A Republican Decade

I. The Red Scare

- 1918 Russia experienced a civil war
  - Reds (communist) vs. Whites (wanted democracy)
  - the U.S. joined with some of the Allies in sending troops to Russia
  - in 1920, the Reds, led by Vladimir Lenin, won
- Lenin created a new country called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)
  - established a communist system
    - the government owned all land and property
    - a single political party controlled the government
    - individuals had no rights except those given to them by the government
    - the government vowed to incite revolutions in other countries and to spread communism worldwide
- fear and anxiety associated with communism spread through the U.S. in 1919-1920
  - became known as the Red Scare
  - caused by strikes and communist revolutions abroad
  - fear of foreigners (xenophobia)
  - the press contributed to Red Scare
- *Schenck v. United States* (1919)
  - Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. said the government can restrict the 1st Amendment right to free speech in time of war if there is a “clear and present danger” constitutional rights are not absolute
  - for example, someone could not shout fire in a crowded theater
- in 1919, prompted by bombings in cities, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer created the General Intelligence Division (GID) to investigate American radicals
  - led by a Justice Department attorney named J. Edgar Hoover, the GID targeted anarchists, Communists, trade union activists, civil rights activists, and foreign resident agitators
  - January 2 and 6, 1920, special agents and local police arrested thousands of Communists and suspected sympathizers across the country
    - became known as the Palmer Raids
- Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti accused of murder/robbery trial
  - Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted and executed
  - trial gained worldwide attention
- 1920s, increase of nativism and intolerance
  - eugenics
    - pseudoscience that deals with improving hereditary traits
    - lent authority to racist theories and reinvigorated the nativist argument for strict immigration control
  - Emergency Quota Act of 1921
    - established a temporary quota system, limiting immigration
  - National Origins Act of 1924
    - made quotas permanent on immigration from certain areas of Europe, Asia, and Africa
    - exempted immigrants from Mexico

II. Labor Strikes

- one cause of the Red Scare was a wave of labor unrest in 1919
- early 1919, food and rent cost increased
  - by 1920, the cost of living was more than double prewar levels
- many strikes occurred
- 1919 when 19 police officers in Boston were fired for union activity, the entire police force went on strike
  - Calvin Coolidge sent the National Guard into Boston after striking police officers were fired
  - *There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, anytime.* - Calvin Coolidge
- 1919, steel workers in Gary, IN and other cities struck
  - 18 strikers were killed and hundred more were beaten
- 1919, coal miners of the United Mineworkers of America (UMW) struck
- union movement weakened in the 1920s because
  - overall wage rates rose steadily in the 1920s
  - the older craft-based pattern of union organization was ill-suited to the new mass-production industries
  - management was hostile to labor organizing
  - many saw strikes as anti-American
    - unions were labeled as communist

III. Republican Leadership

- 3 Republicans held the presidency in the 1920s
  - Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover
- pro business
- rejected many Progressive Era economic reforms
- Democratic Party split between rural and urban factions

IV. The Harding Presidency

- Harding elected in 1920
- promised “return to normalcy”
- wanted to reduce the role of the government in the economy
- Republican Formula:
  - lower government spending
  - higher tariffs
  - lower taxes
- Harding may some wise cabinet appointments, but other cabinet members were corrupt
  - named, “The Poker Cabinet”
- Harding's Administration marred by scandals
  - Teapot Dome Affair
    - Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall sold government oil leases for personal gain
    - first cabinet officer to go to prison
- Harding pushed for isolationism but supported disarmament
  - 1921, Harding convened the Washington Naval Conference
  - several nations agreed to limit the size of their navies
- 1922, Harding supported the Fordney-McCumber Act
  - raised tariffs
- Harding fell ill and died in 1923
  - upon Harding’s death, Calvin Coolidge became President

V. The Coolidge Presidency

- Vice President Coolidge was visiting his parents in Vermont on August 3, 1923 when he learned of Harding’s death
- Coolidge’s father, a justice of the peace, administered the oath of office
- Coolidge was honest, and felt government should stay out of people's lives
  - 4/5 of our troubles would disappear if we would sit down and keep still
- Will Rogers, said, Coolidge retired a hero, “not only because he hadn’t done anything but because he had done it better than anyone.”
Coolidge was pro business, practiced laissez faire economic policies
- *The business of government is business!*
- Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and the Bureau Corporations overlooked business's violations of antitrust laws
- under President Coolidge, the American stock market grew in value
- made conservative appointments
  - five appointments to the Supreme Court
    - Court found 12 progressive laws unconstitutional (child labor, Wash. DC min. wage for women)
- 1924, Coolidge ran against Democrat John W. Davis and Progressive Robert LaFollette
  - Coolidge used the slogan, "Keep cool with Coolidge"
  - Coolidge won
- Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon led effort to cut taxes on corporations and the wealthy

Foreign Policy
- in the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 nations pledged to renounce war as an instrument of national policy
- U.S. businesses expanded into Latin America
  - U.S. controlled financial policies of most Latin American countries
  - controlled markets and raw materials
  - 14 of 20 nations were controlled by US
  - U.S. backed governments experienced rebellion
    - 1927, U.S. Marines sent into Nicaragua to put down rebellion led by Augusto Sandino
    - Coolidge said that they were just being a policemen continuing Big Stick policy
    - Latin Americans resented US troops
    - Americans believed that US business could spread peace and prosperity to the nation and the world
- Coolidge in 1928, "I choose not to run."

