

# The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910-1929

## 1.1 Why did people want to emigrate to America?

- During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, about 40 million people emigrated to the USA.
- The majority of these came from Southern and Eastern Europe and became known as the 'new immigrants.'
- People made the journey to the USA for many different reasons. These can be grouped into the 'push' and 'pull' factors. The push factors explain why immigrants wanted to leave their homeland and the pull factors relate to the attractions of a new life in the USA.



For example:

- The USA was the land of opportunity for all.
- The USA was the land of the free and a country which guaranteed basic human rights.
- The promise of religious tolerance and freedom.
- Escaping political persecution in their home country.
- The USA was booming industrially, creating many employment opportunities.

The USA followed an 'Open Door' policy. The Open Door policy was designed to make entry into the USA as easy as possible.

## 1.2 Key terms

 Open door policy	Free admission of immigrants.
WASP	White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant.
Communist	A person who believes in a classless society.
Anarchist	A person who wants to remove all forms of government.
Red Scare	Fear that immigrants from Eastern Europe were spreading communist ideas across America.
Xenophobia	An irrational fear or hatred of foreigners.

## Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?

### 1.3 The growing demand to restrict immigration

In the 1920s many Americans were starting to question the **open door policy** towards immigration.

Traditionally, the immigrants had tended to come from northern and western Europe - Britain, Ireland, Germany. Between 1900 and 1914, 13 million arrived, mainly from southern and eastern Europe - Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Western Poland and Greece. People started feeling angry towards these 'new' immigrants because:

- These 'newer' immigrants were seen to offer little - they were often poor, illiterate and could not speak English.
- The immigrants moved to cities where they tended to live with people from their own country of origin and ghettos developed. Many immigrants were failing to 'Americanise.'
- There was a growing feeling that the 'new' immigrants would take jobs and work for very low wages.
- It was thought that immigrants were responsible for increases in crime, drunkenness and prostitution.
- The cultural and religious backgrounds of immigrants from Eastern Europe were different from those of many Americans and this led to fear and hatred.
- The growth of **xenophobia** and the idea that the ideal citizen was a **WASP**, led Americans to look down on the immigrants from Eastern Europe.
- **The rise of Bolshevism (Communism) in Russia following the revolution in 1917 led to a fear of immigrants bringing communist ideas with them into America.**

### 1.4 World War One

- There was opposition to further immigration when the USA became involved in the First World War and hostility to German immigrants increased alarmingly.
- The teaching of German was banned in schools in several states.
- Involvement in the First World War also caused many Americans to fear future entanglements in European affairs. They wanted the USA to isolate itself from events in Europe and restricting immigration was a way of doing this.
- The USA had a policy of isolationism, which meant staying out of world affairs.

## 1.5 The Red Scare

Many Americans became alarmed over events in Europe, especially after the **Bolshevik Revolution** in Russia in 1917, which led to a communist system of government being set up.

- Many feared that immigrants would spread communist and anarchist ideas into America. A number of events added to these fears leading to a growth in xenophobia.
- In Germany, a group of communists attempted to seize power in January 1919.
  - A communist party was formed in the USA in 1919. Many Americans began to fear that there would be a revolution in their own country.
  - Americans tended to see any new political ideas, such as anarchism, as branches of communism. All people who believed in these ideas were classed as 'Reds' (communists).
  - There were 3,600 strikes in 1919. They were protests against poor working conditions and low pay. Even the police went on strike in Boston. To many, the strikes seemed to indicate the beginnings of a communist revolution.



## 1.6 Actions of anarchists

- In 1919, there were a series of bombings by extreme anarchist groups.
- During 1919 a bomb planted by an anarchist group badly damaged the house of the Attorney-General, Mitchell Palmer.
- In April 1919 a bomb planted in a church in Milwaukee killed ten people.
- In September 1920, an anarchist bomb exploded on Wall Street killing 38 people.
- Such action gave rise to the Red Scare, the fear that anarchists and communists threatened America.



# The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910-1929

## 2.1 Restrictions to immigration -1.

There were four important measures introduced to restrict immigration into America, each one being stricter than the previous one.

**Literacy Test, 1917** - Immigrants had to pass a series of reading and writing tests. Many of the poorer immigrants, especially those from eastern Europe, had received no education and therefore failed the tests and were refused entry.

