

POLITICS OF THE ROARING 20'S



SECTION 1: AMERICAN POSTWAR ISSUES

- The American public was exhausted from World War I
- Public debate over the League of Nations had divided America
- An economic downturn meant many faced **unemployment**
- A wave of nativism swept the nation



ISOLATIONISM

- Many Americans adopted a belief in isolationism
- **Isolationism** meant pulling away from involvement in world affairs



U.S. foreign
policy has
reverted to
unilateral
isolationism



FEAR OF COMMUNISM



- One perceived threat to American life was the spread of **Communism**
- Communism is an economic and political system based on a single-governmental party, equal distribution of resources, no private property and rule by a dictatorship





SOVIET UNION

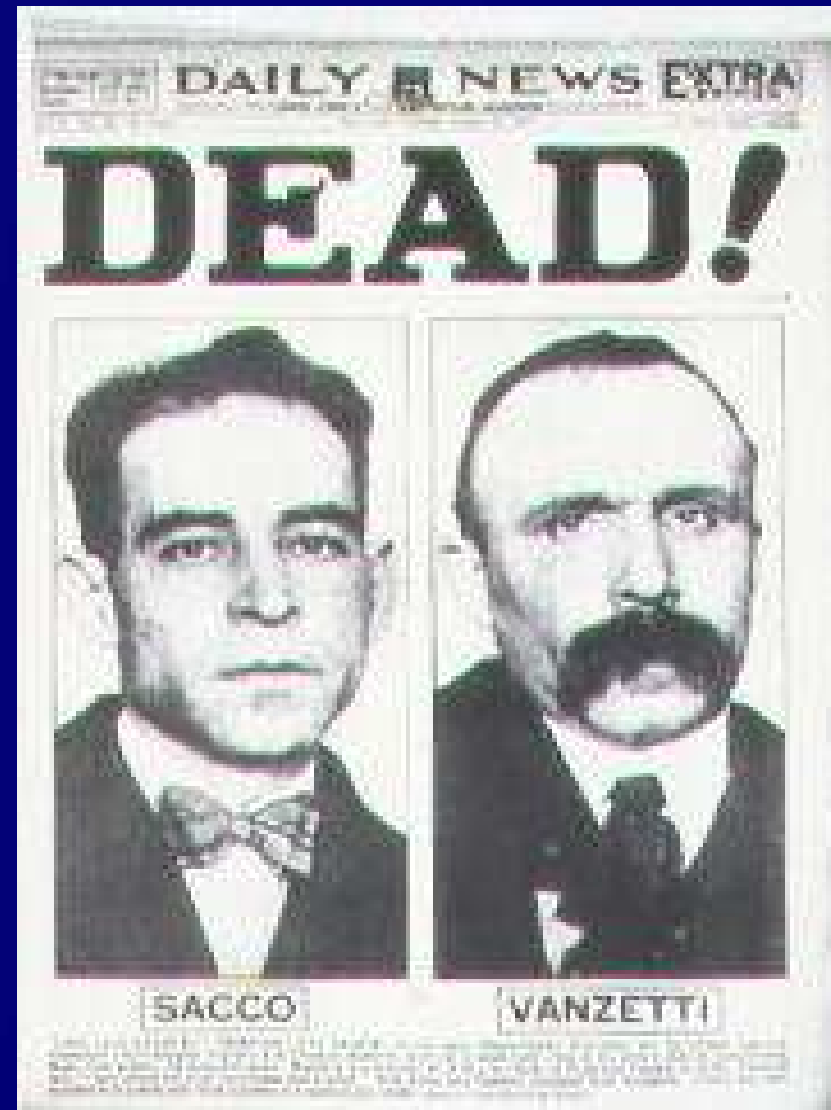
COMMUNISM

- Russia was transformed into the Soviet Union in 1917, a Communist state
- **Vladimir Lenin** led the Bolsheviks and overthrew the Czarist regime
- He was a follower of the Marxist doctrine of social equality
- A Communist party was formed in America, too



SACCO & VANZETTI

- The Red Scare fed nativism in America
- **Italian anarchists Sacco & Vanzetti** were a shoemaker and a fish peddler
- Convicted of robbery and murder despite flimsy evidence, their execution was symbolic of discrimination against radical beliefs during the Red Scare



