering on Stone Mountain on Thanksgiving Day of that year. As the sun set, the participants massed around a burning cross and pledged once again to reassert white supremacy. This second Klan grew slowly, boasting only about five thousand members by 1920. That year, several members used their professional fundraising experience to boost the Klan's numbers. They raised membership dues and sold a great variety of Klan merchandise, including the infamous hoods and robes. Simmons is credited with much of the Klan terminology. Local chapters were called Klaverns, songs were called Klodes, and the leader was called the Imperial Wizard. By the middle of the



decade there were an estimated 5 million Klansmen, with a significant women's auxiliary. This new Klan was national, particularly strong in the Midwest and South but powerful as far west as Oregon. The targets of this group went beyond African Americans. Catholics, Jews, and "non-Nordic" immigrants were victimized by the new reign of terror. Toward the end of the decade, corruption and scandals among the national leadership discredited the high and mighty message the Klan was trying to promote, and membership numbers sharply dropped.



Ku Klux Klan members march down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. in 1928

### **"Back to Africa" Movement**

The environment of intolerance and a new KKK prompted a drastic response by many. Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican-born political activist, believed that equality for African Americans could never be achieved in the United States. He formed the United Negro Improvement Association to promote economic cooperation among African American businesses. Garvey made

fiery speeches and created uniforms and flags to symbolize a new African pride. In his opinion, the ultimate goal for Africans across the world should be to return to the "Motherland." He sought to develop the Republic of Liberia, founded by the American Colonization Society in the 19th century as a colony for free Africans from the United States. Only in Africa, Garvey felt, could a strong nation dedicated to promotion of black culture flourish. After amassing about 80,000 followers, Garvey founded the Black Star Steamship Company to begin transporting African Americans "Back to Africa." Closely watched by government officials, Garvey was convicted of mail fraud in connection with stock sales of the Black Star Line in 1923, and deported to Jamaica.

### **Sacco and Vanzetti Trial**

The intolerance of the decade is embodied in the murder trial of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. These two self-avowed anarchists and atheists were arrested in April 1920 for two Massachusetts murders. From the start, it was clear their trial was not about the murders, but about their backgrounds and beliefs. The judge violated all semblance of impartiality by criticizing their political views in court. Their guilt or innocence remains uncertain, and the circumstantial evidence on which they were convicted was murky. The jury found them guilty, and after six years of delay, Sacco and Vanzetti were silenced permanently by the electric chair.



## Lesson Four

### History Overview and Assignments Books and Movies

While the written page marked a quest for intellectual insight, the new movie industry catered to mass audiences. By the end of the decade over 100 million viewers attended movie houses each week and Sinclair Lewis had been the first American to have been awarded a Pulitzer Prize for literature.



Poster for the 1937 film Saratoga.  
This was actress Jean Harlow's last film.

#### Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *Books and Movies*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Define the vocabulary words in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Choose one of the authors, actors or actresses mentioned in today's article. Write a five paragraph essay on the life and career of that individual.
- Be sure to visit [www.ArtiosHCS.com](http://www.ArtiosHCS.com) for additional resources.

#### Vocabulary

provincial

expatriate

disaffection

opulence

#### Key People, Places, and Events

Pulitzer Prize

F. Scott Fitzgerald – *The Great Gatsby*

Ernest Hemingway - *The Sun Also Rises*

T.S. Eliot - *The Waste Land*

Sinclair Lewis – *Babbit* and *Main Street*

Eugene O'Neill - *Desire Under the Elms* and *A Long Day's Journey Into Night*

Charlie Chaplin

Rudolph Valentino

Mary Pickford

Walt Disney

The Hays Office

## Discussion Questions

1. Who were included in what this article describes as “the lost generation,” and what was their response to American society during the 1920s?
2. List the American authors in today’s article along with the books that they wrote.
3. Who was the first American writer to win a Pulitzer Prize for literature?
4. What was the purpose of the Hays Office?
5. What was the first talking picture?
6. In what film did Walt Disney introduce Mickey Mouse?