**The Emergency Quota Act, 1921** - A law which restricted the number of immigrants to 357,000 per year, and also set down a quota - only 3 per cent of the total population of each ethnic group already in the USA in 1910 could come in after 1921.

## 2.2 Restrictions to immigration 2.

**The National Origins Act, 1924** - This law cut the quota of immigrants to 2 per cent of its population in the USA in 1890. The act was aimed at restricting southern and eastern European immigrants. It allowed more people from northern Europe to enter.

**Immigration Act, 1929** - This restricted immigration to 150,000 per year. No Asians were allowed. Northern and western Europeans were allocated 85% of places.

The **Open Door** was now closed to many. The government did not believe that the new immigrants enriched the life and culture of the USA. As a result, there was more fear of immigrants, xenophobia and racial persecution.

## 2.3 Americanisation

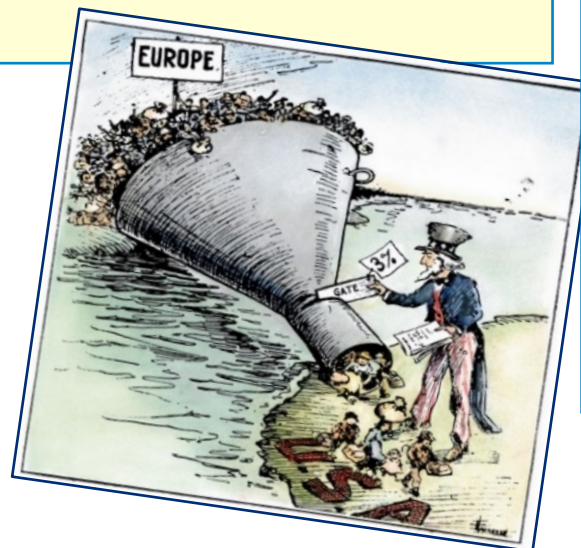
- In addition to the restrictions on the numbers of immigrants, measures were introduced to Americanise them.
- The Federal Bureau of Naturalization organised patriotic 'Americanisation Day' rallies. The Americanisation Day was designed for citizens to reaffirm their loyalty to the USA and the heritage of freedom.
- People were invited to put on appropriate ceremonies in schools and similar places.
- Courses on politics and democracy were organised by the Federal Bureau of Education to prepare immigrants for the citizenship examination.



## Why did immigration become such a major issue in American society?

### 2.4 The Palmer Raids

- In 1919, there was a series of bombings by extreme anarchist groups.
- In one famous attack, the home of Mitchell Palmer, the Attorney-General (Head of the US Department of Justice), was bombed.
- The press stirred up public feeling and insisted that the attack was further evidence of a widespread communist takeover plot.
- The Palmer Raids were organised by the Attorney-General, Mitchell Palmer.
- The police attacked socialist parades on May Day 1920 and raided the offices of socialist organisations.
- Many innocent people were arrested because of their supposed dangerous political beliefs.
- It was a response to the Red Scare and it involved the arrest of over 6000 suspected communists in 36 cities across America.
- Trade unionists, Catholics, Jews and black people were particularly targeted.
- The 'Palmer Raids' were illegal, but there were few who protested against them.
- These people were held for several weeks without charge and several hundred Russian immigrants were sent back in a ship nicknamed the 'Soviet Ark.'



### 2.5 The Sacco & Vanzetti case

- On 5 May 1920, two Italian immigrants - Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti - were arrested and charged with carrying out a robbery at a shoe factory in Massachusetts in which two people died.
- They had radical anti-government pamphlets in the car when they were arrested and both owned guns.
- Their trial started in May 1921 and lasted 45 days. The case against them was not strong - 61 eyewitnesses identified the two men, but the defence produced 107 witnesses who said they were elsewhere at the time of the robbery.
- The case aroused mass media attention and the Judge, Webster Thayer, seemed determined to find the two men guilty.
- On 14 July, 1921, the jury delivered a guilty verdict and they were sentenced to death.
- Sacco and Vanzetti took their case to appeal in several higher courts but all attempts failed.
- Although a man named Celestino Madeiros later admitted that he had committed the crime, Sacco and Vanzetti lost their appeal. Their last appeal in 1927 failed and they were executed by the electric chair in August 1927.

