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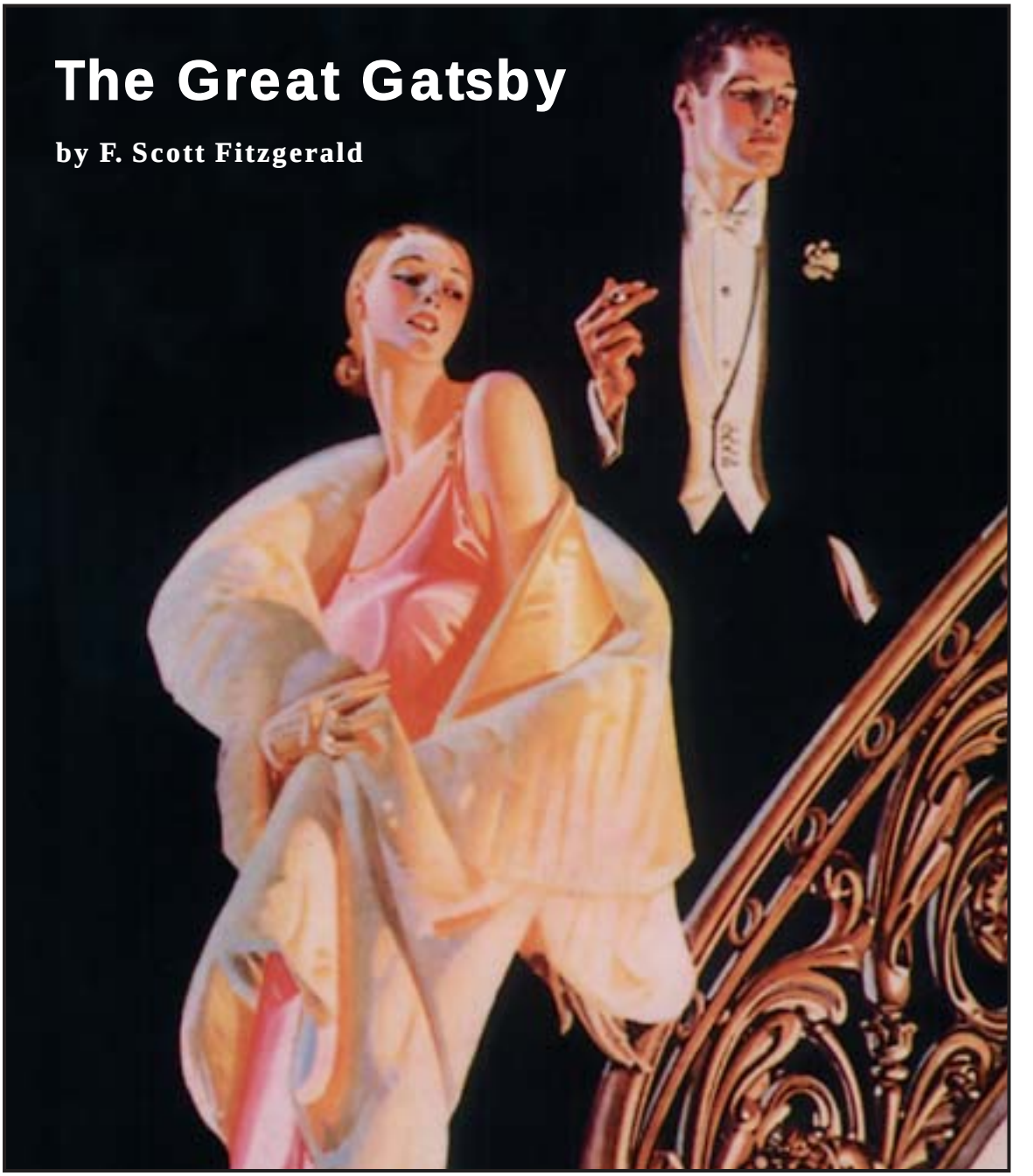

Perfection Learning

LATITUDES®

Resources to Integrate Language Arts & Social Studies

The Great Gatsby

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Reproducibles

and Teacher Guide

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Acknowledgments

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INTRODUCTION

TEACHER INFORMATION

Welcome to *Latitudes*

Latitudes is designed for teachers who would like to broaden the scope of their literature or history study. By providing fascinating primary source documents and background information, the ***Latitudes*** collection of reproducibles helps your students link a fiction or nonfiction book with its historical framework.

The series broadens students' understanding in other ways too. Each packet offers insights into the book as a piece of literature, including its creation, critical reception, and links to similar literature.

The ***Latitudes*** selections help readers draw on and seek out knowledge from a unique range of sources and perspectives. These sources encourage students to make personal connections to history and literature, integrating information with their own knowledge and background. This learning experience will take students far beyond the boundaries of a single text into the rich latitudes of literature and social studies.

Purposes of This Packet

The material in this ***Latitudes*** packet for *The Great Gatsby* has been carefully chosen for four main purposes.

1. to help students connect contemporary and historical events
2. to encourage students to pose questions about the 1920s and its effects upon the individual and society
3. to provide resources that help students evaluate what's "real" in *The Great Gatsby*
4. to help students use the skills and content of both social studies and language arts to search for meaning in the novel

Contents of This Packet

The reproducibles in this packet have been organized into five sections.

- About the Novel
- The Roaring Twenties
- Fitzgerald and the Twenties
- Comparative Works
- Suggested Activities

About the Novel

The resources here introduce students to contextual dimensions of the novel. Selections include

- a plot synopsis
- biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald
- critics' comments about *The Great Gatsby*
- key excerpts from *The Great Gatsby*
- a glossary of historical and technical terms from the novel
- a timeline of the 1920s
- an economic map of the United States

The Roaring Twenties

These reproducibles familiarize students with the historical, economic, and social dimensions of the novel. This section includes

- selections on Prohibition, gangsters, and the economy
- newspaper articles about flappers, bobbed hair, and dance contests
- voices of the Harlem Renaissance and viewpoints on jazz
- selections on movies, the automobile, advertising, and radio

Fitzgerald and the Twenties

In this section, selections give students a personal dimension to their study. The voices of F. Scott Fitzgerald, his wife Zelda, and friends are presented in

- letters
- literary portraits

Comparative Works

In this section, selections give students a literary dimension to their study. The reproducibles offer

- theme-related poems and songs
- a suggested reading and viewing list

Suggested Activities

Each reproducible in the packet is supported with suggestions for student-centered and open-ended student activities. You can choose from activities that develop reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening skills. Projects are suitable for independent, collaborative, or group study.

Use of the Material

The pieces in ***Latitudes*** can be incorporated into your curriculum in any order you wish. We encourage you to select those resources that are most meaningful and relevant to your students.

Story Synopsis

The Great Gatsby details life among the very rich during the 1920s—America's Jazz Age.

The story is told by Nick Carraway, a member of a wealthy midwestern family. He moves to New York and rents a home in the Long Island colony of West Egg. Soon after arriving, he visits his cousin Daisy Buchanan and her husband, Tom, in the more fashionable East Egg. Nick senses tension between Daisy and Tom. And Miss Jordan Baker, another guest at the Buchanans', tells Nick privately that Tom is having an affair with another woman.

Depressed by this, Nick returns home. On the way, Nick sees a man he takes to be Jay Gatsby, owner of the mansion next to his own home. Gatsby is reaching out his arms to the green light on the Buchanans' dock across the bay.

In the following weeks, Nick attends two parties. The first is held at the New York apartment shared by Tom and his mistress. She is Myrtle Wilson, wife of garage owner George Wilson. At the party, Nick, Tom, Myrtle, and several of Myrtle's friends spend the afternoon getting drunk. Tom and Myrtle have a fight, and Tom breaks Myrtle's nose. Nick escapes in the confusion and goes home.

Later Nick is a guest at a large, lavish party at Gatsby's home. Hundreds of people are there, including famous actresses, directors, musicians, and athletes. But no one seems to know much about their host. Nick hears several guests speculate about Gatsby's background and occupation. Is he a former German spy? Or an Oxford-educated bootlegger? No one knows for sure. Nick meets Gatsby, who appears to be a quiet and pleasant man.

Nick learns from Jordan Baker that Gatsby has been in love with Daisy for years. The two met during the war and planned to wed on Gatsby's return from duty. But Tom, with his enormous wealth and aggressive personality, convinced Daisy to marry him instead. From the start, Tom proved unfaithful.

Upon his return from service in Europe, Gatsby set about winning his dream—Daisy. For this reason alone, he amassed large amounts of money, bought the mansion in West Egg—across the bay from Daisy's house—and held large, extravagant parties. He wanted to impress Daisy with his success and wealth.

But Gatsby needs a way to meet Daisy again. So he asks Nick to invite his cousin to tea. Nick consents, not telling Daisy that Gatsby will be there.

Gatsby waits nervously for Daisy at Nick's house. The meeting between Daisy and Gatsby is tense at first. But gradually the two

continued

lovers resume their old relationship. Gatsby invites Daisy and Nick next door to his mansion, and Nick leaves them there together.

Later, Gatsby tells Nick of his true past. He is really James Gatz, of a poor North Dakota family, and has always dreamed of success. Dan Cody, a millionaire prospector, hired him as a personal assistant. Soon after, Cody died and left Gatz $25,000. The young Gatz never received the money. But he had learned the ways of the world, including how to get rich quickly. He changed his name to Jay Gatsby and began to make his way in the world.

Later Gatsby, Nick, and Jordan visit the Buchanans. Tom, sensing a bond between Daisy and Gatsby, is enraged. Daisy suggests a drive into the city, and all three couples go in two cars. Tom, driving Gatsby's flashy yellow car, stops at Wilson's garage for gas. There he finds George Wilson moving because George has found out that his wife has been unfaithful—though he doesn't know who the man is. George plans to take Myrtle far away.

Nick, Jordan, Gatsby, and the Buchanans meet at a New York hotel. There Tom accuses Daisy of having an affair with Gatsby, and he reveals the source of Gatsby's wealth—bootlegging. Though she is dismayed by this news, Daisy says she loves Gatsby and never loved Tom. Yet she cannot stand up to Tom's forcefulness. Finally, Tom, who is sure that he has won Daisy back, insists that Daisy accompany Gatsby home in his yellow car.

The others follow in Tom's coupé and sight a crowd on the road. Myrtle has been killed while trying to flag down the yellow car that she had seen Tom driving before. But the car hit her and didn't stop. Wilson is stunned by grief, especially since he believes Myrtle was trying to contact her lover.

Later, Nick learns that Daisy was actually driving, though Gatsby means to take the blame for the accident. Nick advises Gatsby to leave town for his own safety, but Gatsby still hopelessly dreams of winning Daisy. Wilson, who is crazed with grief, believes Gatsby is both his wife's lover and murderer. He walks to the Gatsby mansion, kills Gatsby, and then takes his own life.

Nick arranges Gatsby's funeral. Despite the crowds that flocked to Gatsby's parties, only three people attend the service. A surprise visitor is Gatsby's father, who speaks of his awe of his son's "success."

Disgusted by the cold, shallow people he has met, Nick plans to leave the East. He stops seeing Jordan, sensing a lack of honesty in her. Months later he meets Tom, who admits sending Wilson after Gatsby. Never having learned of Daisy's part in the accident, Tom feels his conduct was justified. Nick realizes that people like Tom and Daisy never take responsibility for their actions. As consolation, Nick holds on to the memory of Gatsby's idealism—his willingness to follow his dreams no matter what the cost.

About the Author

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in Saint Paul, Minnesota, in 1896 to parents whose backgrounds shaped his outlook on life. His father, from a socially prominent family, was a business failure. His mother, on the other hand, inherited wealth, but she had no social standing. Thus the family lived on the fringes of high society and wealth. Fitzgerald later said that they lived in a "house below average on a street above the average." This sense of standing outside looking in at the privileged class would shape much of Fitzgerald's life as well as his fiction.

Early in his life, Fitzgerald knew he wanted to be a writer. "I wrote all through class in school," he said later. "In the back of my geography and first year Latin. . . on the margins of themes, declensions and mathematics problems." While at St. Paul Academy, he published a short story in the school magazine, and he always kept a journal. Fitzgerald also tried his hand at drama. While a student at a boarding school in New Jersey, he wrote several plays that were performed on stage. He even played the lead—a sophisticated gentleman burglar—in one of his productions.

When Fitzgerald reached college age, he applied to several schools in the East. His parents were delighted when he decided to attend Princeton University. But he realized later that attending Princeton was a mistake for him. "It took my mind off writing," he wrote. "I decided to play football, to smoke. . . to do all sorts of irrelevant things that had nothing to do with the proper mixture of description and dialogue in the short story."

In 1917, Fitzgerald's school career at Princeton ended when he enlisted in the army. The United States had just entered World War I. Fitzgerald saw military service as an adventure, as did many young men of the period. At about the same time, he asked Zelda Sayre—the daughter of a wealthy Alabama family—to marry him. Both endeavors proved to be failures. Fitzgerald never saw active military duty. Indeed, he never left the States. As for Zelda, she cut off their engagement because Fitzgerald wasn't financially successful.

Zelda's was not the only rejection Fitzgerald was to experience at this time. Following his discharge from the army, he tried to make a living as a writer. "I became an advertising man at ninety dollars a month, writing the slogans that while away the weary hours in rural trolley cars. After hours I wrote stories. . . . No one bought them, no one sent personal letters. I had one-hundred-and-twenty-two rejection slips pinned in a frieze about my room."

Finally, his luck changed. In March 1920, Fitzgerald published his first novel—*This Side of Paradise*. Fitzgerald—who was only twenty-four at the time—became an overnight success.

With this success, Fitzgerald was able to "purchase" his romantic dream—Zelda agreed to marry him. "I married the heroine of my stories," he said in an interview later. "I would not be interested in any other sort of woman."

The couple began to live a wild, flamboyant life—what Fitzgerald called "the greatest, gaudiest spree in history." However, the couple's extravagant spending put them in serious debt. Fitzgerald wrote and sold short stories. But the money problems continued. Eventually, the Fitzgeralds decided to travel to Europe.

Paris in the 1920s was a haven for American writers and artists. Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Fitzgerald, and others formed a

continued

colony in Paris. "The best of America drifts to Paris," Fitzgerald explained. "The American in Paris is the best American. It is more fun for an intelligent person to live in an intelligent country. France has the only two things toward which we drift as we grow older—intelligence and good manners."

It was in Paris that Fitzgerald finished his second novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925). "My book is wonderful," he wrote to his friend Edmund Wilson about *Gatsby*. But the reading public of the time felt otherwise. *Gatsby* received mixed reviews and didn't sell well.

In the meantime, Fitzgerald and Zelda began to have serious problems with their marriage. Zelda was diagnosed as schizophrenic and spent a year in a private mental hospital. Fitzgerald himself began drinking heavily. He continued to have financial problems as well.

In 1934, Fitzgerald published *Tender Is the Night*—his last complete novel. Like *Gatsby*, it received very little attention. That same year, Zelda suffered her final breakdown. She would spend the rest of her life in various sanitariums.

Suffering illness and alcoholism, Fitzgerald worked in Hollywood to pay off his debt. In 1940, he had a serious heart attack and died at age forty-four. He left an unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*.

In his writing, Fitzgerald deliberately tried to capture the spirit of the 1920s. "My idea is always to reach my generation," he wrote. "The wise writer, I think, writes for the youth of his own generation, the critic of the next, and the schoolmasters of ever afterward."

Today Fitzgerald is most remembered for his portraits of the young people who made up the Jazz Age. "I was the man," he used to joke, "who made America Younger-Generation-conscious."

In an autobiographical sketch that he wrote when he was twenty-five, Fitzgerald advised his readers, "If you believe in anything very strongly—including yourself—and if you go after that thing alone, you end up in jail, in heaven, in the headlines, or in the largest house in the block, according to what you started after."

Fitzgerald set out to write about his own generation—the "lost generation" as some called it. In the process, he described America during one of its most extravagant decades—the Roaring Twenties.

Critics' Comments

When books are published, critics read and review them. The following statements are comments that have been made by the critics of ***The Great Gatsby.***

What has never been alive cannot very well go on living; so this is a book of the season only, but so peculiarly of the season, that it is in its own small way unique.

—Isabel Paterson
New York Tribune

A little slack, a little soft, more than a little artificial, *The Great Gatsby* falls into the class of negligible novels.

—*The Springfield Republican*

The Great Gatsby is not a good book, but it is superior to his others with the exception of the first. The conversation throughout is a rather quaint collection of epigrams. But at least, he is over the awkward age, and later books may prove that he can still be effective—outside of the field of sophisticated juveniles.

—*The Independent*

In subject-matter the book is not essentially different from his other stories. The end is uncurbed melodrama. The virtues of this book are its painstaking, often exquisite, workmanship and its humor.

—*The Outlook*

This is a fine yarn, exhilaratingly spun.

—Carl Van Vechten
The Nation

Reading *The Great Gatsby*, one has an impression that the author entertained in his urbane and ever more polished imagination ideas for a melodrama, a detective story, and a fantastic satire, with his usual jazz-age extravaganza adding its voice to the mental conversation. And the result is not confusion, but a graceful, finished tale, as if each of the four had contributed a keen, well-timed remark to a good-mannered and highly efficient committee meeting.