Adapted for High School from the book:

### ***U.S. History Online Textbook***

source: [ushistory.org](http://ushistory.org)

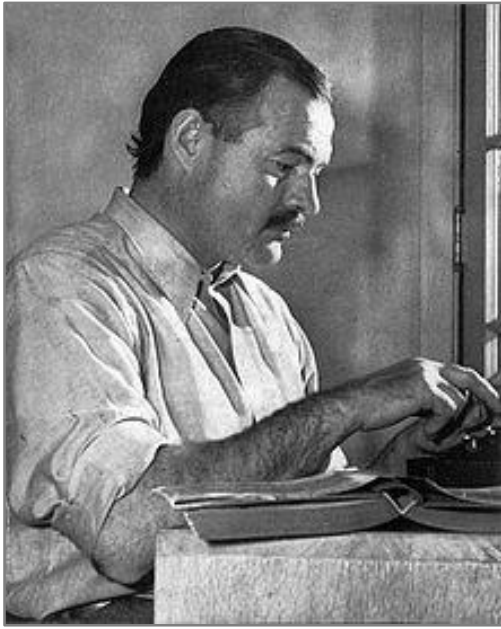
#### ***Books and Movies***

They were called the Lost Generation. America's most talented writers of the 1920s were completely disillusioned by the world and alienated by the changes in modern America. The ghastly horrors of trench warfare were a testament to human inhumanity. The ability of the human race to destroy itself had never been more evident. The materialism sparked by the Roaring Twenties left many intellectuals empty. Surely there was more to life than middle-class conformity, they pined. Intolerance toward immigrants and socialists led many writers to see America as grossly provincial. Thus the literature of the decade was that of disaffection and withdrawal, and many of America's greatest talents expatriated to Europe in despair.

#### **The Writers**

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote about the excesses of the Jazz Age. He and his wife Zelda operated among the social elite in New York, Paris, and on the French Riviera.

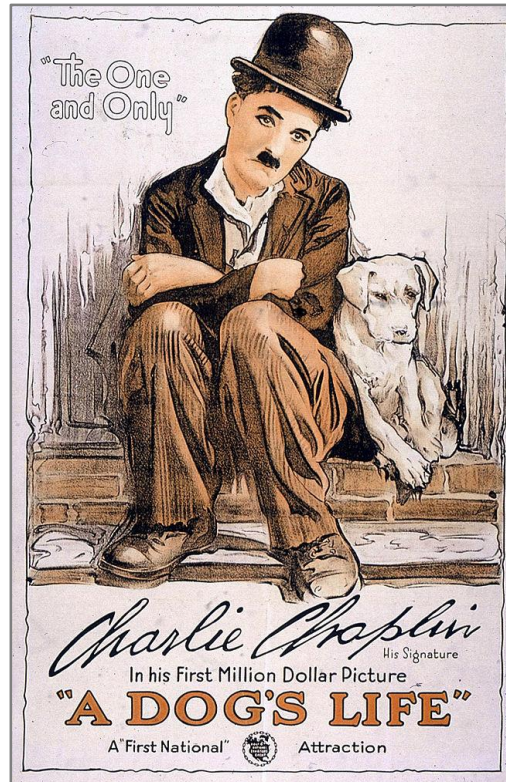
*The Great Gatsby*, his most famous novel, highlights the opulence of American materialism while harshly criticizing its morality. Ernest Hemingway wrote of disillusioned youths wandering Europe in the wake of World War I in search of meaning in *The Sun Also Rises*. T. S. Eliot commented on the emptiness of American life in his epic poem *The Waste Land*. American theater earned worldwide acclaim in the 1920s. The foremost playwright of this newly respected American genre was Eugene O’Neill, noted for *Desire Under the Elms* and *A Long Day’s Journey Into Night*. The sharpest critic of American middle-class lifestyle was Sinclair Lewis. In *Main Street*, he took aim on small-town American life. *Babbitt* denounced the emptiness of middle-class life in the city. After a string of successful novels, Lewis brought honor to American writers by becoming the first to win a Pulitzer Prize for literature.