The treatment of these two anarchist immigrants highlights the hysteria of the Red Scare the attitudes and discrimination immigrants experienced.

### 2.6 The importance of the trial

- The trial was reported all over the world and showed the intolerance of American society. As Italian immigrants, the two men were victims of racial discrimination and were denied the rights that they were entitled to.
- It exposed the unfairness of the American legal system. The two men were convicted on flimsy evidence, although subsequent evidence suggests that Sacco may have been guilty.
- In the 1970s, the Governor of Massachusetts granted Sacco and Vanzetti a formal pardon and agreed that a mistrial had taken place.





# The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910-1929

1.1

## Jim Crow Laws

**Jim Crow Laws** introduced **segregation**, separating black and white Americans in schools, parks, hospitals, swimming pools and other public places.

Life for black Americans living in the south was very hard. They were discriminated against and found it difficult to get fair treatment. They could not vote and were denied the right to a decent education and a good job.



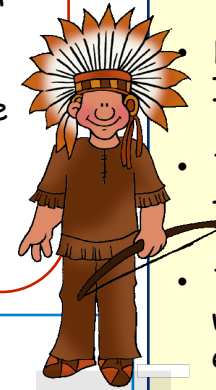
## Was America a country of religious and racial intolerance during this period?

### Key Words

**Bible Belt**- an area of southern America where Christian belief was strong.

**Fundamentalist** - a very religious person who believes the Bible word for word..

**Segregation** - keeping a group separate from the rest of society.



1.5

## The treatment of Native Americans

- Until the passing of the Indian citizenship Act of 1924, America's native people had been denied full US citizenship.
- They had been forced to live on reservations, often on poor quality land.
- During the 1920s, the white authorities tried to destroy the Indian culture and traditional way of life.
- They were encouraged to reject their own culture and integrate fully into white society.
- Their children were sent away to boarding schools where they were taught English, forced to wear western clothes and encouraged to convert to Christianity. Children found speaking their own language were beaten.
- Indian traditions were banned; for example, performing the Sun Dance, boys having long hair and the wearing of traditional clothes.
- While the granting of citizenship gave them the right to vote Native Americans continued to be treated as second-class citizens and remained victims of racial intolerance.

1.2

## The growth of the Ku Klux Klan

- The movement was revived in 1915 by William J. Simmons following the release of the film Birth of a Nation.
- Membership was only open to **WASPS**; members saw themselves as being superior to other races.
- Concerns over immigration and the **Red Scare** caused Klan membership to rise sharply. By 1925, there were 5 million members.
- The head of the Klan was the Imperial Wizard - a post held in the 1920s by Hiram Wesley Evans. Grand Dragons were in charge of each state.
- Klan members dressed in white robes and white hoods - the colour symbolising **white supremacy**. Members carried the American flag and burnt crosses during their night-time meetings.
- Klan members often killed black people by hanging without trial (lynching) - Rope Law.
- Sometimes the local police could not protect the victims and even took part in the killings.
- Klan members were rarely brought to justice; they knew that their 'friends' in the courts would not convict them.



1.1

## The Great Migration

- Many black Americans decided to migrate to cities in the north in search of a new job and a better standard of living.
- Between 1916 and 1920 almost 1 million people moved to the north in what became known as the '**Great Migration**.'
- Black Americans were treated like second-class citizens.
- They received low pay and lived in poor neighbourhoods called ghettos, such as Harlem in New York.

1.4

## The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP)

- Founded in 1910 by William Du Bois.
- By 1919 it had 90,000 members in 300 branches.
- Objected to the persecution under the Jim Crow Laws and protested against **segregation**.
- Believed in peaceful, non-violent protest using legal methods such as marches
- They protected the rights of black people using the law and law courts, helping to fund and fight legal cases.

## The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)

- Established in 1914 by Marcus Garvey.
- UNIA members were more militant.
- Garvey encouraged black people to establish their own businesses and to employ black people only.
- He encouraged black people to return to their homeland, Africa.
- "Black is beautiful" was his most famous slogan.