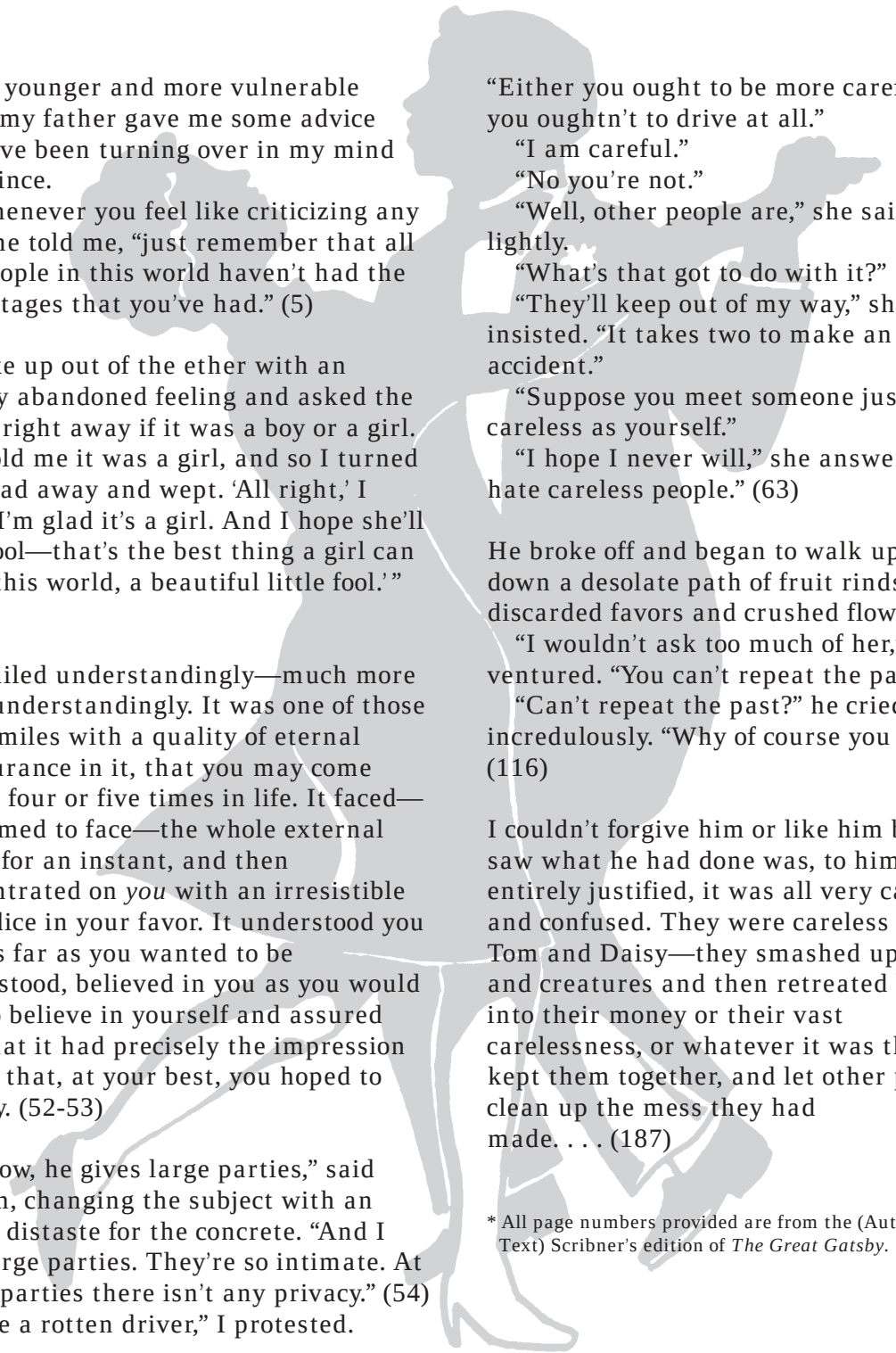
—E. K.
Literary Digest International Book Review

The Great Gatsby is a strange combination of satire, burlesque, fantasy, and melodrama. It is Fitzgerald writing with his old gusto, with driving imagination, and with a sense of the futility of life and of the constant presence of bootleggers.

—J. F.
Bookman

Voices from the Novel

The following quotes are from ***The Great Gatsby.****



In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had." (5)

"I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.'" (21)

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on *you* with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. (52-53)

"Anyhow, he gives large parties," said Jordan, changing the subject with an urban distaste for the concrete. "And I like large parties. They're so intimate. At small parties there isn't any privacy." (54)
"You're a rotten driver," I protested. "Either you ought to be more careful, or you oughtn't to drive at all."

"I am careful."

"No you're not."

"Well, other people are," she said lightly.

"What's that got to do with it?"

"They'll keep out of my way," she insisted. "It takes two to make an accident."

"Suppose you meet someone just as careless as yourself."

"I hope I never will," she answered. "I hate careless people." (63)

He broke off and began to walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favors and crushed flowers.

"I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured. "You can't repeat the past."

"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!" (116)

I couldn't forgive him or like him but I saw what he had done was, to him, entirely justified, it was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made. . . . (187)

* All page numbers provided are from the (Authorized Text) Scribner's edition of *The Great Gatsby.*

GLOSSARY

Understanding the meanings of the following terms will help you have a better understanding of ***The Great Gatsby.***

Armistice: the peace which ended World War I on November 11, 1918.

Astoria: well-known hotel in New York City.

bond business: financial business, as in the stock trade.

bootlegger: person who illegally brewed and/or sold alcohol during the years of Prohibition.

Charleston: dance form that became popular during the 1920s.

coupé: two-door automobile shorter than a sedan.

El Greco: Spanish painter from the late 1500s.

foxtrot: dance form that became popular during the 1920s.

Long Island Sound: an arm of the Atlantic between Connecticut and Long Island.

mint julep: alcoholic drink often associated with southern leisure class.

Monte Carlo: town in the principality of Monaco, renowned for its casinos.

Montenegro: republic in southern Yugoslavia that was an independent kingdom until World War I.

Oxford: England's most prestigious university.

polo: game played by teams of players on horseback using long-handled mallets to drive a wooden ball.

Prohibition: period in U.S. history (1919-1933) during which the production and sale of alcoholic beverages was illegal.

J. D. Rockefeller: (1839-1937) oil magnate and philanthropist.

speakeasy: a nightclub or tavern where alcoholic beverages were illegally sold.

Trimalchio: vulgar millionaire created by Roman poet Petronius in his work *Satyricon*. Fitzgerald originally intended *The Great Gatsby* to be titled "Trimalchio in West Egg."

A Time in HISTORY

This timeline will help you place ***The Great Gatsby*** *in its historical period.*

1920

United States enters World War I (April 6, 1917)

World War I ends (November 11, 1918)

18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits sale, manufacture, and transportation of all alcoholic beverages (January 29, 1919)

19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives American women the right to vote (August 26, 1920)

"Shoeless" Joe Jackson and seven other Chicago White Sox players indicted for conspiring with gamblers to throw the 1919 World Series (September 28, 1920)

First radio broadcast station, KDKA, opens in Pittsburgh (November 2, 1920)

First Miss America pageant held in Atlantic City, New Jersey (September 7, 1921)

A banner year in literature: T. S. Eliot publishes *The Waste Land;* Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room;* F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Beautiful and the Damned* and *Tales of the Jazz Age;* and James Joyce, *Ulysses.* The U.S. Post Office in New York City burns 500 copies of *Ulysses*, citing obscenity (1922)

Fashion designer Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel returns from a cruise with a suntan. Her bronzed look begins sunbathing fashion (1923)

1925

First book of crossword puzzles published; begins new mania (April 1924)

Alain Locke's *The New Negro* published. This anthology of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction proclaimed the Harlem Renaissance (1925)

Flapper dress introduced; it features a drop waist or no waist at all (1925)

John Scopes convicted for teaching evolution in "trial of the century" (July 21, 1925)

40,000 members of Ku Klux Klan march on Washington (August 8, 1925)

Ford Motor Company begins paying $6 a day and establishes the 40-hour workweek (1926)

Charles Lindbergh makes first solo flight across Atlantic (May 21, 1927)

First talking movie, *The Jazz Singer* starring Al Jolson, opens (October 6, 1927)

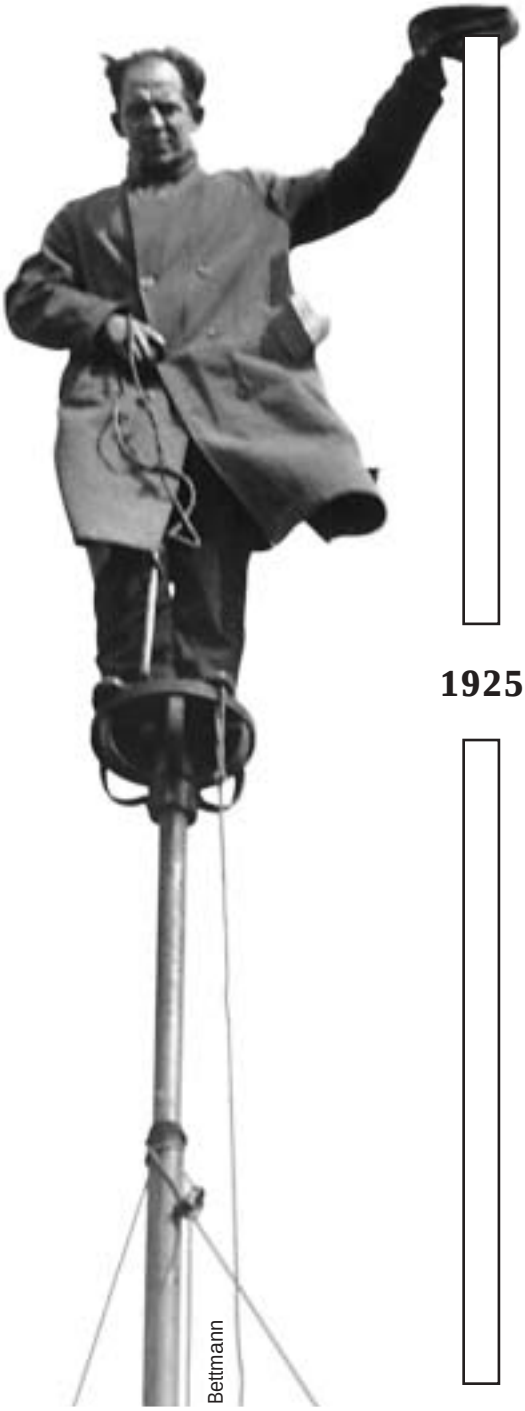
St. Valentine's Day Massacre (February 14, 1929)

First Academy Awards ceremony held; the movie *Wings* wins best picture (May 16, 1929)

Herbert Hoover nominated for president, saying, "We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land." (March 29,1929)

Stock market crashes ("Black Tuesday," October 29, 1929)

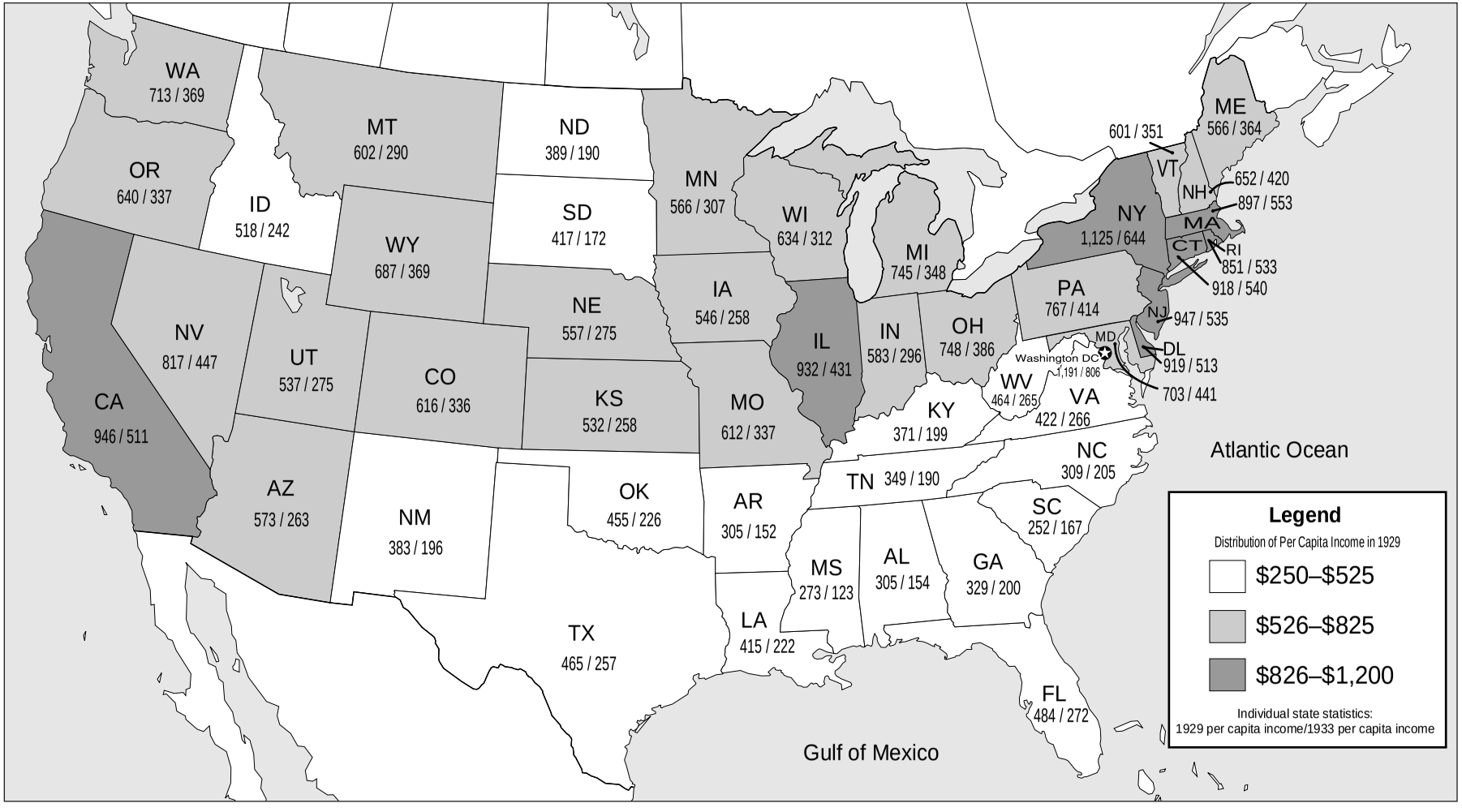
1930



Shipwreck Kelly, a famous flagpole sitter of the 1920s

The Geographical Picture

Per Capita[1] Income by State in 1929 and 1933

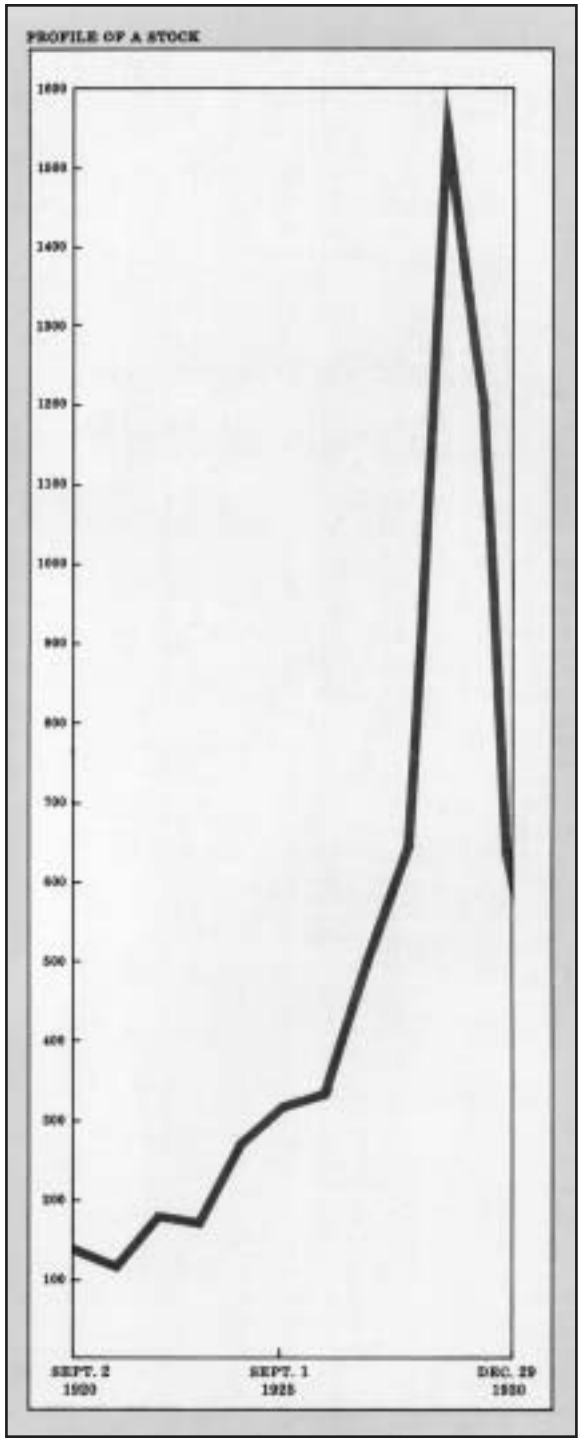


[1] *per capita:* per person

A DECADE of UPS AND DOWNS

The Granger Collection

This cartoon shows a capitalist hanging from a rope in the shape of 1929—the year the stock market crashed. Cartoon by Otto Soglow.



