Roaring Twenties
Prosperity

American History 11R
Which event in the 1920’s had the longest lasting impact on American society and why?

- End of WWI
- Scopes Trial
- Sacco & Vanzetti
- Prohibition
- Economic Boom
- Communism
- Arms Control
- Klu Klux Klan
- Morals and Manners
Postwar American Attitudes

• Disillusionment following World War I, particularly among veterans, artists, and intellectuals (the Lost Generation)
• Society was lacking in idealism and vision
• Sense of personal alienation
• Americans were obsessed with materialism and outmoded moral values
• Desire for Isolationism – pulling away from world affairs.
Fear of Bolshevism

• Success of Russian Revolution combined with epidemic of strikes frightened Americans into "Red Scare" mentality of 1919-1920

• Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer arrested 6000 suspected radicals and deported many following several bombings
Fear of Foreigners

• Over 800,000 immigrants came to America in 1920-21, with 2/3 coming from southern and eastern Europe

• To preserve the northern European racial composition of America, quotas were set up to restrict new immigration in a series of acts, including the National Origins Act of 1924 which cut immigration to 2% of each nationality from the 1890 census.
Sacco and Vanzetti

- Italian anarchists, accused of murder during a bank robbery.
- Anti-immigrant attitudes prejudiced their trial. Protests from within and outside the U.S.
- Found guilty, but most likely didn’t do it
- Executed in 1927
Rise of the Nativist *Ku Klux Klan*

- Reconstituted partly after the success of the movie *Birth of a Nation*, the new KKK was more anti-foreign than anti-black. Its strength was in the Midwest and South.
  - Targets: foreigners, Jews, Catholics, pacifists, communists, and evolutionists
  - By 1925, 5 million members had joined to march in parades, burn crosses, and hold secret meetings

Movement lost strength, particularly after it was exposed as a money-making scheme by organizers.
Arms Control following WWI

- **Washington Naval Conference** (1921) set a ratio of naval tonnage among the five leading naval nations in an attempt to limit naval armaments. Participants also agreed not to build new bases in the Pacific.

- **Kellogg-Briand Pact** (1928) signers—62 nations—agreed to renounce war as a solution for international disputes.
Labor Movement Falters

• Work force of immigrants willing to work for low wages and in poor conditions.
• Difficulty organizing different ethnic groups.
• Unions excluded African Americans.
Prohibition During 1920’s

- Against the sale of alcohol
- Doomed to failure due to lack of government enforcement.
  - Bootleggers and Organized Crime
  - Speakeasies
Fundamentalism vs. Modernism

- **Fundamentalist Christians**, stressing literal biblical interpretation, opposed any scientific teaching that cast doubt on veracity of scripture, particularly Genesis.

- **Modernist Christians**, mainly urban and better educated, attempted to adapt religion to the teachings of modern science and a changing world.
Scopes “Monkey” Trial

- Dayton, Tennessee, 1925
  - John Scopes purposely violated Butler Act forbidding the teaching of evolution
  - William Jennings Bryan assisted prosecution while Clarence Darrow defended Scopes
  - Scopes found guilty (conviction later overturned), but Darrow's cross-examination of Bryan exposed narrowness of fundamentalist position as anti-science and anti-progress
  - Movie Speech
Prosperity and Consumerism
Roaring 1920’s

• Tremendous performance of American economy in early 1920s. From 1920-1929:
  – Manufacturing output rose more than 60%
  – Gross national product (total of goods and services) rose 5% a year
  – Industrial output per worker grew 33%
  – Per capita income grew 30% with virtually no inflation
Mass Consumption

• **Consumerism** fostered growth of advertising which benefited from expansion of national mass-circulation magazines, such as *Time*, *Reader's Digest*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*.