1.6

## The Monkey Trial



- There was a growing divide between the rural areas and the more modern city culture of America.
- The rural areas tended to be very religious, especially those in the Bible Belt states.
- Many of the people in these states were Christian fundamentalists who believed that the Bible had to be taken literally and must not be questioned.
- Traditional and modern America clashed over the 'Monkey Trial,' which was an argument over Darwin's theory of evolution.
- The Bible Belt states believed in creationism and in 1924 the state of Tennessee passed the Butler Act which banned the teaching of evolution in their schools. Five other states passed similar laws.
- A biology teacher called John Scopes from Dayton, Tennessee, ignored the ban. He was arrested and put on trial in July 1925.
- Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution and fined \$100.
- The case was important because it showed how the fundamentalists were trying to curb the freedom of thought.

1.3

## The decline of the Klan

- Membership of the Klan fell by 1928.
- The Klan declined following the conviction in 1925 of David Stephenson, the Grand Dragon of the Indiana Klan, for the rape and mutilation of a woman on a Chicago train.
- During the trial Stephenson spoke about illegal Klan activities which discredited the movement and brought it much bad publicity.

# The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910-1929

2.1

## Reasons for Prohibition

In January 1920 the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment made it illegal to make, sell or transport alcohol. The Volstead Act for breaking this law. This became known as Prohibition.



There were many reasons for Prohibition:

- Many believed that drinking lowered moral standards and traditional values.
- Groups such as The Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League believed that drinking alcohol was the root of sin and evil.
- Many thought alcohol caused an increase in crime.
- Alcohol was said to be the cause of wife beating and child abuse.
- During WWI, it was believed that drinking alcohol was unpatriotic and beer was given the nickname 'the Kaiser's brew.'

## Was the 1920s a decade of organized crime and corruption?

### Key terms

Bootlegger - a person who supplies and distributes illegal alcohol.

Moonshine - homemade illegal alcohol.

Speakeasy - an illegal drinking saloon.



2.3

## The growth of organised crime during the 1920s

- Prohibition created an enormous **public demand** for illegal alcohol
- The 1920s saw rapid growth in the number of criminal gangs. Prohibition provided them with the opportunities to engage in organised crime, providing illegal alcohol through bootlegging schemes.
- They controlled the speakeasies and diverted into other areas of crime e.g. running protection rackets, gambling and, prostitution.
- There were huge profits in alcohol and rival gangs fought each other for the control of this trade, sometimes murdering the opposition.
- Between 1926 and 1927, there were 130 gangland murders in Chicago, for which no one was ever convicted.
- Gangs used the Thompson sub-machine gun, nicknamed the 'Chicago Typewriter'.

2.4

## Al Capone

One of the most notorious gangsters of the 1920s was Al Capone.

- His empire included speakeasies, gambling houses, brothels, nightclubs and breweries.
- Capone had over 200 rivals killed between 1925 and 1929.
- The most serious incident involving gang related killing was the St Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929.
- This was an attempt to kill the rival gangland leader Bugs Moran. The authorities could not find enough evidence to prosecute Al Capone.
- The violence of the St Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929 shocked the American public and led to demands for action to stop the gangster menace.
- In 1931, Capone was found guilty of tax evasion and sent to prison.



2.5

## The end of Prohibition

- Prohibition was impossible to enforce and by 1930 there was widespread opposition to it.
- It had led to the growth in organised crime and an increase in violence.
- Many argued that making alcohol legal again would create jobs in the brewing and service industries, helping to reduce the high unemployment level.
- Taxes could be collected from alcohol, which was better than letting gangsters make money.
- The Association Against the Prohibition Amendment (AAPA) campaigned to get rid of Prohibition.
- In 1929, the Wickersham Commission confirmed that the Prohibition law did not work.
- The 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment ended prohibition in December 1933.

2.6

## Government corruption: President Harding and his 'Ohio Gang'

President Warren Harding appointed many of his Ohio friends to important posts. These became known as the 'Ohio Gang' and betrayed the public's trust in several scandals. Some of these friends used their position to 'line their pockets.'