The Granger Collection

This chart shows the value of a share of General Electric from 1920 to 1930.

VIEWPOINTS
on Prohibition

On January 16, 1919, the United States Congress passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment made liquor, beer, and wine illegal and changed the drinking habits of America for the next fourteen years.

People who supported the law were known as "drys." Others, who thought that alcohol should remain legal, were called "wets." The following quotes show some of the feelings Americans had about Prohibition.

Anti-Saloon League poster LOC

No one will defend the saloon from a religious, moral, or educational standpoint. The evolution of the race from lower to higher levels, is all wrapped up in the spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth of the people. Intoxicating liquors in no way contribute to these, but warp, tear, and destroy. Shall we tolerate that which like a blight of death plants its slimy form across the way of human progress? No! No! No!—a thousand times no!

—Rev. Grant Perkins
Third Prize Sermon
1917

The extensive disregard and violation of the Volstead Act[1] is notorious.

—John A. Ryan
Catholic World,
May 1925

The Prohibition Director of Nebraska wrote to the State Superintendent of Education. He protested because, in one of the school text-books of that state, was a picture of a distilling apparatus and information on how malt liquors and spirits are made.

—Time
June 22, 1925

Several years ago, at its annual meeting, the American Medical Association adopted the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas, We believe that the use of alcohol is detrimental to the human economy, and whereas its use in therapeutics as a tonic or stimulant or for food has no scientific value,

Resolved, That the use of alcohol as a therapeutic agent should be discouraged.

This view is amply sustained by laboratory research and by the experiences in the treatment of wounded soldiers during the war.

No informed medical man would now think of administering alcohol to combat shock or collapse, since it has been clearly shown that alcohol when introduced into the circulation, does not raise blood pressure and of itself produces the very conditions which are the fundamental causes of shock and collapse.

—Dr. John H. Kellogg
Good Health,
June-July 1926

[1] *Volstead Act:* set of laws that enforced Prohibition

continued

Drinking among the undergraduates in our schools and colleges is steadily decreasing.

—Alfred E. Stearns
Harper's Magazine,
November 1926

. . . the Anti-Saloon League, which arrogates to itself the dubious credit of having foisted this thing [Prohibition] upon a listless people, claims to be a religious organization, it has brought into government an arrogant interference of religion, contrary and abhorrent to one of the cherished ideals of American government.

—Hon. Alfred J. Talley
April 1926

You can get a drink in any community in the United States at any time—if you want it. It is physically impossible to enforce prohibition.

—John P. Dempsey
Chief Justice of Cleveland
March 18, 1926

One hundred ten millions of people do not continue to make fools of themselves for long. They are the most prosperous people under the sun, not because they have the gold, but because they have not the drink.

—David Lloyd George
Manufacturer's Record,
November 11, 1926

Whiskey, gin, wine, beer, cider and other alcoholic drinks are now being manufactured in millions of homes—some estimates being as high as 90% of homes in certain communities.

—Charles S. Wood
A Criticism of National Prohibition, 1926

Speaking of the students as a whole in Pittsburgh, I would say that conditions now are very much worse than they were before Prohibition.

—Samuel H. Church
President, Carnegie Institute, 1926

Bettman

Anti-Prohibition parade in New York City

AL CAPONE

Alphonse "Scarface" Capone was one of the 1920s' most notorious gangsters. Born in Italy in 1899, Capone grew up in New York City and moved to Chicago in his late teens. In a short time, he controlled most illegal trade in alcohol. While still in his twenties, Capone earned over $3,000,000 a year.

Capone was believed to be responsible for many gang murders. But because he had many friends in government, the police had trouble bringing him to justice. The gangster was finally arrested in 1931—not for bootlegging or murder, but for tax evasion. He was sentenced to ten years in jail and fined $57,692.29. The following statement by Capone is from his tax evasion trial.

In His Own Words

Bettmann

Capone winks at reporters during his trial.

I'm like any other man. I've been in this racket long enough to realize that a man in my game must take the breaks, the fortunes of war. Three of my friends were killed in the last three weeks in Chicago. That certainly isn't conducive to peace of mind. I haven't had any peace of mind in years. Every minute I was in danger of death. Even when we're on a peace errand we must hide from the rest of the racketeers, even to the point of concealing our identity under assumed names in hotels and elsewhere. Why when I went to Atlantic City I registered under a fictitious name.

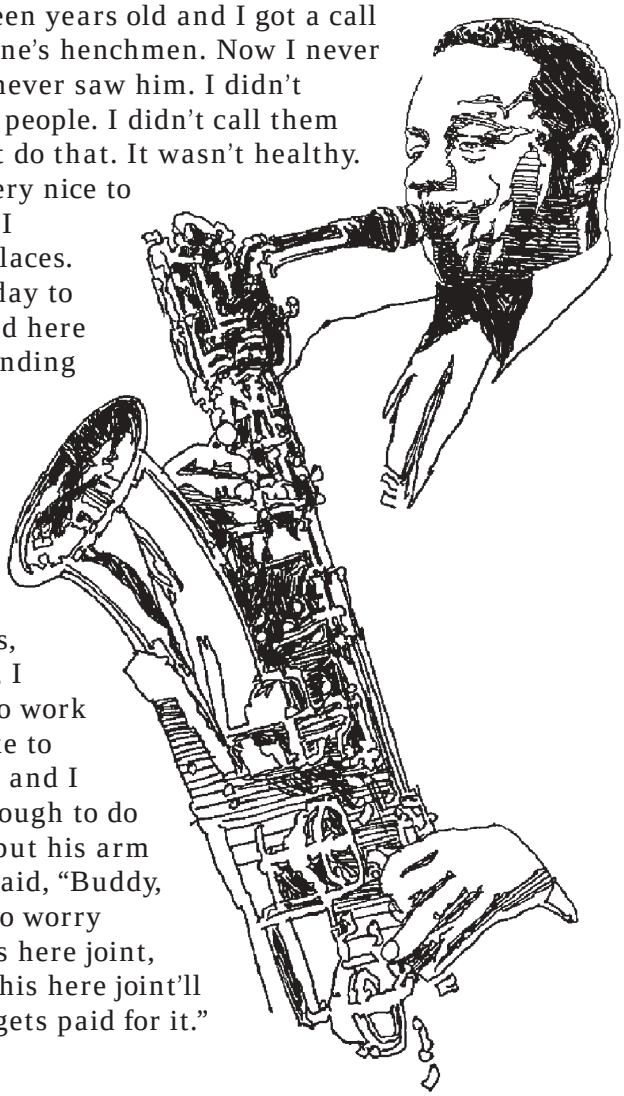
Once in the racket you are always in it, it seems. The parasites will trail you begging for money and favors and you can never get away from them no matter where you go. I have a wife and boy who is eleven—a lad I idolize—and a beautiful home at Palm Island, Florida. If I could go there and forget it all I would be the happiest man in the world. I want peace and I will live and let live. I'm tired of gang murders and gang shootings. I spent a week in Atlantic City trying to make peace among the various gang leaders of my city. I have the word of each of the men there will be no more shootings. I am satisfied that the odds are in my favor but it's a tough life to lead. You fear death every moment and, worse than death, you fear the rats of the game who would run around and tell the police if you don't constantly satisfy them with money and favors.

I was never able to leave home without my bodyguard. He has been with me constantly for two years. I have never been convicted of a crime, never, nor have I ever directed anyone else to commit a crime. I don't pose as a plaster saint, but I never killed anyone. And I am known all over the world as a millionaire gorilla.

continued

Another View

Jazz saxophone player Bud Freeman remembers working in one of the speakeasies (nightclubs) that Capone controlled. This excerpt from ***Voices of the Jazz Age*** *gives a flavor of gangster life.*



I was about nineteen years old and I got a call from one of Al Capone's henchmen. Now I never knew Al Capone; I never saw him. I didn't socialize with those people. I didn't call them by name. One didn't do that. It wasn't healthy. But they were all very nice to musicians, anyway. I played in all their places. So I went over one day to look at his place, and here were these guys standing around with collars turned up, very sinister-looking guys with black hats and guns on the other side. And I felt a little frightened of all this, and I said, "Tell me, I don't think I want to work here. You see, I'd like to finish my education and I want to live long enough to do so." Whereupon he put his arm around me and he said, "Buddy, I don't want youse to worry about nobody in this here joint, because nobody in this here joint'll hurt you unless he gets paid for it."

The St. Valentine's Day M·A·S·S·A·C·R·E

Bettmann

Grisly scene of the massacre

The following newspaper article describes the scene of the St. Valentine's Day massacre—the bloodiest gangland killing ever in Chicago. It was the final battle in a long rivalry between the gangs of Al Capone and George "Bugs" Moran. Despite a flurry of public alarm at the "frontier lawlessness" of the Chicago streets, no one was ever prosecuted for the massacre.

It's too much to tell. You go into the door marked "S-M-C Cartage company." You see a bunch of big men talking with restrained excitement in the cigarette smoke. You go through another door back of the front office. You go between two close-parked trucks in the garage.

Then you almost stumble over the head of the first man, with a clean gray felt hat still placed at the precise angle of gangster toughness.

The dull yellow light of a lamp in daytime shows dark rivulets of blood heading down to the drain that was meant for the water from washed cars. There are six of the red streams from six heads. The bodies—four of them well dressed in civilian clothes—two of them with their legs crossed as they whirled to fall.

It's too much, so you crowd on past the roadster with bullet holes in it to the big truck behind.

continued

You look at the truck. It is something to look at because the men were fixing it. It's jacked up, with one wheel off. You look and the big man called "commissioner" looks and a crowd gathers, and then it gets too much for the police dog you had failed to notice lying under the truck, tied to it by a cheap yellow rope.

It gets too much for the big brown and gray police dog and he goes crazy. He barks, he howls, he snarls, showing wicked white teeth in bright red gums.

The crowd backs away. The dog yowls once more and subsides.

Your thoughts snap with a crack back to the circle of yellow lamplight, where six things that were men are sprawled.

It's still too much. You push out into the fresh air.

You find that traffic was quiet in front of 3122 North Clark street at 10:30 this morning. A streetcar rattled down the narrow way left by parked cars. Across from the high garage, two windows of one of those old-fashioned gray-stone apartment houses were open. Two women exchanged their curiosities about it and then went back to gossip.

They jumped as a muffled roar reached them. The blue and black car sped away and turned the corner.

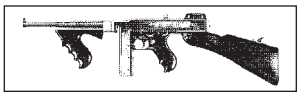
Out of nowhere the crowd came, pouring in from the rooming houses, the little stores, the automobiles, the street cars. They set up a hum. A policeman arrived—another. A police siren sounded—the clang of a patrol wagon.

The two women ran down and joined the buzzing in the street.

By this time people from the big apartment hotels on Lincoln Park West, half a block away, had heard and had come. The crowd was a cross section. Gold coast and Clark street[1] merged in the gathering.

"What is it? Who were they? What did they do? Were they in the know? Double-crossers. Them guys had the pull and pulled it too strong—"

Inside six pairs of lips failed to answer.



Gangster Movies

Ever since the 1920s, Americans have been fascinated with gangster culture. Thousands of citizens would watch the elaborate funerals of prominent gangsters. Hollywood was quick to exploit this fascination, as witnessed by this list of popular movies.

Scarface, 1932, 1983
This Day and Age directed by Cecil B. De Mille, 1933
The Petrified Forest directed by Robert E. Sherwood; with Humphrey Bogart, 1936
Mutiny in the Big House, 1939
Johnny Eager directed by Mervyn LeRoy, 1942
The Big Heat directed by Fritz Lang, 1953
On the Waterfront directed by Elia Kazan; with Marlon Brando, 1954
Baby Face Nelson directed by Don Siegel; with Mickey Rooney, 1957
The Godfather, 1972, 1974, 1990
Mean Streets, 1973
The Cotton Club, 1984
The Untouchables, 1988
Goodfellas, 1990
Miller's Crossing, 1990
Mobsters, 1991
Bugsy, 1992

[1] *Gold coast and Clark street:* "Gold coast" refers to a wealthy neighborhood; "Clark street," a less affluent street.

"Say it ain't so, Joe"

In 1919 Americans were shocked to learn that baseball was as open to greed and corruption as other aspects of the culture. Eight Chicago White Sox players were charged with accepting money from gamblers to throw the World Series to Cincinnati.

Arnold Rothstein, a wealthy New York City gambler (Meyer Wolfsheim in ***The Great Gatsby),*** *was linked to the deal. But no association was ever proven.*

Eight White Sox Players Are Indicted on Charge of Fixing 1919 World Series; Cicotte Got $10,000 and Jackson $6,000

Special to the New York Times

Chicago, Sept. 28—Seven star players of the Chicago White Sox and one former player were indicted late this afternoon, charged with complicity in a conspiracy with gamblers to "fix" the 1919 world's series. The indictments were based on evidence obtained for the Cook County Grand Jury by Charles A. Comiskey, owner of the White Sox, and after confessions of two of the players told how the world's championship was thrown to Cincinnati and how they had received money or were "double-crossed" by the gamblers.

The eight players indicted are:

EDDIE CICOTTE, star pitcher.

"SHOELESS" JOE JACKSON, left fielder and heavy hitter.

OSCAR "HAP" FELSCH, center fielder.

CHARLES "SWEDE" RISBERG, shortstop.

GEORGE "BUCK" WEAVER, third baseman.

ARNOLD GANDIL, former first baseman.

CLAUDE WILLIAMS, pitcher.

FRED McMULLIN, utility player.

The specific charge against the eight players is "conspiracy to commit an illegal act," which is punishable by five years' imprisonment or a fine up to $10,000, but this charge may be changed when the full indictments are drawn by the Grand Jury.

No sooner had the news of the indictments become public than Comiskey suspended the seven players, wrecking the team he had given years to build up and almost certainly forfeiting his chances to beat out Cleveland for the American League pennant.

Bettmann

"Shoeless" Joe Jackson. After his indictment a tearful fan called out, "Say it ain't so, Joe."

Two Parties

Library of Congress

Popular cartoonist John Held shows a party-going threesome with hip flasks.

A Diary Entry

Social and literary critic Edmund Wilson was a college classmate and friend of F. Scott Fitzgerald. The following description of a party is an excerpt from Wilson's diary.

The party was being given for a very pretty girl—a brunette in a green and gray dress and gray stockings and black shoes with round toes and light tan tongues. It was her birthday. She chewed gum the whole evening. Their dancing was wonderful—a boy threw a girl over his shoulder—a little English girl in green with an accent mainly American did the Charleston with her partner, exploding in wooden angular motions in all directions, with tremendous vigor. Said, afterwards, "I'm tired.—Are you in the show business?" She had been on the stage three years. They did squatting Russian dances and tried the Charleston on their knees. Music supplied by Throck's radio, which he had built himself (he explained that the best radio features had all been patented by different companies, so that there wasn't a single radio on the market which was as good as possible, and it was only the government or a private individual, making his

continued

own, who could have one).—"I don't believe you, but say it again!"—Big blond girl in red with thick red lips, who lolled around on the couch and in the Morris chair. . . . There was a toe dancer, but she "didn't have her shoes.". . . —One boy was a sort of grownup choirboy type with yellow curly hair and blue eyes. They all drank the wine and ate all the sandwiches, till there was nothing left but messes of tissue paper, unassailable crusts and empty glass jars.

George Babbitt Experiences a Party

The following excerpt is from the satirical novel ***Babbitt*** *by Sinclair Lewis. George Babbitt is the "perfect" modern man—standardized and sanitized. Yet his perfection leads inevitably to hypocrisy. For example, he praises Prohibition, yet drinks bootleg whisky. He is, in short, everything the younger generation loves to scoff at. Here is Babbitt's reaction to a party held in his home by his daughter Verona.*

On the night of the party he [Babbitt] was permitted to look on, when he was not helping Matilda with the Vecchia ice cream and the *petit fours*.[1] He was deeply disquieted. Eight years ago, when Verona had given a high-school party, the children had been featureless gabies. Now they were men and women of the world, very supercilious men and women; the boys condescended to Babbitt, they wore evening-clothes, and with hauteur they accepted cigarettes from silver cases. Babbitt had heard stories of the. . . "goings on" at young parties; of girls "parking" their corsets in the dressingroom, of "cuddling" and. . . a presumable increase in what was known as Immorality. To-night he believed the stories. These children seemed bold to him, and cold. The girls wore misty chiffon, coral velvet, or cloth of gold, and around their dipping bobbed hair were shining wreaths. . . . Their stockings were of lustrous silk, their slippers costly and unnatural, their lips carmined and their eyebrows penciled. They danced cheek to cheek with the boys, while Babbitt sickened with apprehension and unconscious envy.