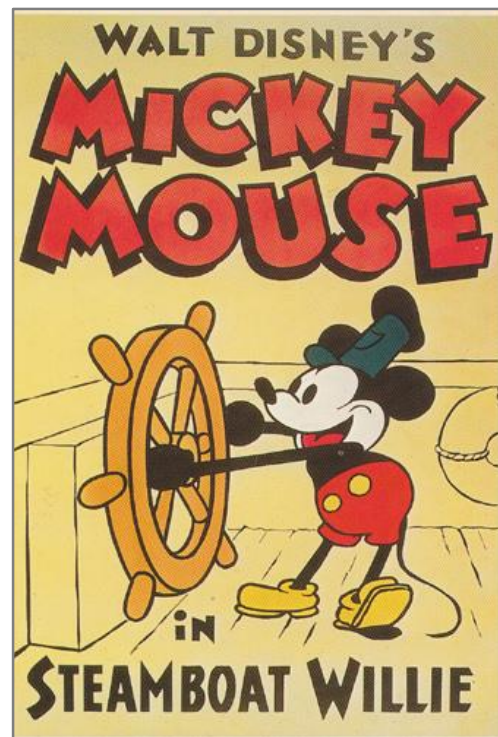
Typical of the writing of the age were the desolate landscapes of Ernest Hemingway

### The Movies

While the written page marked a quest for intellectual insight, the new movie industry catered to mass audiences. Every town seemed to have at least one theater for the new craze. The early decade saw millions flock to the screens to see silent action films and slapstick comedies by the likes of Charlie Chaplin. Sex appeal reigned supreme as American women swooned for Rudolph Valentino and American men yearned for the all-American beauty Mary Pickford. To keep standards of morality high in the film industry, the Hays Office censored objectionable scenes. Because of soaring profits, studios sought quantity rather than quality. Therefore the decade saw few pictures of merit. The first talking picture, *The Jazz Singer*, appeared in 1927. Walt Disney introduced Mickey Mouse to the American public the following year in *Steamboat Willie*. By the end of the decade over 100 million viewers attended movie houses each week, more than the number of weekly churchgoers.



*A Dog's Life* (1918). It was around this time that Chaplin began to conceive the Tramp as "a sort of Pierrot", or sad clown.



50th anniversary poster, 1978



## Lesson Five

### History Overview and Assignments Domestic and International Politics

America now desired to avoid the mistakes that led to World War I. This led President Harding to convene the Washington Naval Arms conference. In addition, while practicing political isolation, the United States had become entangled with Europe economically. With war debt due from European countries, America found that when the Great Depression struck, only Finland was able to make good on its debt to the United States.



President Warren Harding



President Calvin Coolidge



President Herbert Hoover

### Reading and Assignments

- Review the discussion questions and vocabulary, then read the article: *Domestic and International Politics*.
- Narrate about today's reading using the appropriate notebook page. Be sure to answer the discussion questions and include key people, events, and dates within the narration.
- Define the vocabulary words in the context of the reading and put the word and its definition in the vocabulary section of your history notebook.
- Be sure to visit [www.ArtiosHCS.com](http://www.ArtiosHCS.com) for additional resources.

### Discussion Questions

1. What caused the Teapot Dome Scandal?
2. How are people divided in their opinion of the presidency of Calvin Coolidge?
3. What two themes dominated American diplomacy during this time?