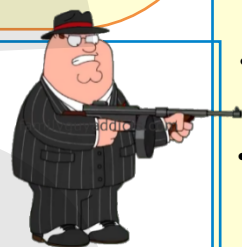
### The Teapot Dome Scandal



- The biggest scandal was Teapot Dome.
- Albert Fall leased government oil fields (Teapot Dome, Wyoming and Elk Hills, California) to wealthy friends in exchange for hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes.
- The oil fields were for the US Navy, to ensure there would sufficient reserves in times of a national emergency.
- Most of the money came from Harry Sinclair of the Mammoth Oil Company and Edward Doheny of the Pan-American Petroleum and Transport Company. Fall received about \$400,000 in cash and gifts for these men
- Details of the secret deals were leaked to the press in 1922 and a government enquiry was demanded.
- The enquiry was not completed until 1927 when Albert Fall was found guilty of conspiracy and accepting bribes; he was fined \$100,000 and sent to prison.
- Sinclair was also sent to prison, but Doheny was acquitted.
- The leases were cancelled.

2.2

## Life under Prohibition



- **Rum-runners** smuggled alcohol into the USA from Canada and Mexico.
- **Moonshiners** distilled their own alcohol at home. By 1926, about 50,000 people had died from poisoned alcohol.
- Illegal drinking bars called **speakeasies** opened and by 1930 there were over 30,000 of these in New York alone.

• There was more corruption as gangsters **bribed** police officers, judges and politicians to turn a blind eye to their illegal activities.

• Prohibition had a long lasting effect on America's brewing industry. In 1915, there were 1,345 breweries in the USA. In 1934, there were only 756

## The difficulties enforcing prohibition



- Prohibition proved almost impossible to enforce and the law was openly ignored, particularly in the cities.
- There were not enough government prohibition agents to enforce the prohibition law and many were often open to bribery.
- America had more than 30,000 Kilometres of coastline and land borders to guard. It was difficult to stop the smuggling of illegal alcohol into the US.

# The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910-1929



## What were the causes of the economic boom in the 1920s?

### Key terms

Mass-production - Manufacture of goods on a large scale.

Tariff - A tax on foreign goods coming into a country.

Laissez-Faire - Policy of non-interference in the running of the economy.

### Henry Ford and the Model T

- Henry Ford used new methods of production - the assembly line.
- The time to assemble Ford's Model T was reduced from 13 hours to 1 hour 33 minutes.
- Mass production methods caused the cost of the Model T to fall (1914-\$850; 1926 - \$295).
- Ford doubled wages to \$5 a day by 1914.
- His factory in Detroit operated 24 hours a day, using a 3 x 8 hour shift system and employing 80,000 people.
- The Model T was nicknamed 'Tin Lizzie' and was the world's first mass-produced car using standardised parts and one colour - black.
- Ford used modern advertising techniques to sell his cars, and also introduced hire purchase.
- By 1925 half the world's cars were Model T's.



### Impact if the car industry

- Mass production of cars stimulated growth in other industries such as steel, rubber, leather and petrol.
- The increase in the number of cars stimulated road construction, which led to the building of gas stations, motels and restaurants.
- It encouraged the development of suburbs.
- It transformed buying habits and hire purchase became the acceptable way of buying costly items.
- Car ownership benefitted rural areas, making farmers less isolated and more mobile.

### World War I

America was able to supply Europe with food, raw materials and munitions. War stimulated technological advances such as mechanisation and the production of new materials like Bakelite.

#### Cheap labour force

Immigrants provided America with a plentiful supply of cheap unskilled labour.

#### Natural resources

America had plentiful supplies of raw materials such as oil and coal.

#### New technology

The USA led the world in changes in technology. New manufacturing techniques like **mass-production** were used. Plastics such as Bakelite were developed and used in household products. New building materials such as steel girders for skyscrapers were developed.

#### Spread of electricity

By 1927, 63% of Americans lived in electrically lit homes. By 1929 most US cities had electricity. The electrification of America enabled the development of and spread of a range of household domestic goods.

### The policies of the Republican Presidents

During the 1920s, America was governed by three Republican Presidents.

#### Back to normalcy'

President Harding promised a 'return to normality.' He wanted to reduce and limit government interference in the economy. He also wanted to reduce the tax burden on the rich.

He reduced taxes to give businesses more money to grow and ordinary Americans more money to spend.

#### Laissez-faire

President Coolidge believed that the government should have only limited involvement in the day-to-day running of the economy.

#### Rugged individualism

This was the belief that people achieved success through their own hard work.