Worst of them all was Eunice Littlefield. . . . She slid the length of the room; her tender shoulders swayed; her feet were deft as a weaver's shuttle; she laughed, and enticed Babbitt to dance with her.

Then he discovered the annex to the party.

The boys and girls disappeared occasionally, and he remembered rumors of their drinking together from hip-pocket flasks. He tiptoed round the house, and in each of the dozen cars waiting in the street he saw the points of light from cigarettes, from each of them heard high giggles. . . . When he returned to the front hall, he coaxed the boys, "Say, if any of you fellows are thirsty, there's some dandy ginger ale."

"Oh! Thanks!" they condescended.

[1] Vecchia was probably a brand of ice cream; *petit fours* are small cakes.

The FLAPPER

In the 1920s, young women who bobbed their hair, wore short skirts, and used makeup were called "flappers." The name came from the fad of wearing rubber galoshes unbuckled and flapping open. Many flappers shocked the older generation by smoking cigarettes, swearing, drinking, and kissing men they didn't necessarily intend to marry. The following two articles show the older generation's views on flappers.

The Flapper

"Flapper" is a term, as everyone knows, applied to young ladies in the crude or immature state. . . . There are always those who are contemptuous of youth, and there is no doubt that in some respects youth is bumptious[1] and offends the older generation by its enthusiasm. . . . There is much to be said of the flapper of to-day. She is better dressed than ever. For one thing, she does not wear so many clothes, neither does she pinch her waist, as in former days.

It is to be remembered that the young person of to-day is more athletic than the young person of former days. She is realizing more the importance of a sound and healthy body. . . .

There is a natural desire on the part of youth to shock the elders. This is due to the instinct of independence. And the antics of the flapper of to-day, with her cigarette smoking and other questionable habits, are equivalent to the deeds of young ladies of former days who read

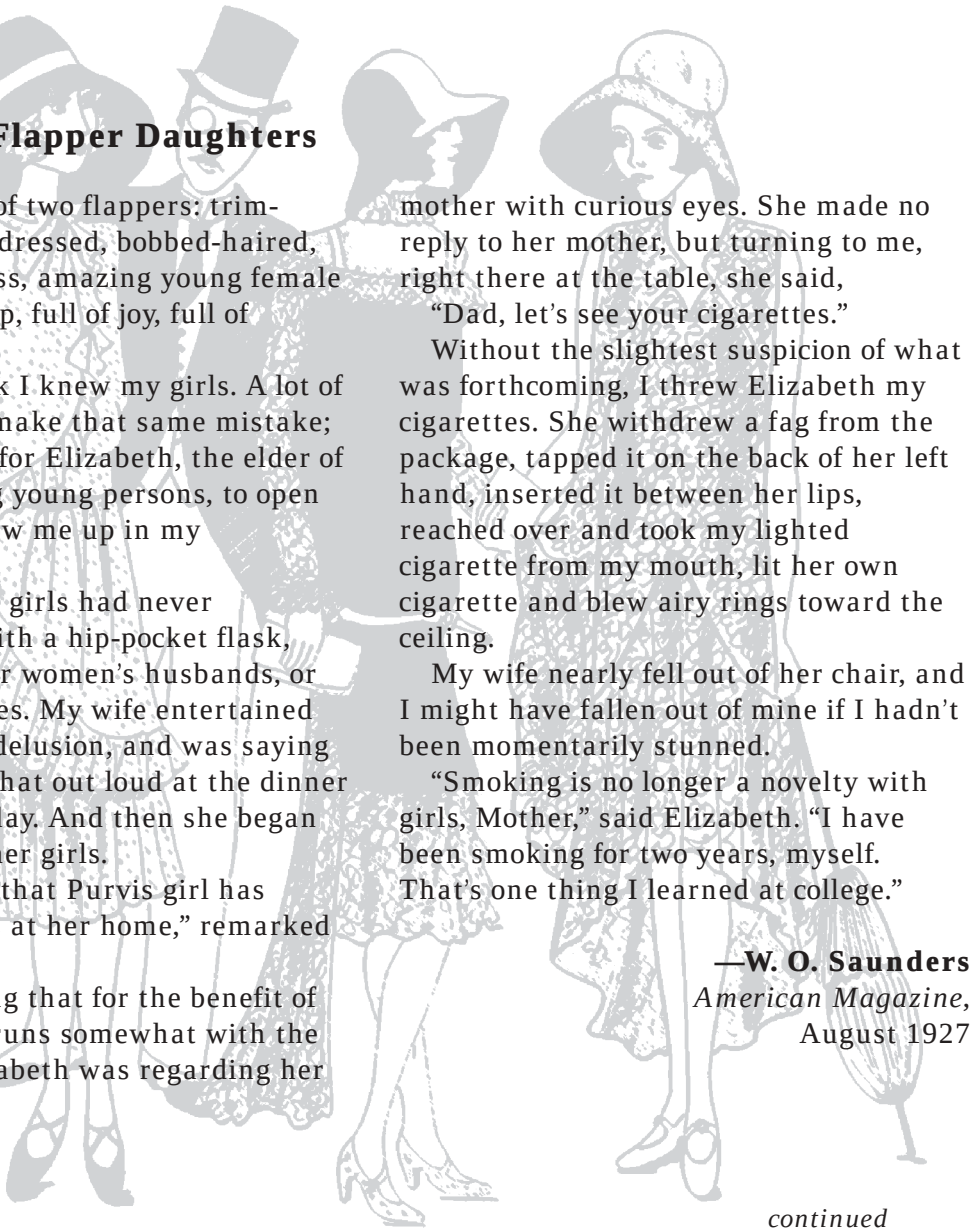
continued

[1] *bumptious:* noisy; self-assertive

novels on the sly. They are simply the outcome of youth and high spirits. . . .

We need not fear results from the over-exuberance of the flapper. Time will cure them. And the generations, in their revolutions, will produce other forms in which youth may shock age. . . . The flapper, in a sense, will therefore be eternal—the young women of the more lively type will continue, in one way or the other, to shock the older generation until they themselves grow older.

—Dr. Frank Crane
Collier's Magazine
October 11, 1924



Me and My Flapper Daughters

I am the father of two flappers: trim-legged, scantily dressed, bobbed-haired, hipless, corsetless, amazing young female things, full of pep, full of joy, full of jazz. . . .

I used to think I knew my girls. A lot of foolish parents make that same mistake; but it remained for Elizabeth, the elder of the two amazing young persons, to open my eyes and show me up in my ignorance. . . .

I was sure my girls had never experimented with a hip-pocket flask, flirted with other women's husbands, or smoked cigarettes. My wife entertained the same smug delusion, and was saying something like that out loud at the dinner table the other day. And then she began to talk about other girls.

"They tell me that Purvis girl has cigarette parties at her home," remarked my wife.

She was saying that for the benefit of Elizabeth, who runs somewhat with the Purvis girl. Elizabeth was regarding her mother with curious eyes. She made no reply to her mother, but turning to me, right there at the table, she said,

"Dad, let's see your cigarettes."

Without the slightest suspicion of what was forthcoming, I threw Elizabeth my cigarettes. She withdrew a fag from the package, tapped it on the back of her left hand, inserted it between her lips, reached over and took my lighted cigarette from my mouth, lit her own cigarette and blew airy rings toward the ceiling.

My wife nearly fell out of her chair, and I might have fallen out of mine if I hadn't been momentarily stunned.

"Smoking is no longer a novelty with girls, Mother," said Elizabeth. "I have been smoking for two years, myself. That's one thing I learned at college."

—W. O. Saunders
American Magazine,
August 1927

continued

Library of Congress

Sunbathing became popular during the 1920s.

Flapper Slang

Here is a list of terms the flapper would have known.

bathtub gin	homemade gin	**jalopy**	old car
blotto	drunk	**keen**	attractive, good
bootleg	make or sell illegal liquor	**lousy**	bad, inferior
		malarkey	lies, nonsense
bunk	nonsense!	**nitwit**	idiot
cat's meow	outstanding	**ritzy**	elegant
flick	movie	**sheik**	handsome man
gaga	crazy, silly	**smooch**	kiss/hug
high hat	to snub someone	**talkie**	movie with sound
hoof	to dance		

Bobbed Hair

To "bob" hair means to cut it very short. This style became very fashionable for women during the 1920s. Some women liked the carefree, boyish look of the bob. The following articles show some of the advice (and warnings) that women's magazines and newspaper articles were giving to women with the new look.

Bobbing Spreads to All Ages of Women

. . . There are two camps, the bobbed and the unbobbed, and a mere hair line divides them. It is not yet possible to express an opinion on which side is the stronger; returns are not in from the country at large, and only a local report can be given.

The hairdressers, barbers, or bobbers, the real executionists in this newest of revolutions, agree that about 70 per cent of the women in Greater New York have shorn their tresses. The Spring styles brought on a veritable harvest of hair. In preparation for the Easter Parade, in Manhattan alone, some 4,000 heads a day were trimmed. In Brooklyn, it is stated, the figure reached 2,000. . . .

Short hair on women, says the philosophers, means but one thing. It is a badge of emancipation, an outward expression of her freedom of thought and action. . . .

Some of the theories advanced for the bobbing epidemic are that it is economical, that it saves time, that it makes a woman look young. The first can scarcely be true, for there is the constant expense of waving, clipping and trimming. And, besides, she must have a postiche[1], a transformation, a switch, a something to cover up the nape of her neck on occasion.

There is a time-worn notion that the cutting of hair makes it grow in more heavily. But a tonsorial[2] journal has warned that if women continue to cut their hair they will become bald.

The newspapers tell of divorce suits brought because wives bobbed their hair; of suicides on the same grounds; of employers who protest; of educators who condemn; of superintendents of hospitals who storm. Yet the world has gone calmly on its way. And the long and short of it is that women will continue to do as they like.

—Virginia Pope
New York Times
May 11, 1924

continued

[1] *postiche:* wig

[2] *tonsorial:* of or related to a barber

If You Have Short Hair

How pleasant they are to look at—the proud, smoothly-coiffed, youthful, brave bobbed topnots of today, hair brushed and clipped until it outlines charmingly the line of the back of the head! So different they are from the grotesque shapes and sizes we have seen since the twentieth century ushered in the towering pompadour. Here is freedom and simplicity and a lightness of head—physically speaking, of course—that seems to have a strange connection with lightness of heart. Hats are easy to buy, headaches from hairpins and heavy coils disappear, and hair dressing takes less time—though more thought. . . .

Whatever style you select, though, it must be flawless. Your hair must have the sheen of satin, of velvet, and be sure you do not confuse the glitter that comes out of bottles with the gleam that comes from constant, intelligent care. Here are a few suggestions that will help you. . . .

. . . Wash your comb and brush every day, but wash your hair only once in every two weeks. If it needs freshening oftener than that, brush it with a good hair tonic.

Immediately after shampooing. . . rub a little Vaseline into the scalp. Vaseline is preferable to oils, because it does not become rancid.

Don't use hot curling irons if you can avoid it. They make the hair brittle and lifeless. Frizzy hair is never pretty, and is especially unbecoming when the hair is short. . . .

Remember that your neck is infinitely more noticeable now that it is not shadowed by knots and coils of hair above it. Keep the neck firm, round, smooth and white. If there is a roll of fat at the back of it, do not crop your hair. Get rid of the extra flesh first.

—Nora Mullane
Good Housekeeping
May 1926

Troubles of the Bobbed and Waved

We bobbed our hair, and we had a permanent wave, and as we looked approvingly in the glass at a well-modeled coiffure, we said to ourselves: "Well, that's that. No more bother with you!" We discovered the comfortable, becoming, and practically storm-proof little felt hats, and we liked them so well that we wore them all the year round. Now, we thought, we could be carefree and lazy: no more troublesome hair-dressing—just a trim now and then and a wave twice a year.

The awakening from this pleasant dream was gradual, but none the less brutal for that. We found ourselves looking at the clipped heads about us and discovering—much against our will—that short hair can not tell a lie. It is as honest as daylight. The multitude of sins that might be covered by puffs and curls and braids are each one plain to the casual glance. Scantiness, oiliness, harshness—whatever the trouble is, it is perfectly apparent to everyone.

—Ruth Murrin
Good Housekeeping
October 1927

Bobbed Hair Brings Beards, German Warns Modern Women

Berlin, July 12 (Associated Press)—The women of the future may have longer beards than the bearded women of the circus today, in the opinion of Dr. Adolph Heilbron, if they continue the invasion of man's domain of activities.

"As woman exercises more and more the functions previously belonging to man," Heilbron writes in the Berlin *Morgenpost*, "she also begins to assume a masculine growth of hair."

He cites Buckman, Brandt, Friedenthal and other anthropologists as authority for his statements that there has been a decided increase in the number of bearded women and expresses the belief that families wherein generations of women bob their hair will develop bearded women as a parallel phenomenon.

New York Times
July 13, 1924

Bettmann

Young couple at a dance hall marathon

DANCE Contests

During the 1920s, dance became a popular way for young people to express themselves. It became such a fad that dance contests began to take place across the country. Contestants danced for hours on end until they dropped from exhaustion. The following article describes a contest stopped by the dance manager for "humane reasons."

Manager Ends Endurance Test When 16 Dancers Dwindle to 3 After 22 ½ Hours.

After three young men—all that were left of sixteen persons who started the contest—had stepped steadily for twenty-two and one-half hours at the Roseland Dancing Academy, Fifty-First Street and Broadway, Charles Burgess, the manager, arbitrarily stopped a Charleston endurance test at 10:30 last night "for humane reasons."

Of the sixteen who started five were girls. They lasted from Tuesday midnight until early yesterday morning. Three of them dropped at about 5 A.M. and the other two quit soon after.

In the morning the eleven young men were dancing but during the day their number dwindled to the three who had to be ordered from the floor last night.

The seven judges decided that John Gioia, 23 years old, of 144 East Fifteenth Street, was the winner. He received a silver cup and a week's contract at a Broadway theatre, it was announced. John Kay, 21 years old, of 887 Eagle Avenue, the Bronx, won second prize and the third went to Finley Purcell, 32 years old, of 1010 Roosevelt Street, the Bronx.

—*New York Times*
February 4, 1926

The CHARLESTON

Bettmann

Two contestants at a Charleston contest held in Los Angeles, 1926

Many new dances came into fashion during the 1920s. One of the most popular was the ***Charleston.*** *The dance itself had its roots in the early history of African-American jazz music. So explains J. A. Rogers, a Black journalist of the '20s, in his "Jazz at Home." His article appears in* ***The New Negro: An Interpretation*** *(1925) edited by Alain Locke.*

The Origin of the Charleston

As to the jazz dance itself: at this time [at the beginning of jazz] Shelton Brooks, a Negro comedian, invented a new "strut," called "Walkin' the Dog." Jasbo's[1] anarchic airs[2] found in this strut a soul mate. Then as a result of their union came "The Texas Tommy," the highest point of brilliant, acrobatic execution and nifty footwork so far evolved in jazz dancing. The latest of these dances is the "Charleston," which has brought something really new to the dance step. The "Charleston" calls for activity of the whole body. One characteristic is a fantastic fling of the legs from the hip downwards. The dance ends in what is known as the "camel-walk"—in reality a gorilla-like shamble—and finishes with a peculiar hop like that

continued

[1] Jasbo was an early blues musician who could make his trombone "talk." According to Rogers, the term *jazz* originated when Jasbo's audience would call for more: "More, Jas, More!"

[2] *airs:* tunes or melodies

of the Indian war dance. Imagine one suffering from a fit of rhythmic ague[3] and you have the effect precisely.

The cleverest "Charleston" dancers perhaps are urchins[4] of five and six who may be seen any time on the streets of Harlem, keeping time with their hands, and surrounded by admiring crowds. But put it on a well-set stage, danced by a bobbed-hair chorus, and you have an effect that reminds you of the abandon of the Furies.[5] And so Broadway studies Harlem. Not all of the visitors of the twenty or more well-attended cabarets[6] of Harlem are idle pleasure seekers or underworld devotees. Many are serious artists, actors and producers seeking something new, some suggestion to be taken, too often in pallid[7] imitation, to Broadway's lights and stars.

[3] *ague:* illness

[4] *urchins:* mischievous youngsters; scamps

[5] *abandon of the Furies:* Furies were female spirits of Greek mythology who avenged wrongdoers.

[6] *cabarets:* nightclubs or speakeasies

[7] *pallid:* dull, colorless

Charleston

by Cecil Mack and Jimmy Johnson

*The lyrics to the **Charleston** emphasize the newness and originality of the dance steps that often accompanied the song.*

Carolina, Carolina,
at last they've got you on the map
With a new tune, funny blue tune
With a peculiar snap!
You may not be able to buck or wing,
Foxtrot, two-step, or even sing,
If you ain't got religion, in your feet,
You can do this prance and do it neat.