## Vocabulary

tranquility  
*laissez-faire*

## Key People, Places, and Events

President Warren Harding  
The Teapot Dome Scandal  
President Herbert Hoover  
Naval Arms Conference of 1921  
Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall

The Dawes Plan  
President Calvin Coolidge  
The Progressive Party  
Open Door Policy  
Kellogg-Briand Pact

*Adapted for High School from the book:*

### ***U.S. History Online Textbook***

*source: ushistory.org*

### ***Domestic and International Politics***

Warren Harding won his bid for the White House in 1920 with the campaign slogan “Return to Normalcy.” Republicans believed Americans had grown weary of the turmoil caused by World War I and promised tranquility. Harding found himself mired in scandals unknown in America since the Grant administration. Although Harding himself was above the graft (using authority for personal gain), his friends were more than willing to dip into the public treasury. Fraud and bribery plagued the Veterans Bureau and the Justice Department. The Teapot Dome Scandal exposed Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall for accepting bribes for allowing private oil companies to lease public lands at low rates without competitive bidding. Harding fell ill in 1923 and died shortly thereafter.

#### **The Progressives**

Calvin Coolidge made no significant changes to Harding's *laissez faire*, pro-business style of administration, and opinions regarding his presidency are divided between those who approve of his reduction of the size of government programs and those who think the federal

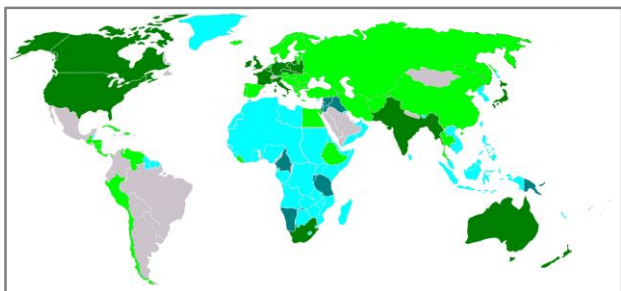
government should be more involved in regulating and controlling business. Progressives bemoaned the end of activist presidents, prompting Fighting Bob La Follette to launch an unsuccessful run for the presidency under the Progressive Party banner in 1924. The only successful progressive reforms occurred on the state and local levels. Politics became interesting in the election year of 1928. The Democrats nominated Al Smith, the first Catholic ever to earn the nomination of a major party. Smith raised eyebrows with an open opposition to the Prohibition amendment. As a result, the South broke with a long tradition of supporting Democrats and helped Herbert Hoover to continue Republican domination of the presidency.

#### **The International Scene**

On the international scene, two themes dominated American diplomacy. The first was a desire to avoid the mistakes that led to World War I. To this end, President Harding had convened the Washington Naval Arms Conference in 1921. The United States, Great Britain, and Japan agreed to a ten-year freeze on the construction of battleships and to maintain a capital ship



ratio of 5:5:3. They also agreed to uphold the Open Door Policy and to respect each other's holdings in the Pacific. In 1928, the United States and France led an initiative called the Kellogg-Briand Pact, in which 62 nations agreed to outlaw war. These two measures showed the degree to which Americans hoped to forestall another disastrous war.



Kellogg Briand Pact countries:  
*Dark green:* original signatories,  
*Green:* subsequent adherents,  
*Light blue:* territories of parties,  
*Dark blue:* League of Nations  
mandates administered by parties



"Silent Cal" Coolidge, a man of few words,  
poses with a fisherman for a Massachusetts magazine.



President Hoover tosses out the first pitch  
at a Major League baseball game

The second priority dealt with outstanding international debt. While practicing political isolation, the United States was completely entangled with Europe economically. The Allies owed the United States an enormous sum of money from World War I. Lacking the resources to reimburse America, the Allies relied on German reparations. The German economy was so debased by the Treaty of Versailles provisions that they relied on loans from American banks for support. In essence, American banks were funding the repayment of the foreign debt. As Germany slipped further and further into economic depression, the United States intervened again. The Dawes Plan allowed Germany to extend their payments on more generous terms. In the end, when the Great Depression struck, only Finland was able to make good on its debt to the United States.