### VI. The Election of 1928

- Republican Herbert Hoover defeated Democrat Al Smith
- Hoover had been Sec. of Commerce under Harding and Coolidge

#### A Business Boom

- 1920s was the first modern decade
- first fast food chain, A & W Root Beer
- advertising became big business in the 1920s

#### I. Consumer Economy

- 1920s, the US developed a consumer economy
  - characterized by increased consumer borrowing and spending
  - installment plans
  - industrial production shifted from heavy industry to consumer goods and services
  - new electric products
    - General Electric: *vacuums, coffee pots, sewing machines, irons, ovens, toasters*
  - rural America did not experience the prosperity of the cities
    - during the 1920s, farmers suffered an economic downturn
    - the depressed situation of United States agriculture was chiefly caused by mechanization, rising production costs and overproduction

#### II. Ford and the Automobile

- most important new industry was automobile manufacturing
1920s, the number of registered cars rose by over 15 million
Ford was the leader
1896 Henry Ford perfected his first version of the gas-powered car which he called the quadricycle
- started his own automobile company
- 1907, Ford sold 30,000 of an improved car called the Model T
Ford developed an assembly line to manufacture cars more cheaply and efficiently
- the assembly line moved while the workers stayed in place
- between 1907 and 1926 Ford built half the cars produced in the world (16,750,000)
  - at Ford’s Highland Park, MI factory a new car rolled off of the assembly line every 24 seconds
- 1914, a Model T sold for $490, 1915 $390
  - Model T's only came in black and with no options
- General Motors introduced the Chevrolet in several colors
  - Model T sales dropped
- 1927, Ford introduced the Model A which came with more options and in more colors
  - Ford vertically integrated
- 1914, Ford introduce a $5 per day pay scale which was twice what most factories paid

III. Industrial Growth
- by the end of the 1920s, automobile production had become the nation’s largest industry
- new cars meant growth of related businesses (gas stations, roads, etc)
- the U.S. began to develop a national culture
- besides automobiles, steel, oil, electrical, machine making, publishing, movie and other industries also boomed

Society in the 1920s
- economic changes allowed Americans to devote more time to entertainment in the 1920s

I. Women's Changing Roles
- American women in the 1920s felt freer to experiment with bolder styles and manners
- young women of the 1920s who wore make-up, short skirts, and short hair were called flappers
  - actress Clara Bow, the “It” girl was the role model for many Flappers
- Women working and voting
  - usually only single women worked
  - women did not vote in large numbers and to the dismay of suffragettes tended to vote like their male counterparts
- 1920s became known as the “Roaring Twenties” because new fads and ways to have fun swept across the country
  - fads includes dance marathons and flagpole sitting
  - the Charleston became a popular dance craze of the 1920s

II. Cities and Suburbs
- Demographics
  - people moved from rural to urban
  - Black Americans moved North (Great Migration)
  - huge increase in Suburbs

III. American Heroes
- many Americans became fascinated with heroes in the 1920s
longed for symbols of old-fashioned virtues

- Charles Lindbergh was the first man to fly the Atlantic Solo
  - in 1927 he flew from New York to Paris in 33.5 hours in his plane the *Spirit of St Louis*
  - Lindbergh was known as Lucky Lindy
- Amelia Earhart became the first Woman to solo the Atlantic

- **Sports Heroes**
  - Jack Dempsey - boxing - heavyweight champion of the world
  - Lou Gehrig was a popular baseball player for the New York Yankees during the 1920s and 1930s
    - became known as the "Iron Horse" because he set the record for most consecutive games played
  - Babe Ruth of the Yankees became baseball's homerun king
    - known as the "Sultan of Swat"
  - Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the English channel and she smashed the men's record by 2 hours
  - Babe Diedrickson Zaharis - golf
  - Knute Rockne - Football
  - Helen Wills women's tennis champ

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**Mass Media and the Jazz Age**

I. **Mass Media**

- before the 1920s, the U.S. was a collection of regional cultures
- the majority of people did not travel much or interact with people from other regions
  - did not read much about other regions
- the development of the automobile and mass media helped the U.S. develop a national culture
- mass media includes movies, newspapers, radios, and other methods of communicating information to large numbers of people
Movies
- movies were silent until 1927
- Jazz Singer with Al Jolson first feature talkie

Newspapers
- newspapers grew in size
- the use of newsprint in the U.S. roughly doubled between 1914 and 1927
- the number of newspapers was actually declining
  - between 1914 and 1929, nearly 2,000 newspapers and magazines went out of business
- newspaper chains bought and merged established newspapers
  - between 1923 and 1927, the number of newspapers owned by newspaper chains increased by 50%
  - William Randolph Hearst gained control of newspapers in more than 20 cities
- people shared the same information, read about the same events, and were influenced by the same ideas