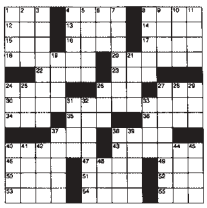
Charleston! Charleston!
Made in Carolina,
Some dance, some prance, I'll say,
There's nothing finer than the
Charleston, Charleston,
Lord how you can shuffle,
Ev'ry step you do, leads to something new,
Man I'm telling you, it's a lapazoo.
Buck dance, wing dance, will be a back number,
But the Charleston, the new Charleston, that dance is surely a comer.
Sometime, you'll dance it one time,
The dance called the Charleston,
Made in South Caroline.

continued

Other Fads of the 1920s

bathtub gin Gin made at home, sometimes in the bathtub.

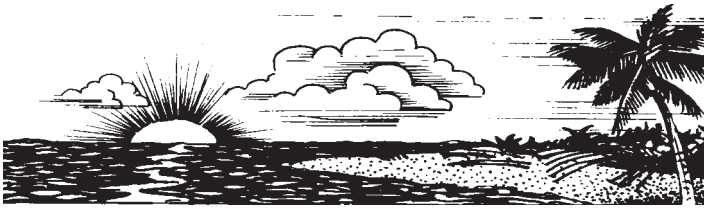
Burma Shave road signs Catchy roadside advertisements for the Burma Shave Company. They were usually four-line humorous poems displayed on four separate billboards about 500 yards apart.



crossword puzzles These word games became popular in the 1920s.

flagpole sitting Individuals sat on a platform at the top of a pole. The reason—to set new records.

Florida land boom Many people moved to Florida in the 1920s, and property values soared. Investors became rich buying and selling Florida land.



hip flasks These small, narrow bottles for carrying alcohol fit into a jacket or hip pocket. They were especially popular among college students.

Mah-Jongg A Chinese gambling game. It became popular among affluent women.

Oxford bags A style of very wide, baggy pants popular among college men.

raccoon coats All 1920s college students yearned for the ultimate mark of distinction—a long raccoon fur coat.

turned down hose Flappers wore their silk hose rolled down around the knee in order to expose a little more of their legs.

Voices of the HARLEM RENAISSANCE

Something exciting was happening in a section of New York City called Harlem during the 1920s. It was a rebirth—or renaissance—of African-American arts. Poets, artists, novelists, musicians, and dancers came from all over the world to participate. Many notable writers and artists owed their reputations to the Harlem Renaissance, including Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neale Hurston.

The following excerpts show the excitement as the Renaissance began as well as the letdown as it ended.

Harlem is the precious fruit in the Garden of Eden, the big apple.

—Alain Locke, 1919

I sit on my stoop on Seventh Avenue and gaze at the sunkissed folks strolling up and down and think that surely Mississippi is here in New York, in Harlem, yes right on Seventh Avenue.

—Anonymous, 1923

Bettmann

The Cotton Club in New York City was the jazz "mecca" during the 1920s.

continued

In the make-up of New York, Harlem is not merely a Negro colony or community, it is a city within a city, the greatest Negro city in the world. It is not a slum or a fringe, it is located in the heart of Manhattan and occupies one of the most beautiful and healthful sections of the city. It is not a "quarter" of dilapidated tenements,[1] but is made up of new-law apartments[2] and handsome dwellings, with well-paved and well-lighted streets. It has its own churches, social and civic centers, shops, theaters and other places of amusement. And it contains more Negroes to the square mile than any other spot on earth. . . .

The West Fifty-third Street settlement deserves some special mention because it ushered in a new phase of life among colored New Yorkers. Three rather well-appointed hotels were opened in the street and they quickly became the centers of a sort of fashionable life that hitherto had not existed. On Sunday evenings these hotels served dinner to music and attracted crowds of well-dressed diners. One of these hotels, The Marshall, became famous as the headquarters of Negro talent. There gathered the actors, the musicians, the composers, the writers, the singers, dancers and vaudevillians. . . . Paul Laurence Dunbar[3] was frequently there whenever he was in New York. . . . The first modern jazz band ever heard in New York, or, perhaps anywhere, was organized at The Marshall. It was a playing-singing-dancing orchestra, making the first dominant use of banjos, saxophones, clarinets and trap drums in combination, and was called The Memphis Students. Jim Europe was a member of that band, and out of it grew the famous Clef Club, of which he was the noted leader, and which for a long time monopolized the business of "entertaining" private parties and furnishing music for the new dance craze. Also in the Clef Club was "Buddy" Gilmore who originated trap drumming as it is now practised, and set hundreds of white men to juggling their sticks and doing acrobatic stunts while they manipulated a dozen other noise-making devices aside from their drums. A good many well-known white performers frequented The Marshall and for seven or eight years the place was one of the sights of New York.

—**James W. Johnson**
"Harlem: The Culture Capital" *The New Negro* 1925

That spring [of 1928] for me was the end of the Harlem Renaissance. Sophisticated New Yorkers turned to Noel Coward.[4] Colored actors began to go hungry, publishers politely rejected new manuscripts, and patrons found other uses for their money. The cycle that had charlestoned into being on the dancing heels of *Shuffle Along*[5] now ended in *Green Pastures* and *de Lawd*. The generous 1920s were over.

—Alain Locke
"1928: A Retrospective View"
Opportunity, August 1929

continued

[1] *tenements:* apartment buildings, usually occupied by poor families

[2] *new-law apartments:* high-class apartments

[3] *Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1927):* African-American author who wrote novels and short stories about Southern life

[4] *Noel Coward (1899-1973):* British playwright, composer, and actor. *Hay Fever* (1925), *Bitter Sweet* (1929), and *Private Lives* (1930) were some of his plays that were popular during the period.

[5] *Shuffle Along:* musical written, performed, and directed by African Americans

Bettmann

A floor show in the Cotton Club. It is believed that many jazz forms such as scat singing originated at the Cotton Club.

In Harlem, black was white. You had rights that could not be denied you; you had privileges protected by law. And you had money. Everybody in Harlem had money. It was a land of plenty.

—Rudolph Fisher
"City of Refuge,"
AtlanticMonthly,
February 1925

Melting pot Harlem—Harlem of honey and chocolate and caramel and rum and vinegar and lemon and lime and gall. Dusky dream Harlem rumbling into a nightmare tunnel where the subway from the Bronx keeps right on downtown, where the money from the nightclubs goes right on back downtown, where the jazz is drained to Broadway, whence Josephine goes to Paris, Robeson to London, Jean Toomer to a Quaker Meeting House. . . .[6]

—Langston Hughes
"My Early Days in Harlem"
Harlem edited by John H. Clarke, 1969

[6] Josephine Baker, African-American singer and dancer who starred in "The Negro Review" that played in Paris; Paul Robeson, actor and baritone singer; Jean Toomer, African-American writer known for his work titled *Cane* (1923)

VIEWPOINTS
on Jazz

Jazz is a uniquely American music. The form developed among Black musicians in New Orleans and combined African-American rhythms with European instruments.

During the 1920s, jazz became popular all over America. However, the new music was not without its critics. The following viewpoints voice both admiration as well as criticism of the music that defined the Jazz Age.

Jazz is a marvel of paradox:[1] too fundamentally human. . . to be typically racial, too international to be characteristically national, too much abroad in the world to have a special home. And yet jazz in spite of it all is one part American and three parts American Negro, and was originally the nobody's child of the levee[2] and the city slum. . . . [Jazz] is really at home in its humble native soil wherever the modern unsophisticated Negro feels happy and sings and dances to his mood. . . . The story is told of the clever group of "Jazz-specialists" who had found themselves drawn to the Bohemias[3] of Paris. In a little cabaret of Montmartre they had just "entertained" into the wee small hours fascinated society and royalty; and, of course, had been paid royally for it. Then, the entertainment over and the guests away, the "entertainers" entertained themselves with their very best, which is always impromptu,[4] for the sheer joy of it. That is Jazz.

—J. A. Rogers
"Jazz at Home"
The New Negro (1925)

Louis Armstrong (front row, 4th from the right) with his band in Chicago, 1925 Bettmann

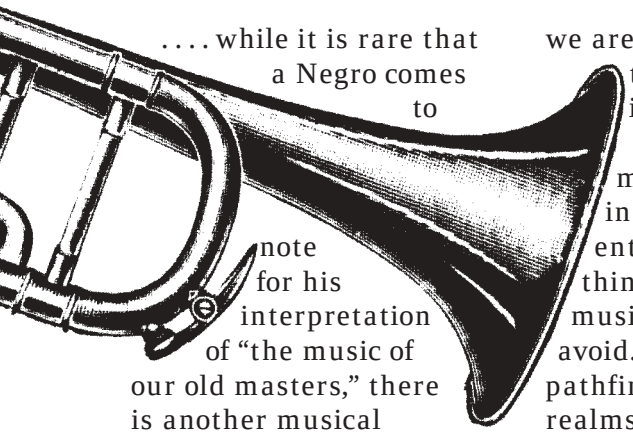
[1] *paradox:* a statement that contradicts itself

[2] Literally, a levee is an embankment designed to prevent rivers from flooding. Here, Rogers is referring to the fact that homeless and poor people often gathered on levees.

[3] *Bohemias:* places where artists gather

[4] *impromptu:* unpracticed

continued



. . . . while it is rare that a Negro comes to note for his interpretation of "the music of our old masters," there is another musical tradition which arose out of the black race and has bid fair to jostle civilized, European music into limbo.

It is a music that stole, with a mutter of muffled tom-toms, out of Africa. It hid with the Norway rats in the holds of pitching slave-ships; it crawled between the leaves of missionary Bibles to leap out grimacing and twitching, whenever a buck preacher smote the Book with his barrel-house fist. . . . Jazz, that Klaxon-throated Phoenix, rose from the ashes of untold night-club cigarets. . . .

[Irving] Berlin. . . was perhaps the first white man who noticeably impressed his talent upon the music of the Negro—the first to score dark jungle jingles, canniballets, revivalisteria for the Anglo-Saxophone.

—*Time*
April 20, 1925

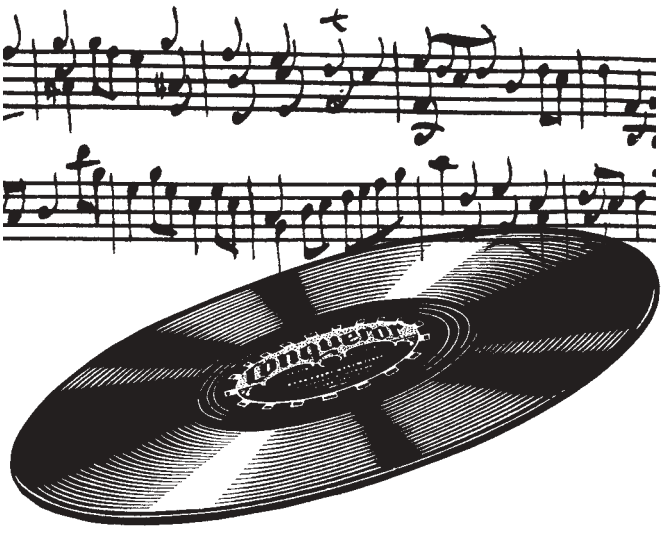
Jazz has come to stay because it is an expression of the times, of the breathless, energetic, superactive times in which we are living, it is useless to fight against it. . . .

The jazz players make their instruments do entirely new things, things finished musicians are taught to avoid. They are pathfinders into new realms.

—Leopold Stokowski,
conductor

The waltz to-day fails to satisfy. Why? Simply because the nerves of the present generation are in such a state that they are soon bored by silence. A healthy, normal animal, whether human or not, is not bored by tranquillity, rest, silence. A man in a normal state can sit all day fishing or drifting along with a small breeze. When his nervous health begins to fail, he takes to tobacco, to fast motors, to exciting sports; and for those who can not indulge in such things jazz furnished the substitute.

—Anonymous
quoted in
Literary Digest,
1927



All white musicians who are worth their salt know that the black man started, created this music. . . . I used to go to the black churches to hear it, and they used to swing better than most bands. Bessie Smith was a church singer. She was the greatest blues singer that ever lived. Ethel Waters. They all learned that in their churches.

—Bud Freeman
saxophonist
1985 interview

Jazzists make a great point of their rhythmic innovations and the freedom of their rhythms. . . . If they had any idea of what rhythm meant, they would know that in comparison with the rhythms of any of the great composers of the sixteenth century onward their own rhythms are merely as the sing-song of a nursery rhythm to the changing subtleties of a page of Shakespeare.

continued

Your typical jazz composer or jazz enthusiast is merely a musical illiterate who is absurdly pleased with little things because he does not know how little they are. Had he any knowledge of history he would know that all that is now happening in jazz happened many centuries ago in vocal music, and that the end in the present case will be the same as in the earlier one. . . .

At present jazz is not an art, but an industry; the whirring of a standardized machine endlessly turning out a standardized article. There is no hope of salvation for it until a real composer takes it up, and no real composer would touch it because it is too feeble and limited an instrument of expression for any one who has anything to express.

—Ernest Newman
English music critic
New York Times
September 12, 1926

The expressions of Mr. Newman are typical of the narrow-minded, bigoted critic of the old school....He believes that he knows it all and that the rest of the world is wrong. Jazz today is popular all over the civilized world. Originating in this country, it has been introduced in almost every part of the world. Its popularity in England, France and Germany is practically as great as its popularity here.

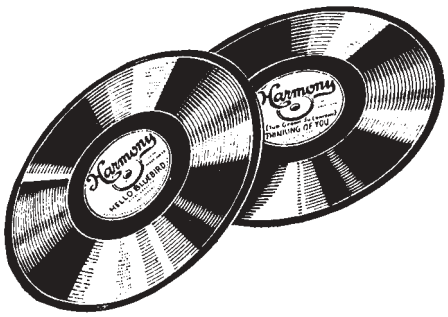
No lover of jazz claims that it is a substitute for the classics. Admirers of the classics are often admirers of jazz. Some of the best-known symphony conductors in this country are interested in jazz. . . .

Jazz is not simple and easy for the musician, as some think. The best jazz orchestras use the services of men who are fully equipped to play with the best symphony orchestras. I have men in my organization who were educated in the best conservatories abroad. The faults of a poor musician are even more glaring with a jazz orchestra than with a philharmonic orchestra. . . .

—Ernie Golden
director of
Ernie Golden's
Hotel McAlpin Orchestra
New York Times,
September 13, 1926

An Affront to Jazz

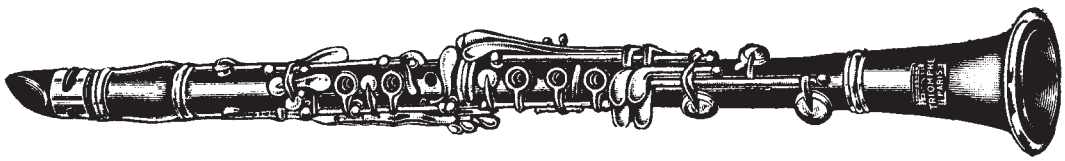
It is a pity that, after we had thought all the world, Europe as well as America, converted to jazz, ready to see in it the coming—nay, the present—expression in



music of the true American spirit, a distinguished English critic, MR. ERNEST NEWMAN, should burst out in denunciation. How many forward-looking American critics have expounded the merits of jazz; how many of those standing on the watchtowers have seen in it the coming of a new day! Many talented Americans—or perhaps there is a genius or two among them—have wrought jazz into works of profound significance. Eminent college professors have shown that jazz is the one thing in music that is alive today, that its rhythms are palpitating with the new blood of tomorrow.

Mr. Newman has sinned against the light. . . .

—New York Times
editorial,
September 17, 1926



The Rising Tide of Color

The 1920s witnessed a dramatic rise in intolerance toward minorities in the United States. Believers in white supremacy viewed the advances made by African Americans and other racial groups with alarm. Tom Buchanan, Daisy's husband in ***The Great Gatsby,*** *quoted from* ***The Rising Tide of Color*** *by Lothrop Stoddard. Tom didn't get the title or author of the book right. However, he did get the main idea.*

"Finally perish!" That is the exact alternative which confronts the white race. For white civilization is to-day conterminous with[1] the white race. The civilizations of the past were local. They were confined to a particular people or group of peoples. If they failed, there were always some unspoiled, well-endowed barbarians to step forward and "carry on." But today *there are no more white barbarians.* The earth has grown small, and men are everywhere in close touch.

If white civilization goes down, the white race is irretrievably ruined. It will be swamped by the triumphant colored races, who will obliterate the white man by elimination or absorption. What has taken place in Central Asia, once a white and now a brown or yellow land, will take place in Australasia, Europe, and America. Not to-day nor yet to-morrow; perhaps not for generations; but surely in the end. If the present drift be not changed, we whites are all ultimately doomed. Unless we set our house in order, the doom will sooner or later overtake us all.

And that would mean that the race obviously endowed with the greatest creative ability, the race which had achieved most in the past and which gave the richer promise for the future, had passed away, carrying with it to the grave those potencies upon which the realization of man's highest hopes depends.

A million years of human evolution might go uncrowned, and earth's supreme life-product, man, might never fulfill his potential destiny. This is why we today face "The Crisis of the Ages."

Library of Congress

Ku Klux Klan march, Washington, D.C., September 1926

[1] *conterminous with:* equal to

During the 1920s, the movie industry made the transition from silent films to the new "talkies." Not everyone was sure how popular the new movies would be, as the following quotes show.

