

Chapter 22- The Roaring Twenties

Section 3- The Jazz Age

Focus Question: What arts and culture symbolized the Jazz Age?

I. Fads and Heroes

A. Dancing and Other Fads

1. Young people expressed their joy for life through dancing.
2. Dance fads like the Charleston, Lindy Hop and Breakaway became popular and quickly faded.
3. Other fads come about as well during this time including flagpole sitting and dance marathons.
4. The game of Mahjong also became popular.
 - a) Women would attend Mahjong clubs, college students would create their own clubs and the game would also be played at dinner parties.

B. Heroes of a New Age

1. With the growing popularity of sports the sports hero come about.
 - a) Babe Ruth was the hero of baseball with his 60 home runs in one season, a record that lasted almost 30 years.
 - b) Other sports heroes included Johnny Weissmuller, Red Grange, Bobby Jones, Bill Tilden, Helen Wills and Jack Dempsey.
2. Mass media helped to make these athletes bigger celebrities and trendsetters.
3. Charles Lindbergh was one of the most beloved heroes of the time/
 - a) He gained his fame by being the first person to fly nonstop across the Atlantic in 1927.
 - b) New York gave him a huge parade.
 - c) Lindbergh also became a symbol of the energy and optimism of the decade.

II. An American Sound

A. A new musical sound was created in the 1920's, by black musicians in the nightclubs of New Orleans, known as jazz.

1. Jazz is a combination of rhythms of West Africa and the Caribbean, work chants and spirituals of the rural South and harmonies from Europe.

B. Jazz quickly spread throughout the country in part of the Great Migration.

C. Some of the most famous jazz musicians included Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith and Duke Ellington.

1. Louis Armstrong, learned how to play the trumpet while growing up in an orphanage in New Orleans.
 - a) Like many other jazz players, Armstrong learned how to take a simple melody and create new rhythms and sounds.

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- D. The radio also helped to spread jazz into white communities and throughout the 1920's, white audiences, bandleaders and composers embraced jazz.
 - E. Jazz influenced the world culture as well and it became so important that the 1920's are now considered the Jazz Age.
 - F. Not everyone was a fan of jazz many older Americans believed that jazz would corrupt the youth of America, with it overemphasis of foolishness and pleasure.
- III. Literature of the 1920's
- A. Literature flourished during the 1920's
 - 1. Writers wrote both about the exuberance and criticized it excesses.
 - 2. Many writers from this time became "expatriates."
 - B. Social Critics
 - 1. F. Scott Fitzgerald was a critic of the upper classes of society.
 - a) In his 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby*, he seemed to be both intrigued and disgusted with the people he was describing.
 - 2. Ernest Hemingway was another important writer of the 1920's who had a distinct style of writing and was one who became an expatriate.
 - a) He wrote *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *Farewell to Arms* (1929), which he captured the anti-war sentiments of his generation.
 - 3. Sinclair Lewis criticized American society, in his novel *Babbitt* (1922), specifically the middle class.
 - a) "Babbitry" became a common term for mediocrity and the unconscious conformity to middle class standards.
 - C. The Harlem Renaissance
 - 1. African American culture grew in Harlem with writers, musicians and poets, who reacted against the prejudice they experienced and at the same time they expressed their hopes.
 - 2. Poet, Langston Hughes was an acclaimed poet of the Harlem Renaissance.
 - a) He is known for his expressions of racial pride.
 - b) He also tried to write his poems to sound like jazz music.
 - 3. James Weldon Johnson was another Harlem Renaissance contributor, both as a writer and politically.
 - a) He wrote for the *New York Age*, an important black owned newspaper.
 - b) He was also an organizer of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
 - 4. Zora Neale Hurston, most known for her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, moved to New York to study anthropology.

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- a) She recorded folk songs and stories to preserve them and analyze them.