• **Installment Purchasing Plan** – Enables people to buy goods over an extended period of time.
Causes of Economic Boom

- Destruction of European economies during World War I left the U.S. as the only major industrial nation
  - Technology allowed for expansion, particularly in the auto industry
    - 1.5 million cars sold in 1920, 5 million cars sold in 1929
    - Assembly line methods used by Ford and others made cars affordable to many American families
  - Radio and motion picture industry grew as a result of technological innovations
  - Cheap, readily available energy sources (coal, oil) made expansion affordable
  - Scientific management techniques promoted by Frederick Taylor were adopted widely in an attempt to improve efficiency
Flapper

- New Attitude for New Age
- Emancipated young women
  - New fashions
  - Urban attitudes – smoking, drinking, dancing
- New Work Opportunities
- Changing role in household
- New Literature captured era
  - F. Scott Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*
- Double Standard
African American Great Migration

• In 1910, 89% of all blacks remained in southern states, and nearly 80% of those lived in rural areas.

• During the early 1900’s, over 1 million African Americans moved from the South to the North.

• Problems
  – Faced same prejudice in Northern cities
  – Competed with whites for unskilled jobs.
    • Often used as strikebreakers
1890 African American population

Data source: U.S. Census, Historical Census Data website
https://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/
1990 county shapes used: approximately 90% of historical counties represented

1 Dot = 1,000 Afr Amer people

Map by: UIC Big City Teacher Preparation Initiative
1920 African American population

Data source: U.S. Census, Historical Census Data website
https://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/
1990 county shapes used; approximately 90% of historical counties represented

Map by: UIC Big City Teacher Preparation Initiative
Black American Goals of 1920’s

• W.E.B. Du Bois
  – Writer and Teacher
  – Professor of History and Economics at University of Atlanta

• Helped found National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
  – Protest racial violence
  – Editor of *The Crisis*, official magazine
Black American Goals of 1920’s

• Marcus Garvey
  – Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)
    • African Americans should build a separate society.
    • “Black is Beautiful”
  – Arrested for mail fraud and sentenced to five years in prison 1923, Deported in 1927
The Harlem Renaissance

- Literary and artistic movement celebrating African American culture.
- Writers
  - Langston Hughes – poet
  - Claude McKay – novelist
- Actors
  - Paul Robeson
Jazz Age

- Created in New Orleans in the early 1900’s
- Blend of instrumental ragtime and blues creates new uniquely American sound.
- Performers
  - Cab Calloway, Bessie Smith
Other Significant African American Issues of 1920’s

• First Anti-Lynching legislation approved by House of Representatives in 1922.
• Harlem Globetrotters established 1927.
• Mass defection of blacks from the Republican party began in 1932.
Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover

American History 11R
Election of 1920

- 1920 presidential election
- Republican Senator from Ohio
  Warren G. Harding
  - Slogan “Return to Normalcy”
- Democratic Governor from Ohio
  James M. Cox
  - Running mate FDR
- Harding won
- Beginning of 12 years of Republican control.
Largest percentage popular vote victory since Monroe (60%)
Warren G. Harding

- Budget Act – 1921
  - President more control over national budget
  - President has to submit national budget
- Washington Naval Conference - 1921
- Corrupt Administration
  - Teapot Dome scandal
    - Naval oil leases on federal land
    - Biggest presidential scandal up to Watergate (1972)
  - Died in 1923 of stroke
Coolidge Prosperity – 1920’s

- 1923 – VP Calvin Coolidge becomes president due to death of Warren G. Harding.
- “The chief business of America is business”
- Kept taxes down, high tariffs, reduced income taxes
- Easy credit for businesses to grow.
- Election of 1924
  - Split in Democratic party
    - Conservative – John W. Davis, Congressmen (WV)
    - Liberals – Wisconsin Senator Robert LaFollette
      - Progressive Party Candidate
Election of 1924

The map shows the electoral vote distribution for the 1924 presidential election, with the colors indicating the winning candidates:

- Republican (Coolidge): Red
- Democratic (Davis): Blue
- Progressive (La Follette): Green

The electoral vote total was 531, with the popular vote tally being 29,090,208. Wisconsin is highlighted in green, indicating it was won by the Progressive candidate.
Election of 1928

- Republican – Herbert Hoover –
  - Highly respected politician
  - Food Administrator during WWI
  - Secretary of Commerce – Harding, Coolidge
- Democrat – Alfred E. Smith –
  - Progressive Governor of New York
- Hoover wins big
  - Belief that prosperity will continue forever
Good Times Forever