Talkies, squeakies, moanies, songies, squawkies. . . . But whatever you call them, I'm absolutely serious in what I have to say about them. Just give them ten years to develop and you're going to see the greatest artistic medium the world has known. Just think: you can get all the movement, the swing, the rhythm and the drive of the best of the old silent pictures into them. There you have your appeal to the eye. And added to this you have the human voice.

And music, the one perfect art. You can combine the features of the picture, the opera, the legitimate theater. As for the picture part of it, it will be superior to the painter's art, for it will be alive. . . .

—D. W. Griffith, film director

As rapidly as theaters throughout the country are being fitted for the audible films, it is preposterous to suppose that the time will ever come when all houses, the length and breadth of the United States, will be so equipped. . . . An occasional audible picture will suffice for some audiences whose steady and uninterrupted patronage will continue to be accorded to the silent picture.

—Albert Warner, Warner Bros.

The nicest thing about film so far was that it kept its mouth shut. It would have been terrible if one had accompanied with words the stupidities which were played. That was the only reason I did not permit the filming of my plays, because their greatest strength was their dialogue. . . .

—George Bernard Shaw, dramatist

The future of the talkie is one of the most entertaining speculations; roughly there are three paths:

1. The talkie may develop as a separate medium, having hardly anything to do with the movie except that it uses the same mechanism for entirely different purposes;
2. It may create a sort of hybrid with itself and the movie as the components in variable proportions;
3. The movie may incorporate the talkie, or vice versa, creating an entirely new form—cinephonics, perhaps—in which the principles of the movie will not be abandoned.

—Gilbert Seldes, critic

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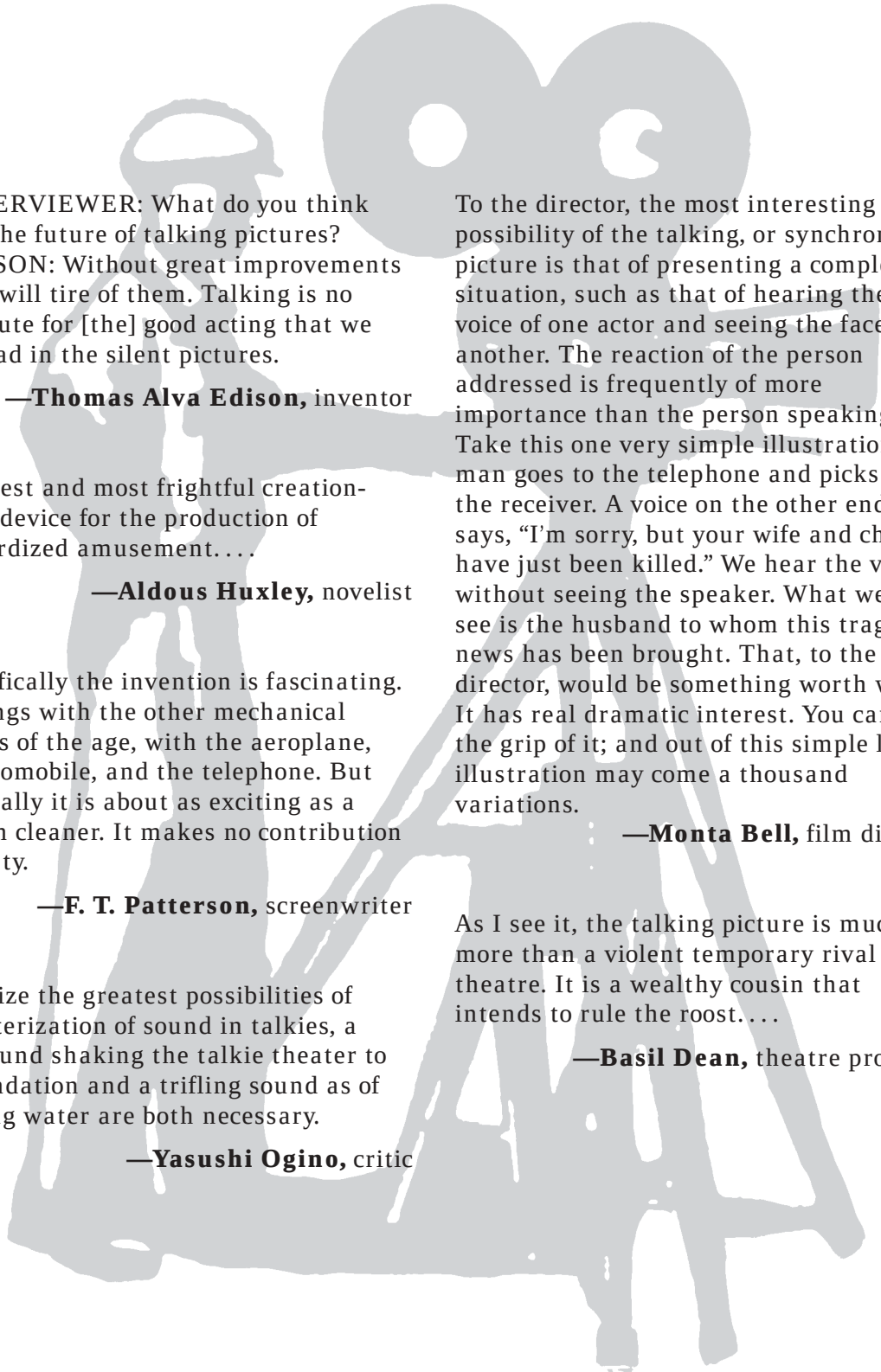


INTERVIEWER: What do you think about the future of talking pictures?

EDISON: Without great improvements people will tire of them. Talking is no substitute for [the] good acting that we have had in the silent pictures.

—**Thomas Alva Edison,** inventor

The latest and most frightful creation-saving device for the production of standardized amusement. . . .

—**Aldous Huxley,** novelist

Scientifically the invention is fascinating. It belongs with the other mechanical marvels of the age, with the aeroplane, the automobile, and the telephone. But artistically it is about as exciting as a vacuum cleaner. It makes no contribution to beauty.

—**F. T. Patterson,** screenwriter

To realize the greatest possibilities of characterization of sound in talkies, a loud sound shaking the talkie theater to its foundation and a trifling sound as of dripping water are both necessary.

—**Yasushi Ogino,** critic

To the director, the most interesting possibility of the talking, or synchronized, picture is that of presenting a complex situation, such as that of hearing the voice of one actor and seeing the face of another. The reaction of the person addressed is frequently of more importance than the person speaking. Take this one very simple illustration. A man goes to the telephone and picks up the receiver. A voice on the other end says, "I'm sorry, but your wife and child have just been killed." We hear the voice without seeing the speaker. What we do see is the husband to whom this tragic news has been brought. That, to the director, would be something worth while. It has real dramatic interest. You can feel the grip of it; and out of this simple little illustration may come a thousand variations.

—**Monta Bell,** film director

As I see it, the talking picture is much more than a violent temporary rival of the theatre. It is a wealthy cousin that intends to rule the roost. . . .

—**Basil Dean,** theatre producer

The Movies and the Censors

The booming new movie industry began to create controversy in the 1920s. The issue—the content of some of its films. Reform groups across the country demanded that movie makers regulate representations of vice, sex, drinking, and gambling in the movies.

Rather than face government regulations, the Association of Motion Picture Producers adopted their own list of standards in 1927. The following list shows some of the content which the association agreed should not appear in pictures.

1. Pointed profanity—by either title or lip—this includes the words "God," "Lord," "Jesus," "Christ" (unless they be used reverently in connection with proper religious ceremonies), "hell," "Gawd," and every other profane and vulgar expression however it may be spelled
2. Any licentious or suggestive nudity—in fact or silhouette...
3. The illegal traffic in drugs

* * *

5. White slavery
6. Miscegenation [romantic] relationships between the white and black races
8. Scenes of actual childbirth—in fact or in silhouette

* * *

10. Ridicule of the clergy
11. Willful offense to any nation, race or creed

The Association also resolved that "good taste... be emphasized" in the manner in which the following subjects were treated.

1. The use of the flag
2. Internal relations (avoiding picturizing in an unfavorable light another country's religion, history, institutions, prominent people, and citizenry)
3. Arson
4. The use of firearms
5. Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc. (having in mind the effect which a too-detailed description of these may have upon the moron[1])
6. Brutality and possible gruesomeness
7. Technique of committing murder by whatever method
8. Methods of smuggling
9. Third-degree methods
10. Actual hangings or electrocutions as legal punishment for crime
11. Sympathy for criminals
12. Attitude toward public characters and institutions
13. Sedition

* * *

17. Rape or attempted rape
18. First-night scenes
19. Man and woman in bed together

* * *

21. The institution of marriage
22. Surgical operations
23. The use of drugs
24. Titles or scenes having to do with the law enforcement or law-enforcing officers
25. Excessive or lustful kissing, particularly when one character... is a "heavy"

[1] *moron:* stupid person

THE AUTOMOBILE

Henry Ford's automobile began replacing the horse and buggy at an amazing rate during the 1920s. However, the automobile's mobility and privacy were threatening to some people, as shown in this November 1924 article from the ***New York Times.***

Says Auto Harms Student Illinois University Dean Also Lays Loose Morals to Machine

Urbana, Ill. Nov. 8—The morals, scholarship and physical safety of students at the University of Illinois are endangered by those whose parents permit them to bring automobiles to the university, according to a letter sent today by Professor Thomas A. Clark, Dean of Men, to the parents of the 100 students who use automobiles.

"The university has made no regulations about the automobile and does not wish to do so, hoping that the cooperation of parents may be able to solve the problem," the letter reads.

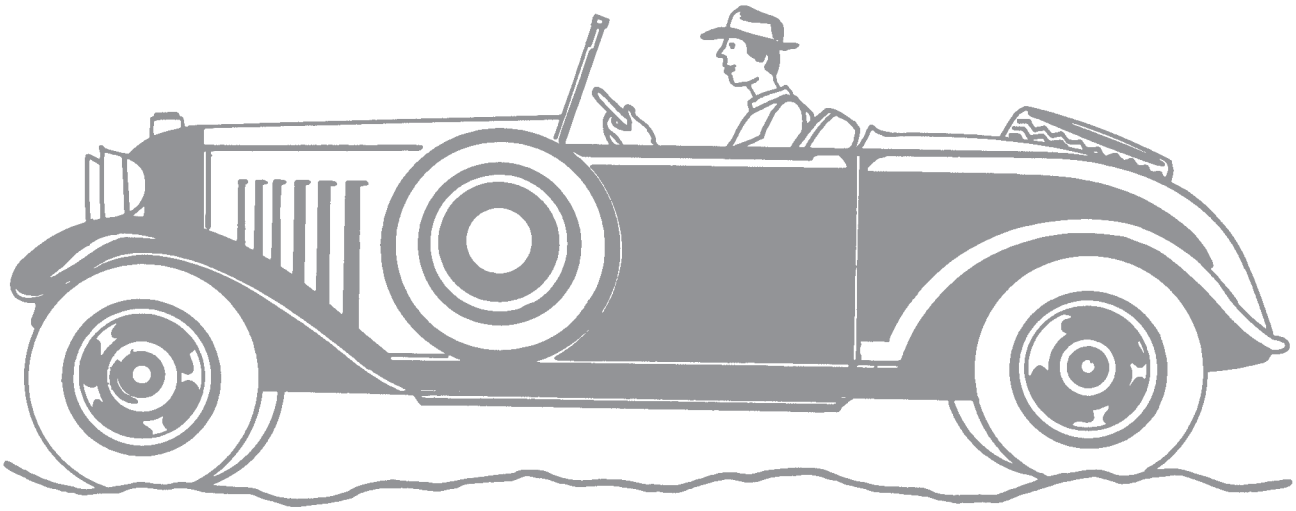
"The automobile is a waster of time and money. It encourages loafing and the taking of frequent and unnecessary trips out of town to the neglect of the students' regular work.

"The possession of a car involves more than ordinary physical danger. A half dozen students crowd into a machine intended for two or three. There is excitement and fast driving and frequent serious accidents.

"There is moral danger in the car. Whatever of drinking and stealing and immorality exists among the college students is largely in connection with the automobile. The passion for driving seems often to stimulate other passions and unconventionalities and actual immorality often results.

"Youth is perhaps no more irresponsible now than it has always been, but the automobile is an added temptation to moral irresponsibility."

New York Times
November 9, 1924



SELLING the American Dream

In the first two decades of the 20th century, most American advertising was still in tune with the slow, rural tempo of the previous century. But the 1920s brought sweeping changes to advertising. Through the mediums of national magazines and radio, a lucrative national marketplace began to emerge. At the same time, professional marketers—called admen—began to use new aggressive approaches to selling. Here are some voices for and against the new advertising ethic.

The actual effect of modern advertising is not so much to convince as to suggest.

—Walter Dill Scott
professor of psychology, 1917

[Advertising] is the most potent influence in adapting and changing the habits and modes of life, affecting what we eat, what we wear, and the work and play of the whole nation. Advertising ministers to the spiritual side of trade. It is a great power which is inspiring and ennobling the commercial world. It is all part of the greater work of the regeneration and redemption of mankind.

—Calvin Coolidge, 1926

The chief economic problem today is no longer the production of goods but their distribution. The shadow of overproduction, with its attendant periods of unemployment and suffering, is the chief menace to the present industrial system.

—Stanley Resor, adman, 1927

Beauty is the most important factor in modern advertising.

—Bruce Barton,
adman, 1927

The real revolutionist is the advertising man, whose stimulation of mass desire and demands results in mass production and buying. Could I control the advertising publications of this country I would control the entire land.

—William Allen White,
editor, 1927

We are all Alices in a Wonderland of conflicting claims, bright promises, fancy packages, soaring words, and almost impenetrable ignorance.

—Stuart Chase and Frederick J. Schlink,
Your Money's Worth, 1927

If advertising persuades some men to live beyond their means, so does matrimony. If advertising speaks to a thousand in order to influence one, so does the church. If advertising is often garrulous[1] and redundant and tiresome, so is the United States Senate. We are young, and law and medicine and theology are old.

—Bruce Barton,
adman, 1927

[1] *garrulous:* talkative

continued

The banker of the coming generation will hesitate to lend money to a businessman who is not advertising. For they know he is probably due for a deficit.

—Roger W. Babson,
economist, 1928

It pays to be personal now;
It brings in the shekels[2]—and how!
If you want to sell drugs,
Or Baluchistan rugs,
Or revolvers to thugs,
Or a spray to kill bugs—
You've got to be personal now.

—from *Printer's Ink* magazine, 1929

[Advertising] is probably our greatest agency for spreading an understanding and love of beauty in all things.

—Frank Presbrey,
advertiser, 1929

If I were starting life over again, I am inclined to think that I would go into the advertising business in preference to almost any other. . . . It is essentially a form of education; and the progress of civilization depends on education.

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1931

If you can build a lousy mousetrap and spend $10,000,000 advertising it, the world will beat a path to your door.

—*Ballyhoo* magazine, 1931

[Advertising] makes you spend money you don't have for something you don't want.

—Will Rogers, 1931

[2] *shekels:* coins or money

This ad for the Jordan Playboy automobile became famous during the 1920s for its poetic use of language.

The ad reads: "Somewhere west of Laramie there's a broncho-busting, steer-roping girl who knows what I'm talking about. She can tell what a sassy pony, that's a cross between greased lightning and the place where it hits, can do with eleven hundred pounds of steel and action when he's going high, wide and handsome. The truth is—the Jordan Playboy was built for her."

The Jordan Motor Car Company was in business for only a few years. But the "word magic" that was used to sell its automobiles became a standard among ad copywriters.

Voices of 1920s Radio

Radio was a new phenomenon in the 1920s. As the selections from various programs and the jingle show, early broadcasters were trying to appeal to a cross section of the American population.

Wave the Flag for Hudson High

Hero Jack Armstrong, a student at Hudson High, always triumphed over evil in his fifteen minute radio dramas. He also ate a healthy breakfast, as the following jingle for Wheaties breakfast cereal proclaims.

Wave the flag for Hudson High, boys.
Show them how we stand.
Ever shall our team be champions
Known throughout the land!

Have you tried Wheaties?
They're whole wheat with all of the bran.
Won't you try Wheaties?
For wheat is the best food of man!

They're crispy and crunchy the whole year through.
Jack Armstrong never tires of them,
And neither will you.
So just buy Wheaties.
The best breakfast food in the land!