#### Protectionism

- Tariffs (taxes) were imposed on imported goods to limit foreign imports.
- Tariffs made European goods more expensive and encouraged Americans to buy American goods.
- The Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act (1922) raised import duties to their highest ever levels.

### 1.2

#### Availability of credit

Wages increased. Between 1923 and 1929, giving people more buying power. There was a greater range of household goods for sale also and credit and hire purchase were easily available. **Advertising**, encouraged people to buy these new goods.

#### Confidence

Many Americans had confidence in the economy and were prepared to buy goods and invest in companies and take out loans.

#### Growth of stock market

The values of stocks and shares rose steadily between 1923 and 1929. The amount of buying and selling of shares also grew and even ordinary working people were getting involved. The USA began to **speculate**. People became over-confident buying shares, believing that prices would continue to rise. Many bought 'on the margin.'

#### Consumerism

The growth of credit made it easier for people to buy goods even when they did not have enough cash to pay for them immediately. People used **hire purchase** and paid for goods in instalments.

### 1.6

#### Key features of the new consumer society

##### Advertising

- More and more firms were using advertising campaigns to increase sales and profits.
- Sophisticated advertising techniques developed such as catchphrases and targeting audiences e.g. women for household appliances.
- The growing popularity of catalogues led to a growth in 'mail order' sales.
- The availability of credit meant that people could 'buy now, pay later' using hire purchase.

##### Household appliances and electrical goods

- By 1927, two-thirds of US homes had electricity which stimulated the demand for electrical goods.
- The market was flooded with a new range of household electrical appliances such as vacuum cleaners and refrigerators.

##### New types of consumer stores

- The development of department stores which sold a range of consumer goods.
- The first supermarket - the Piggly Wiggly, opened in 1916 in Memphis, Tennessee.
- Chain stores began to appear, such as F.W. Woolworths and J.C. Penney.



# The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910-1929

**2.1** Not all Americans experienced the economic boom of the 1920s and over 60 per cent of the population lived close to or below the poverty line.

## Black Americans

- They experienced hardship because of segregation in the southern states.
- Many were labourers or sharecroppers who worked long hours and lived in slum conditions.
- 750,000 black farmers lost their jobs during the 1920s.

## Farmers

- A decline in European markets after 1918 led to a fall in food prices.
- Over-production due to increased mechanisation meant farmers increasingly struggled to find people to buy their produce.
- Many were forced to borrow money and struggled to keep up with their mortgage payments.
- In 1924, more than 600,000 farmers went bankrupt.
- Total farm income fell from \$32 billion in 1919 to \$13 billion in 1928.

## Immigrants

- Immigrants were viewed as a source of cheap labour.
- They received low wages.
- They experienced prejudice and discrimination.

## Older traditional industries

- The coal industry faced competition from oil, gas and electricity; many mines were forced to close.
- The railroad industry faced increasing competition from the development of a national road network and the growth in car ownership.
- The textile industry faced competition from new man-made fibres such as rayon; the change in women's fashions, e.g. shorter dresses reduced the amount of cloth needed. Many textile mills were forced to close.



## What factors led to the end of prosperity in 1929?



## **2.4** Events of the Wall Street Crash

- From 1921 onwards, the stock market did extremely well because American business was so successful. More and more Americans bought shares on the stock market and prices kept rising.
- The price of shares rose out of all proportion to their real value.
- In 1928 however, shares did not rise as much as in previous years. This was because many companies were not selling as many goods, so their profits fell.
- In the Autumn of 1929, several big investors started to sell large numbers of shares. They were worried about the weaknesses in the economy and the high share prices.
- Small investors panicked and rushed to sell their shares. This caused share prices to fall dramatically.
- This led to a complete collapse of prices and thousands of investors lost millions of dollars.



## **2.3** Over-production

- Over-production in industry meant the market became saturated with unsold consumer goods; factories were forced to cut prices and wages, and eventually lay off workers.
- Over-production in agriculture due to increased mechanisation and lower sales to Europe caused a fall in prices, forcing many farmers out of business.

## Falling demand for consumer goods

- The uneven distribution of wealth meant that those who could afford the new consumer goods had already bought them.
- Close to 60 % of Americans could not afford them.
- Foreign governments introduced tariffs on American goods, making it more difficult to sell these goods abroad.