Radio
- KDKA in Pittsburgh 1920 first for profit radio
- by 1922, more than 500 stations were on the air

II. The Jazz Age
- radio combined with black migration from the South made Jazz a popular form of music
- jazz originated in New Orleans
  - influenced by Dixieland music and ragtime
- Harlem had as many as 500 Jazz clubs
- Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington were the founders of modern Jazz music
- W.C. Handy
  - born in Florence, AL
  - called the “Father of the Blues”
- George Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue

III. Duke Ellington
- Edward Kennedy Ellington
- born in Washington, DC in 1899
- 1923, persuaded by musician Fats Waller to move to New York
- excellent pianist, but best known as a bandleader, composer, and arranger
- songs include: Take the A Train, Tuxedo Junction (Tuxedo Junction is located in Birmingham), In a Sentimental Mood, and Bojangles

IV. Other Artists
- the jazz spirit ran through other forms of art in the 1920s
- painters such as Edward Hopper and Rockwell Kent showed the nation’s rougher side
- Georgia O’Keefe painted natural objects such as flowers, animal bones, and landscapes

V. Literature
- literature experienced a rebirth in the 1920s
- Carl Sandburg
  - a Chicago poet who used common speech to glorify the Midwest
- Lost Generation refers to many American writers who were disillusioned with American society in the 1920s
  - American poet Gertrude Stein coined the expression “lost generation”
  - many literary artists involved in the groups known as the Lost Generation
  - the three best known are F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos
    - F. Scott Fitzgerald The Great Gatsby
when first published, *The Great Gatsby* sold only 25,000 copies  
Fitzgerald coined the phrase *Jazz Age*  
Fitzgerald's wife Zelda was from Montgomery, AL  
others usually included among the list are: Sherwood Anderson, Kay Boyle, Hart Crane, Ford Maddox Ford and Zelda Fitzgerald

- Harlem Renaissance  
  - the movement of African-American artists, poets, and writers who expressed their pride in being black  
  - writers of the Harlem Renaissance included: Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Countee Cullen

**Cultural Conflicts**

**I. Prohibition**

- Eighteenth Amendment prohibited the sale and possession of alcohol  
- 1919, the Volstead Act was passed by Congress to help enforce prohibition  
- some areas (Kansas) obeyed at a high rate (95%) and others (NY) a low rate (5%)

Prohibition in the United States showed that social attitudes can make laws difficult to enforce

- bootleggers supplied illegal alcohol  
  - speakeasies were illegal bars  
- in many cities, criminals formed large organizations that controlled the distribution of alcohol  
  - bootleggers often expanded into other illegal activities such as gambling, prostitution, and racketeering  
  
  - businesses forced to pay for "protection"  
- Al Capone was the most well-known gangster of the Prohibition era  
  - controlled Chicago area  
  - convicted of tax evasion and sent to prison in 1931

**II. Issues of Religion**

- rapid change, moral decadence, and the erosion of traditional beliefs in the 1920s led to a counter movement of fundamentalism  
  - religious traditionalist published a series of 12 pamphlets called *The Fundamentals*  
- Billy Sunday became the most well-known fundamentalist minister of the 1920s  
  - led over 300 revivals that were attended by an estimated 100 million people  
- Aimee Semple McPherson was another well-known evangelist  
  - conducted revivals and faith healings in Los Angeles  
  - founded the Angelus Temple  
  - owned a radio station and use the mass media to spread her beliefs  
- fundamentalists were alarmed by many ideas gaining acceptance in the 1920s  
  - one of those ideas was the theory of evolution  
  - fundamentalist worked to have laws passed against the teaching of evolution  
- Tennessee passed such a law in 1925

**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.

- Tennessee teacher John T. Scopes taught evolution in defiance of the law
- Clarence Darrow defended Scopes in what became known as the "Scopes Monkey Trial"
  - William Jennings Bryan represented the prosecution
  - the trial took place in Dayton, TN in July 1925
  - Scopes was found guilty and fined $100
    - the fine was overturned by the Tennessee Supreme Court
  - William Jennings Bryan died a few days after the trial
- central issue of the Scopes trial was whether or not the theory of evolution should be taught in public schools

III. Racial Tensions

- in the first few years after World War I, relations between blacks and whites in America were generally characterized by extreme resentment, race riots, and numerous lynchings
- 25 Race riots in 1919 (Red Summer)
- an increase in racial prejudice and the resurrection of the Ku Klux Klan occurred in the 1920s, primarily because of bad economic conditions in rural areas and competition for jobs
- the Ku Klux Klan was reborn
  - first reorganized by William J. Simmons in 1915
  - Ku Klux Klan targeted Catholics, Jews, blacks, and immigrants
  - Indiana had largest Klan membership
  - by 1927, Klan activity had diminished
- some black leaders, frustrated by violence and discrimination, urged blacks to emigrate to Africa
  - Marcus Garvey organized a "Back To Africa" movement
  - Garvey encouraged blacks to emigrate to Africa to establish a country and government on their own