WEAF, New York 492

Selected Radio Programming for the Week of July 13, 1924. From the ***New York Times.***

11:00 A.M.—Musical program
11:10 A.M.—Young mothers' program
11:50 A.M.—Market and weather reports
4:00 P.M.—Mrs. Paul Caldwell, soprano
5:30 P.M.—Stories for children
6:00 P.M.—Waldorf-Astoria dinner music
7:00 P.M.—United Synagogues of America services
7:30 P.M.—Poyet sisters, duet
7:50 P.M.—"Summer Care of Babies" by Dorothy Deming
8:00 P.M.—"How Psychology May Be Applied" by Dr. Gardner Murphy
8:20 P.M.—Ruth Ryan, piano
8:30 P.M.—Songs and humor
9:00 P.M.—Popular program
9:30 P.M.—Ruth Ryan, piano
9:45 P.M.—Charles Mertens, baritone

The Early Bird

The following radio skit was performed by comedy team George Moran and Charlie Mack. They were heard on such programs as the ***Eveready Hour*** *and the* ***Majestic Theater Hour.***

Moran: . . . Always remember, that the early bird catches the worm.
Mack: The early bird catches what worm?
Moran: Why, any worm.
Mack: Well, who cares about that?
Moran: Everybody knows that the early bird catches the worm.
Mack: Well, what of it? What about it?
Moran: He catches it, that's all.
Mack: Well, let him have it. Who wants a worm anyhow? What's his idea in catching a worm?
Moran: Why, he catches the worm because he wants it.
Mack: Well, what does he want with it?
Moran: How do I know what he wants?
Mack: Well, how do you know he wants it? How do you know that?
Moran: Well, what's his idea in catching it, if he don't want it?
Mack: Well, what's the worm's idea in bein' there?
Moran: Why the worm lives there.
Mack: He lives where?
Moran: He lives where he is.
Mack: Doggone, I don't even know where he is. I don't know that.
Moran: Well, he's at home. That's where he is!
Mack: Well, I'd rather not hear any more about it. Which is the early bird? Which bird is early?
Moran: Why the first bird gits there is the early bird.
Mack: What causes that?
Moran: Because he's the first bird there.
Mack: Yeah. Well, suppose some other bird got there ahead of him?
Moran: Oh boy, you don't seem to know anything!. . .

Scott & Zelda

F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda, had an intense and stormy marriage. Ernest Hemingway, the renowned author of ***The Old Man and the Sea*** *and* ***The Sun Also Rises,*** *was a close friend of the couple. This passage from Hemingway's autobiographical novel* ***A Moveable Feast*** *is about a visit to the Fitzgeralds' house.*

Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Bettmann

[Scott and Zelda] had been up on Montmartre[1] the night before and had quarreled because Scott did not want to get drunk. He had decided. . . to work hard and not to drink and Zelda was treating him as though he were a kill-joy or a spoilsport. . . .

Zelda had hawk's eyes and a thin mouth and deep-south manners and accent. Watching her face you could see her mind leave the table and go to the night's party and return with her eyes blank as a cat's and then pleased, and the pleasure would show along the thin line of her lips and then be gone. Scott was being the good cheerful host and Zelda looked at him and she smiled happily with her eyes and her mouth too as he drank the wine. I learned to know that smile very well. It meant she knew Scott would not be able to write.

Zelda was jealous of Scott's work and. . . this fell into a regular pattern. Scott would resolve not to go on all-night drinking parties and to get some exercise each day and work regularly. He would start to work and as soon as he was working well Zelda would begin complaining about how bored she was and get him off on another drunken party. They would quarrel and then make up and he would sweat out the alcohol on long walks with me and make up his mind that this time he would really work, and would start off well. Then it would start all over again.

[1] *Montmartre:* area in Paris known for artists and bars

Letters

The following two letters were written when Scott and Zelda were courting. The first is Scott's, written in response to a friend who frankly warned him against marrying Zelda. The second is a love letter from Zelda to Scott.

No personality as strong as Zelda's could go without getting criticism. . . . I've always known that, any girl who gets stewed in public, who frankly enjoys and tells shocking stories, who smokes constantly and makes the remark that she has "kissed thousands of men and intends to kiss thousands more," cannot be considered beyond reproach even if above it. . . . I fell in love with her courage, her sincerity and her flaming self respect and it's these things I'd believe in even if the whole world indulged in wild suspicions that she wasn't all that she should be. . . . I love her and that's the beginning and end of everything. You're still a Catholic but Zelda's the only God I have left now.

F. S. Fitzgerald

Scott my darling lover—
Everything seems so smooth and restful, like this yellow dusk. Knowing that I'll always be yours—that you really own me—that nothing can keep us apart—is such a relief after the strain and nervous excitement of the last month. I'm so glad you came—like Summer, just when I needed you most—and took me, back with you. Waiting doesn't seem so hard now. The vague despondency has gone—I love you Sweetheart.

Zelda

Dear Max

These three letters make up part of the correspondence between Fitzgerald and his editor, Max Perkins. The topic—a new novel.

Dear Max:
Under separate cover I'm sending you my third novel, *The Great Gatsby*. (I think that at last I've done something really my own, but how good "my own" is remains to be seen.)

. . . I'm tired of being the author of *This Side of Paradise* and I want to start over. . . .

I have an alternative title: *Gold-hatted Gatsby*.

After you've read the book let me know what you think about the title. Naturally I won't get a night's sleep until I hear from you but do tell me the absolute truth, *your first impression of the book*, and tell me anything that bothers you in it.

As ever,

Scott

Dear Max:
By now you've received the novel. There are things in it I'm not satisfied with in the middle of the book—Chapters 6 and 7. And I may write in a complete new scene. . . .

I have now decided to stick to the title I put on the book. *Trimalchio in West Egg*.

The only other titles that seem to fit it are *Trimalchio* and *On the Road to West Egg*. I had two others *Gold-hatted Gatsby* and *The High-bouncing Lover*, but they seemed too light.

We leave for Rome as soon as I finish the short story I'm working on.

As ever,
Scott

Dear Scott:
I think you have every kind of right to be proud of this book. It is an extraordinary book, suggestive of all sorts of thoughts and moods. You adopted exactly the right method of telling it. . . . It's magnificent!

Max

Fitzgerald's FAVORITE BOOKS

10 BEST BOOKS I HAVE READ

Samuel Butler's *Note Books*. The mind and heart of my favorite Victorian.

The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (H. L. Mencken). A keen, hard intelligence interpreting the Great Modern Philosopher.

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. (James Joyce). Because James Joyce is to be the most profound literary influence in the next fifty years.

Zuleika Dobson. (Max Beerbohm). For the sheer delight of its exquisite snobbery.

The Mysterious Stranger. (Mark Twain). Mark Twain in his most sincere mood. A book and a startling revelation.

Nostromo. (Joseph Conrad). The great novel of the past fifty years, as *Ulysses* is the great novel of the future.

Vanity Fair. (Thackeray). No explanation required.

The Oxford Book of English Verse. This seems to me a better collection than Palgrave's.

Thais. (Anatole France). The great book of the man who is Wells and Shaw together.

Seventeen. (Booth Tarkington). The funniest book I've ever read.

Fitzgerald mentions the titles of several songs in ***The Great Gatsby****, including "Ain't We Got Fun" and the "Beale Street Blues." The first was a popular dance song, while the second was a jazz piece. Beale Street is a street in Memphis, Tennessee, which was once famous for its musicians and street life.*

Ain't We Got Fun

Lyrics by Gus Kahn and Raymond B. Egan

Bill collectors gather 'round and rather
haunt the cottage next door
Men the grocer and butcher sent
Men who call for the rent
But within a happy chappy and his bride
of only a year
Seem to be so cheerful—here's an ear full
of the chatter you hear:

Ev'ry morning, ev'ry evening—Ain't we
got fun
Not much money, oh but honey—Ain't we
got fun
The rent's unpaid, dear, we haven't a bus
But smiles were made, dear, for people
like us
In the winter, in the summer—Don't we
have fun
Times are bum and getting bummer—
Still, we have fun
There's nothing surer—the rich get rich
and the poor get children
In the meantime, in between time
Ain't we got fun

Beale Street Blues

Lyrics and music by W.C. Handy

I've seen the lights of gay Broadway
Old Market Street down by the Frisco
Bay
I've strolled the Prado
I've gambled on the Bourse
The seven wonders of the world I've seen
And many are the places I have been.
Take my advice, folks
and see Beale Street first.

You'll see pretty Browns in beautiful
gowns
You'll see tailor-mades and hand me
downs
You'll meet honest men and pick-pockets
skilled
You'll find that bus'ness never closes till
somebody gets killed.

I'd rather be here than any place I know
I'd rather be here than any place I know
It's goin' to take the Sergant
For to make me go
Goin' to the river
Maybe, bye and bye
Goin' to the river
and there's a reason why
Because the river's wet
And Beale Streets done gone dry.

POEMS
of the Jazz Age

Music, dance, hairstyles, almost every aspect of American culture, went through rapid changes in the 1920s. These changes were often fueled by young people rebelling against the traditions of the older generation. Such rebellion found its way into poetry, as the following two poems suggest.

Ol' Bunk's Band

by William Carlos Williams

These are men! the gaunt
unforesold, the vocal,
blatant, Stand up stand up! the
slap of a bass-string.
Pick, ping! The horn, the
hollow horn
long drawn out, a hound-deep
tone—
Choking, choking! while the
treble reed
races—alone, ripples, screams
slow to fast—
to second to first! These are men!

Drum, drum, drum, drum, drum
drum, drum! the
ancient cry, escaping crapulence
eats through
transcendent—torn, tears, term
town, terse,
turns and backs off whole, leaps
up, stomps down,
rips through! These are men
beneath
whose force the melody limps—
to
proclaim, proclaims—Run and
lie down,
in slow measures, to rest and
not never
need no more! These are men!
Men!

One Perfect Rose

by Dorothy Parker

A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.
All tenderly his messenger he chose;
Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet—
One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret;
"My fragile leaves," it said, "his heart enclose."
Love long has taken for his amulet
One perfect rose.

Why is it no one ever sent me yet
One perfect limousine, do you suppose?
Ah no, it's always just my luck to get
One perfect rose.

Suggested Reading and Viewing List

*If you enjoyed reading **The Great Gatsby,** you may want to explore other works written during or about the 1920s. The following list offers some suggestions for further reading and viewing.*

Fiction

An American Tragedy by Theodore Dreiser. A classic story of love, greed, and the dark side of the American dream. Signet, 1964. [RL 11 IL 10+]

The Awakening and Selected Stories by Kate Chopin. Contains the title story, about a young American woman's voyage to self-awareness. Penguin, 1984. [RL 9 IL 9+]

Babbitt by Sinclair Lewis. Conformist and successful businessman George F. Babbitt comments on the emptiness of American life in the 1920s. Signet, 1961. [RL 10 IL 9+]

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison. Set in Harlem, this novel shows the underside of the American dream as experienced by an African-American man. Random House, 1959. [RL 7 IL 7-12]

Jazz by Toni Morrison. Set in Harlem in the 1920s, this novel is about the problems of a good marriage gone bad. New American Library, 1993. [RL 9 IL 11+]

Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert. The story of a nineteenth-century French woman's search for personal meaning and fulfillment. Bantam, 1987. [RL 10 IL 11+]

Save Me the Waltz by Zelda Fitzgerald. This autobiographical novel by the wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald tells the story of Alabama Beggs and David Knight. New American Library, 1932. [RL 10 IL 11+]

The Snows of Kilimanjaro and other Stories by Ernest Hemingway. A collection of some of his best short works, including the title story, which features a character based on Hemingway's friend, F. Scott Fitzgerald. Scribner's, 1987. [RL 11 IL 9+]

Summer Harvest by Madge Swindells. Set in Capetown in 1938, this story is about a beautiful, headstrong woman who risks all to gain power, fabulous wealth, and a proud dynasty to inherit it. Signet, 1986. [RL 8 IL 10+]

The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway's story about members of the "lost generation" who live for pleasure and search for meaning in their lives. Scribner's, 1982. [RL 11 IL 12+]

Tender Is the Night by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald's continued exploration of the American dream gone sour. Macmillan, 1977. [RL 11 IL 7-12]

Winesburg, Ohio by Sherwood Anderson. A united collection of short stories that lays bare the life of a small town in the American Midwest. Penguin, 1987. [RL 8 IL 10+]

Drama

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller. The American dream goes bad for Willy Loman, an unsuccessful salesman whose sons don't follow in his footsteps. Penguin, 1949. [RL 9 IL 9+]

Emperor Jones by Eugene O'Neill. Brutus Jones, a former African-American Pullman porter, takes over a West Indies island and sets himself up as emperor. The play became a sensation when it opened in Greenwich Village in 1920, and it helped fuel interest in the Harlem Renaissance. Prentice Hall, 1960. [RL 9 IL 11+]

continued

Famous American Plays of the Nineteen Twenties edited by Kenneth MacGowan. Includes *The Moon of the Caribbees, What Price Glory?, They Knew What They Wanted, Porgy,* and *Holiday.* Dell, 1980. [RL 9 IL 9+]

Nonfiction

Black Music in America: A History Through Its People by James Haskins. Surveys the history of black music in America, from early slave songs through jazz and the blues to soul, classical music, and current trends. HarperCollins, 1993. [RL 6 IL 7-12]

Duke Ellington by Ron Frankl. Chronicles the life of internationally acclaimed jazz musician Duke Ellington from the Harlem Renaissance through his later years. Chelsea House, 1989. [RL 7 IL 5-10]

Louis Armstrong by Sam Tanehaus. Biography of the great African-American master of jazz. Chelsea House, 1989. [RL 7 IL 5-10]

Only Yesterday by Frederick Lewis Allen. Story of America during the 1920s. Harper and Row, 1986. [RL 10 IL 9-12]

Poetry

"Burning the Candle at Both Ends" by Edna St. Vincent Millay

"One Perfect Rose" by Dorothy Parker

Short Stories

"Bernice Bobs Her Hair" by F. Scott Fitzgerald

"City of Refuge" by Rudolph Fischer

"The Egg" by Sherwood Anderson

"The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield

"I Want to Know Why" by Sherwood Anderson

"I'm a Fool" by Sherwood Anderson

"A Telephone Call" by Dorothy Parker

"Winter Dreams" by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Videos

American Documents: The Age of Ballyhoo. Narrated by Gloria Swanson, this Emmy Award-winning documentary explains the world of flappers, jazz, and speakeasies. Republic Pictures Home Video. (VHS, 52 min., color)

Bernice Bobs Her Hair. This dramatization of F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story stars Shelley Duvall. Part of the American Short Story Collection. Distributed by Perfection Learning Corporation. (VHS, 49 min., color)

Good News. This musical representation of life of a 1920s college campus uses songs like *The Varsity Drag* and *The Charleston* to show the spirit of the Jazz Age. MGM/Universal. (VHS, 95 min., color)

The Great Gatsby. The 1974 version of Fitzgerald's novel, with Robert Redford and Mia Farrow. Closely parallels the structure of the novel. Distributed by Perfection Learning Corporation. (VHS, 144 min., color)

Roaring '20s: Witness to History. This documentary discussion covers suffragettes, Prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan, Darwin, and automation. Guidance Associates. (VHS, 60 min., B&W)

Warring and Roaring. From the outbreak of WWI to the stock market crash of 1929, this documentary uses photos, cartoons, and news clips to explain why the 1920s roared. Mastervision. (VHS, 60 min., color)

Using Latitudes in Your Classroom

*The following discussion topics and activities are suggestions for incorporating pieces from **Latitudes** into your curriculum. Most suggestions can be adapted for independent, small group, or whole class activities. In addition, the list includes activities that can be done before, during, and after reading the novel. The variety of choices allows you to modify and use those activities that will make **The Great Gatsby** meaningful to your students.*

About the Author

1. F. Scott Fitzgerald said that he grew up "in a house below average on a street above the average." Ask students to explain what he means by this statement. What might such a statement say about Fitzgerald's values?
2. With students, chart the similarities and differences between Scott and Zelda's relationship and Gatsby and Daisy's affair.
3. Invite students to chart the attitudes toward money, love, and responsibility of the characters in the novel. Ask students to indicate which characters seem to express Fitzgerald's values the most. You might want to use a grid such as the one below.

Character	Attitude toward wealth	Attitude toward love	Attitude toward responsibility
Daisy			
Gatsby			
Jordan			
Nick			
Tom			
Myrtle			
George			

Critics' Comments

1. Suggest that students compare and contrast the critics' comments. They could look for points of agreement or disagreement among the reviewers.
2. Critic Isabel Paterson said that *The Great Gatsby* "is a book of the season only." As students read the novel, challenge them to indicate sections of the novel that transcend the 1920s. Or, if students cannot find such passages, challenge them to prepare evidence that the novel was indeed "of the season only."
3. Invite students to form groups of two to present "thumbs up/thumbs down" oral reviews of *The Great Gatsby* for the class. Remind students that a convincing review not only states an opinion but also provides evidence for that opinion. Retelling parts of the story may help support opinions.

continued

Voices from the Novel

1. Before students read *The Great Gatsby,* have them note the conflicts that emerge through the quotes. Encourage students to predict what might happen in the book.
2. As students read, encourage them to note other meaningful statements in the book that reflect a central idea or theme. As a follow-up, students could write an essay that explains or defends one or more of the statements they selected.
3. After they read the book, discuss with students modern issues and conflicts that are similar to those in the book.

A Time in History

1. Note with students the historical events of the 1920s on the timeline. Invite them to find out more information about events they are not familiar with. Students could then try to generalize about life in America during the 1920s.
2. Note with students that several important events opened the decade of the 1920s. First was the trauma of World War I, followed by the 18th and 19th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. As students read the novel, have them indicate passages that relate to these events in American history. As a follow-up students could research one of the historical events and write a report on its effects on Fitzgerald in specific and America in general.
3. Interested students may want to extend the timeline. They could take a topic from the novel, such as jazz music, dance, or attitudes toward wealth, and trace historical developments from the 1920s to the present.