## Availability of easy credit

- The availability of easy credit meant that many bought 'on the margin.'
- People borrowed money to buy shares, believing they would continue to rise in value, then they would sell them at a profit and repay the loan.

## **2.5**

**Saturday 19 October** - heavy trading as share prices began falling. 3.5 million shares traded.

**Monday 21 October** - 6 million shares traded. Prices continued to fall.

**Black Thursday 24 October** - 13 million shares traded in one day. Sharp fall in share prices.

**Black Tuesday 29 October** - Worst day ever on the stock market. 16 million shares traded.

**Monday 28 October** - Panic returns. Dramatic fall in share prices.

**Friday 25 October** - bankers pump money into stock market. Share prices steadied.

**This became known as the Wall Street Crash - the day the stock market crashed.**

## **2.2** Over speculation on the stock market

- Share prices had risen to unrealistic levels.
- Investing in stocks and shares had become a popular pastime.
- The number of shareholders had risen from 4 million in 1920 to 20 million in 1929.
- In 1925 the stock market value of shares stood at \$27 billion; by October 1929 it had reached \$87 billion.
- The lack of regulation by the government encouraged more and more speculation.



## **2.6** The immediate effects of the Wall Street Crash

- The US stock market collapsed.
- Many stockbrokers were unable to repay their debts to the banks - many banks went bust. Thousands of people who had saved in banks went bankrupt.
- Workers were laid off and unemployment rose sharply. By the end of 1929, there were about 2.5 million unemployed.
- Many people were evicted from their homes and lived on the streets.
- America entered the period of the Great Depression.

# The USA: A nation of contrasts, 1910-1929

## 1.2 Radio:

Having radios meant that people were in touch with the world. They hear about new products and events –this was crucial to the success of sports and cinema, as well as many consumer goods



## CULTURE and SOCIETY.

## 1.3 Jazz was significant because:



**It showed that young Americans were breaking with tradition, engaging in risky, sexy new dancing.**

**-White people were enjoying black music for the first time. Black musicians like Louis Armstrong became famous.**

**-Became famous because people heard it on the radio.**

**BUT**

**Not everyone approved.**

**- Older, white religious people didn't like dances like the 'Black Bottom'.**

**-Poorer people couldn't afford to get involved in the scene.**

**- Although there were black musicians in the jazz clubs, black customers were still not allowed in.**

## 1.1 In a nutshell:

Many Americans were getting richer in the 1920s and enjoying life more. They had more money, but also more free time because of consumer goods in the home (vacuums etc.). Cars meant that they could get places previously inaccessible. They used this new money and freedom to engage in new leisure pursuits like going to sporting events or to the cinema.

The big 'but' here is that not all Americans were part of the 'Roaring Twenties', poor people, black people, native Americans and immigrants were excluded by poverty and discrimination. The older, religious people tended to oppose changes to culture and society.

## 1.5 WOMEN.

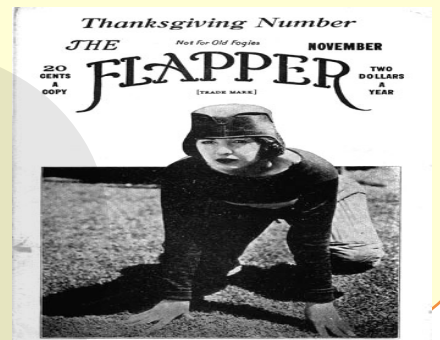
**Women:**

**Worked in WW1 (factories etc.)**

**Got the vote after the war. Some continued working.**

**Freedom: more revealing fashions (flappers); going out without chaperones; driving; smoking; new consumer goods (vacuums, freezers etc.) gave them more time.**

**BUT – this was limited to white, urban middle class women.**



## 1.6 Cinema:

One of the places people spent their new wealth.

People aspired to be like the film stars – rich and glamorous – Gloria Swanson, Rudolf Valentino. They looked up to people like Chaplin as the American Dream.

Cinema was the main form of entertainment. People went several times a week

In 1927 talkies were introduced. People went even more

## 1.4 The Car:

Henry Ford - first production line: cars could be made cheaply and quickly. Everyone wanted one. This created jobs in the car industry as well as related industries like road building and oil.

Made communication and travel easier- Americans could now go to dance hall, cinemas, stadiums etc.