The Geographical Picture/A Decade of Ups and Downs

1. Have students note the regions on the map that show particularly high or low per capita income. Discuss the reasons for this. Invite students to note the ways Fitzgerald uses geographical and economic differences in the novel.
2. Note with students that Nick (as well as Fitzgerald) is from the Midwest. But he has come to New York to get into the bond business. Have students speculate about how midwesterners might feel about life in the more wealthy East. How might easterners view people from the Midwest? As they read the novel, have students note passages where Fitzgerald deals with these issues. As a follow-up, students could write an essay on their findings.
3. Ask students if they think there are still differences in attitudes and values between the Midwest and the coasts. You might want to stage a debate on the following statement: "America is becoming homogenous. There are no differences between one region and the next." Students would present evidence that supports their point of view—pro or con.

continued

Viewpoints on Prohibition

1. After reading these statements, ask students to write down their reactions, feelings, and questions. Ask students to share what they have written and encourage a class dialogue about their responses.
2. Invite students to chart the various viewpoints. Then challenge them to write a short public statement on the topic of Prohibition for each of the main characters in *The Great Gatsby*. You may want to warn students that a character's statement may not correspond to his or her actions.
3. Interested students may want to research Prohibition further. Following is a list of possible topics.
   - Anti-Saloon League
   - Prohibition and religious intolerance
   - Volstead Act
   - law enforcement during Prohibition

Al Capone/The St. Valentine's Day Massacre

1. Invite your students to compare the language of the following people.
   - Al Capone
   - the gangster in Bud Freeman's piece
   - the journalist in "The St. Valentine's Day Massacre"

   Following are some prompts you might pose to begin discussion.
   - Does Capone fit your stereotype of a gangster? Explain.
   - Does the gangster in the Freeman piece fit that stereotype? Explain.
   - Does the newspaper article sensationalize gangsters? Explain.
2. As students read the novel, have them note descriptions of Gatsby's alleged gangster activity. Then invite them to respond to the following questions.
   - What is Fitzgerald saying about the American Dream when he makes the idealist Gatsby a racketeer?
   - In what way does Gatsby's idealism match the following statement by Al Capone: "I have a wife and boy who is eleven—a lad I idolize—and a beautiful home at Palm Island, Florida. If I could go there and forget it all I would be the happiest man in the world. I want peace and I will live and let live."
3. Invite students to write a news account of Gatsby's death in the style of the account of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

"Say it ain't so, Joe"

1. Explain to students that Fitzgerald sometimes included historical events in his fiction. One example is the 1919 World Series scandal. Invite students to speculate why Fitzgerald would include such an event in a novel.
2. As students read, have them note the scene where the 1919 World Series is mentioned. Invite students to chart Nick and Gatsby's responses to the affair.

continued

3. Interested students may want to investigate gambling and sports in more detail. Following are some sports figures that have been involved with gambling.
   - Pete Rose
   - Alex Karras
   - Art Schlicter
   - Connie Hawkins

Two Parties

1. Invite students to compare the two party scenes. You might use a chart such as the one below.

	Edmund Wilson	**Sinclair Lewis**
What attitude does the writer have toward the young people described?		
What attitude does the writer have toward the values of the older generation?		
What, if anything, is being mocked or satirized?		

2. As students read, have them note party scenes in *The Great Gatsby*. They could extend the above chart to include Nick's and Fitzgerald's views of the parties.
3. Interested students could write short expository or fictional scenes that demonstrate tensions between the older and younger generations today.
4. Invite students to write a short description of a party they have attended. Or have them describe the "perfect" party.

The Flapper/Bobbed Hair

1. Remind students that American women gained the right to vote in 1920. Invite them to speculate on how the extension of the vote might have changed relationships between the sexes, between generations, and between rich and the poor.
2. As students read the novel, have them note Fitzgerald's descriptions of women. Invite them to respond to the following questions.
   - Are Fitzgerald's descriptions fair? Explain.
   - What do you think Fitzgerald is saying about women in *The Great Gatsby*?
3. Invite students to compare Daisy, Jordan, or Myrtle with women characters from other works of the period.

continued

Dance Contests/The Charleston

1. List with students dance forms that have been popular in the last several decades. Invite them to speculate what the form "says" about the time period in which it was popular. You might use a chart similar to the chart below. Then have students read the two sections and add the Charleston and dance contests to the chart.

Dance	Period	Description of Time Period
Break dancing		
Reggae		
Slam dancing		
Disco		
The Twist		

2. As students read the novel, have them note Fitzgerald's depiction of dance and dance music. Ask them what Nick's attitude seems to be toward the new forms.
3. Interested students might want to compare the fads of the 1920s with fads of today.

Voices of the Harlem Renaissance/Viewpoints on Jazz

1. Inform students that much of the youth culture of the 1920s was inspired by African-American influences. Journalist J. A. Rogers noted that "jazz with its mocking disregard for formality is a leveller and makes for democracy." List with students more contemporary art forms that have broken through barriers of race and class. Have students note how characters in the novel react to such democratization.
2. With students, chart how they think the characters in *The Great Gatsby* would have responded to jazz music. Invite students to write a short editorial on jazz from the point of view of one of the characters.
3. Journalist J. A. Rogers wrote that jazz music reached its height of popularity when "minds were reacting from the horrors and strain of war." Interested students may want to research the other effects of World War I or other wars in American history. What effects did World War II, the Korean War, or the conflict in Vietnam have on the arts?

The Rising Tide of Color

1. Inform students that characters in Fitzgerald's novels mention or quote from trendy books of the period. Invite students to speculate about Fitzgerald's purpose for mentioning book titles in his fiction.
2. Tom Buchanan mentions Stoddard's book *The Rising Tide of Color,* but he refers to it as " 'The Rise of the Colored Empires' by this man Goddard." Tom also says "...it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been

continued

proved." Invite students to review the Stoddard quotation and respond to the following prompts.
- Do you think Stoddard's statements are scientific? Explain.
- Do you think Tom has read the book? Explain your response.
- What is the impression you get from Tom in this scene?

3. Interested students may want to research the growth of racism and Nazism in America during the 1920s.

Viewpoints on the Talkies

1. Invite students to compare and chart the viewpoints on the talkies. You might ask them which of the commentators' views proved most accurate.
2. In his comment on the talkies, Aldous Huxley wrote, "The latest and most frightful creation-saving device for the production of standardized amusement." Invite discussion on this quotation with some of the following prompts.
   - What could Huxley mean by "creation-saving" and "standardized amusement"?
   - Do you agree with Huxley's view? Explain.
   - Do you think Fitzgerald would agree with Huxley's reaction to "standardized amusement"? Is there evidence for Fitzgerald's view in *The Great Gatsby*?
3. Interested students may want to conduct a survey in which they ask people how they feel about new technologies. Following are some new technologies they could include in their survey.
   - computers
   - CD-ROM and laser disk technologies
   - cable television
   - virtual reality
   - distance learning

The Movies and the Censors

1. Item number five of the second list mentions that care should be taken in the depiction of "theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc. (having in mind the effect which a too-detailed description of these may have upon the moron)." Invite students to debate the following statement: "Movies, novels, and news accounts that depict unlawful activities in great detail should be banned because they give ideas to would-be criminals."
2. Explain to students that the idea of censorship is based on the notion that a small group or a single individual will decide what everyone should be allowed to see, hear, or say. Invite students to speculate if the following individuals would agree or disagree with censorship.
   - Gatsby
   - Tom
   - Nick
   - Fitzgerald

continued

3. Invite students to investigate a recent event or crime in which a person blamed his or her unlawful or violent behavior on suggestions from a movie, book, or song.

The Automobile

1. List with students the impact the automobile has had on society. Ask students if they believe automobiles have had an overall good or bad effect. Have them explain their response.
2. After students have read the novel, invite them to defend one of the statements below.
   - Fitzgerald uses the car as a plot device only. He isn't making a statement about the morality or immorality of the new mode of transport.
   - By the end of the novel, Nick longs for a simpler and slower tempo of life—the American way of life that existed before the automobile. Therefore, Nick (and Fitzgerald) feels that the automobile is helping to destroy the moral center of American life.
3. Interested students may want to research other effects of the automobile on American society. Following are some topics of interest.
   - the decline in streetcars and railroads
   - the development of roads and highways
   - the development of drive-in theaters, restaurants, and the like
   - roadsigns

Selling the American Dream

1. Before students read the novel, have them read these short excerpts on advertising. Challenge students to use the excerpts to compose a definition of the American Dream as viewed by advertisers.
2. Remind students that Fitzgerald made a meager living writing ad copy before his first novel was published. Have them note passages in the novel that refer to advertisements. Then ask students to summarize Fitzgerald's attitude toward the ad industry and the dreams it promotes.
3. In groups, have students trace the history of advertisements by decades from 1900 to the 1990s. They might select several products, such as automobiles, soaps, or garments. Then they could compare advertisements for each product through the decades.

Voices of 1920s Radio

1. With students, list some of the differences between the programs offered on radio stations in the 1920s and the programming of today's popular stations. You may want to introduce the terms "broadcasting" and "narrowcasting" to help focus discussion on changes in American radio and society.
2. As an interesting parallel, some students may want to compare early television programming to today's.

continued

Scott and Zelda/Letters

1. Fitzgerald wrote that he "married the heroine of [his] stories." As students read these two sections, invite them to list characteristics of Zelda. Then have them compose a character sketch. As they read *The Great Gatsby*, have them compare their character sketch with Daisy.
2. Remind students that women gained the right to vote in 1920. Then ask them to respond to the following statement using quotations from these selections as well as *The Great Gatsby* to support their view—pro or con.
   - Women may have gained political equality with the vote. But socially, they were still treated unequally.
3. Interested students may want to read Zelda Fitzgerald's novel *Save Me the Waltz* or Nancy Mitford's biography titled *Zelda*. From their reading, they could write a paper contrasting Zelda to Fitzgerald's fictional character Daisy.

Dear Max

1. Invite students to remember times they have let someone else read their own writing. You might have them write a short journal entry on the topic. Then have them read these letters between Scott and Max and compare their feelings with Fitzgerald's.
2. In his first letter, Fitzgerald writes, "I am tired of being the author of *This Side of Paradise*." Ask students what they think this statement means. You might use some of the following prompts to get discussion started.
   - What are some of the costs of popularity?
   - Should a writer or artist ignore the marketplace and produce what he or she feels? Or should the artist create what he or she knows will sell?
   - Does a famous writer (or celebrity) owe anything to his or her audience? For example, should a famous sports star try to be a role model for his or her fans?

Fitzgerald's Favorite Books

1. Invite students to select one of the books on the list to read fully or in part. They could then write a short synopsis of the book. You might want to challenge students to compose a short essay on how Fitzgerald was influenced by the book.
2. Ask students how important it is for a writer to also be a reader of other people's works. As a follow-up, invite students to create their own list of ten favorite books along with annotations that explain why the book is important to them.
3. Invite students to conduct a survey in which they ask individuals to list their favorite ten books. Students' lists could be compiled and categorized by age and/or gender. Ask students to generate generalizations from the survey results.

continued

Songs/Poems of the Jazz Age

1. Challenge students to compare the text of one of the songs with the attitude of one of the characters in *The Great Gatsby.* Of interest would be the way the song or poem expresses the feelings or attitudes of the character.
2. Suggest that students write a poem describing their favorite type of music. Or have them find a musical selection that would make good background music for one or both of the poems.

Student Projects

The suggestions below will help you extend your learning about the 1920s. The categories give choices for reading, writing, speaking, and visual activities. You are also encouraged to design your own project.

The Historian's Study

1. The 1920s and the 1980s have been described as similar decades. Compare these two eras. You might try to answer questions such as the following:
   - What were the relations like between the rich and poor in the two eras?
   - What was happening on the stock market?
   - How did activity on the stock market affect the rest of society?
   - How were relations between the generations in the two eras?
   - How was the new music in each era received?
   - What were the relations like between the races in the two eras?
   - Did the lifestyles of the 1920s lead to the stock market crash of 1929?
   - How did the lifestyles of the 1980s affect the economy of the 1990s?
2. Research the history of jazz music. Share your findings in a multimedia presentation that includes visuals, text, and musical selections.
3. Research the development of Nazism in Europe and America during the 1920s and 1930s. Present your findings in a timeline. You may want to extend the timeline to include the 1980s and 1990s.
4. Research the development of labor-saving devices for the homemaker during the 1920s. Present a report that outlines the effects such devices had on women at home and in the work force. You may want to illustrate your report with advertisements for the devices.
5. Create a bulletin board display of the Harlem Renaissance. Your display could include photographs of important individuals, as well as quotations. Be sure to include photographs of important landmarks such as streets, speakeasies, and hotels.
6. Research the expatriate artists and writers who formed a group in Paris during the 1920s. Find photographs of the individuals involved and write short biographies of each. Be sure to highlight the paintings and written works produced by the group members.

The Artist's Studio

1. In his piece titled "Jazz at Home," journalist J. A. Rogers states that jazz has always existed in other forms. Research one or more of the dance or musical forms Rogers lists and present your findings to the class. You may want to indicate how (or whether) the dance or song form is similar to jazz.
   - Native-American dances
   - Highland fling
   - Irish jig

continued

- Cossack dance
- Spanish fandango
- Brazilian *maxixe*
- dance of the whirling dervish
- hula hula of the South Seas
- *dance du ventre* of the Orient
- *carmagnole* of the French Revolution
- Gypsy music
- ragtime

2. During the 1920s, European and American artists began using African motifs in their art. Cubism was one of the products of the marriage of African and European art forms. Research this trend and create a slide show that shows some of the African influences on the art of the 1920s.
3. Imagine you are living in the 1920s. Create a cover for one of the major magazines that represents the tempo of the times.
4. Select an appropriate topic and draw a political cartoon that emphasizes some aspect of the novel. You might consider the American Dream, the fast pace of life on the East Coast, or the shallowness of high society.
5. Draw an advertisement of Gatsby's car.
6. Create an invitation to one of Gatsby's lavish parties. You may want to research the typefaces (printed letters) used in high-class publications to make your invitation look authentic.
7. Create a cover illustration for a new edition of *The Great Gatsby*.

The Writer's Workshop

1. Using Nick's style, retell an event that shaped your views of the world.
2. View one or more of the movies of *The Great Gatsby*. Then write a report comparing and contrasting the movie(s) to each other or to the novel. Were any scenes changed or deleted? Does the movie live up to your expectations? How would you change the movie?
3. Write a poem or short story that expresses ideas or feelings you gained from reading *The Great Gatsby*.
4. Write ad copy for an object in the novel—say Gatsby's car, or his shirts, or a piece of clothing that Daisy might have worn. Try to make your ad copy reflect the era of the 1920s.
5. Write a diary entry of one of the many people who attended Gatsby's parties. Imagine that you have just heard of Gatsby's death. Explain why you are not going to his funeral.
6. Write an obituary for Gatsby that might have appeared in a New York newspaper.
7. Write a poem or short story describing today's young generation.
8. Compose an essay on how women are portrayed in *The Great Gatsby*.
9. Write a prologue to *The Great Gatsby* in which you tell about the life of one of the main characters 10 years after Gatsby's death.
10. Analyze several advertisements in current magazines and write an essay about today's values as expressed in ads.

continued

The Speaker's Platform

1. Imagine that *The Great Gatsby* is going to be made into a play. Select a scene from the book and write a script for it. Then present your scene, using class members as actors.
2. Create a theatrical presentation on the 1920s called *The Jazz Age*. Include selections of jazz music, readers' theater presentations of newspaper accounts from the period, dramatic readings of poetry, as well as scenes from popular novels or plays of the period including *The Great Gatsby*.
3. Debate the differences between the generations. One side will argue that the values of the older generation should get more respect. The other side will argue that the younger generation needs to make its own mark on the world.
4. Role-play a dilemma the characters in *The Great Gatsby* faced. (A *dilemma* is a difficult problem in which all the possible solutions have both advantages and disadvantages.) For example, Gatsby placed himself in danger by staying and waiting to see if Daisy would leave Tom. Select another dilemma from the book to role-play with several of your classmates. Or choose a modern-day problem that is similar to one in the novel. You might portray several solutions to the dilemma or have your audience choose one solution for you to act out.

Sample selections from
The Great Gatsby **LATITUDES®**

About the Novel

Story Synopsis
About the Author
Critics' Comments

The Roaring Twenties

A Time in History
The Geographical Picture
A Decade of Ups and Downs
Viewpoints on Prohibition
The St. Valentine's Day Massacre
"Say it ain't so, Joe"
The Flapper and Bobbed Hair
Dance Contests and The Charleston
Voices of the Harlem Renaissance
Viewpoints on Jazz
The Rising Tide of Color
Viewpoints on the Talkies
The Automobile
Selling the American Dream
Voices of 1920s Radio

Fitzgerald and the Twenties

Scott & Zelda
Letters
Dear Max
Fitzgerald's Favorite Books

Comparative Works

Songs and Poems of the Jazz Age
Suggested Reading and Viewing List

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