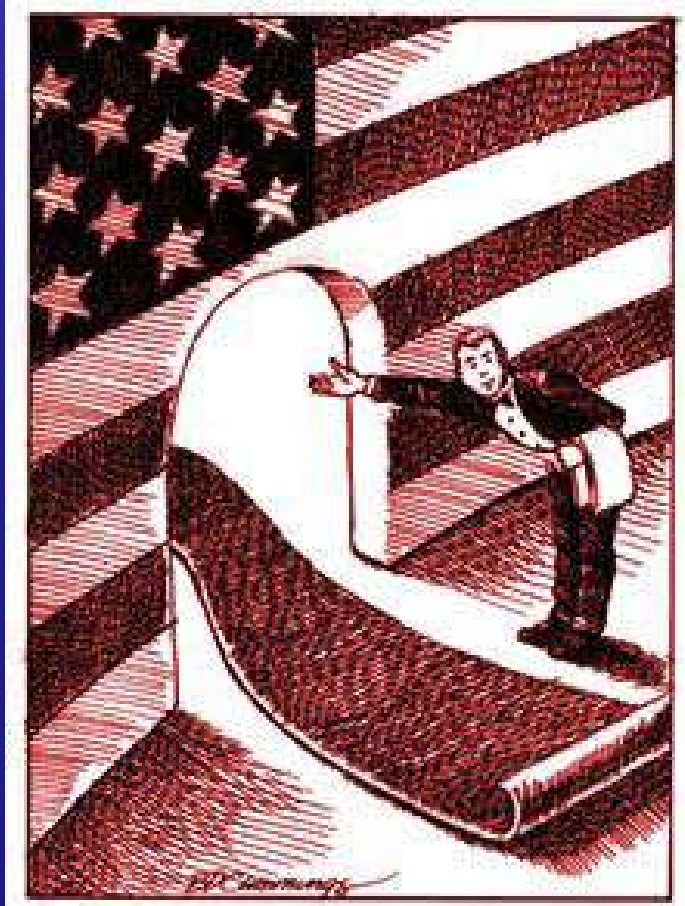
THE KLAN RISES AGAIN



- As the Red Scare and anti-immigrant attitudes reached a peak, the KKK was more popular than ever
- By 1924, the Klan had **4.5 million** members



CONGRESS LIMITS IMMIGRATION



America changed its formally permissive immigration policy

- Congress, in response to nativist pressure, decided to limit immigration from southern and eastern Europe
- **The Emergency Quota Act of 1921** set up a quota system to control and restrict immigration



A TIME OF LABOR UNREST



- Strikes were outlawed during WWI, however in 1919 there were more than **3,000 strikes** involving 4 million workers

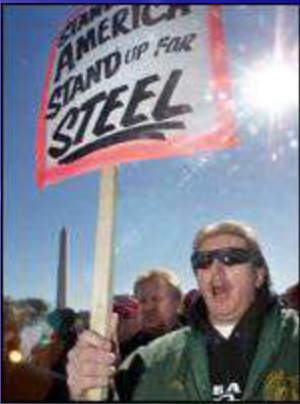


BOSTON POLICE STRIKE



- **Boston police** had not received a raise in years and were denied the right to unionize
- The National Guard was called
- New cops were hired



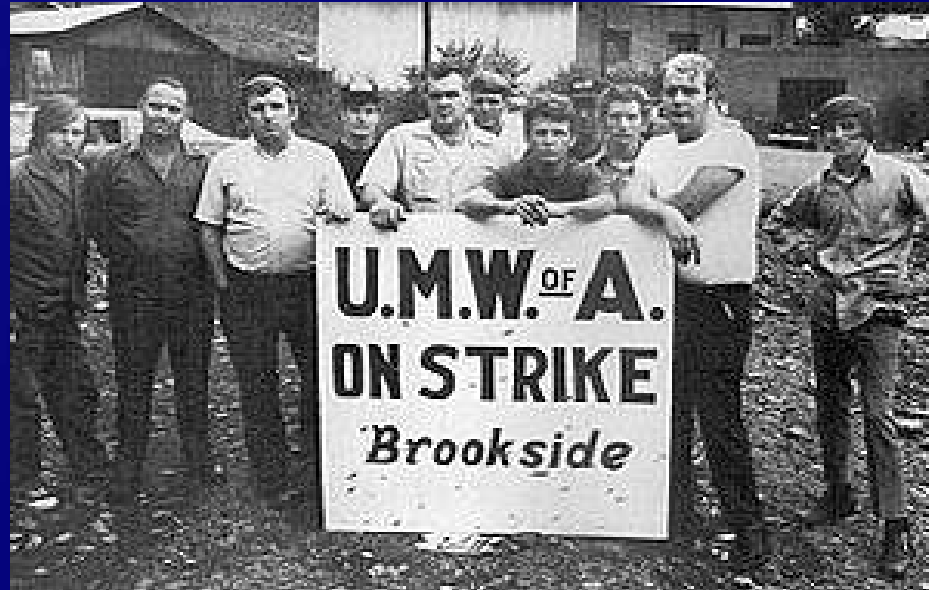


STEEL MILL STRIKE

- In September of 1919, the **U.S. Steel** Corporation refused to meet with union representatives
- In response, over 300,000 workers struck
- Scabs were hired while strikers were beaten by police and federal troops
- The strike was settled in 1920 with an 8-hour day but no union



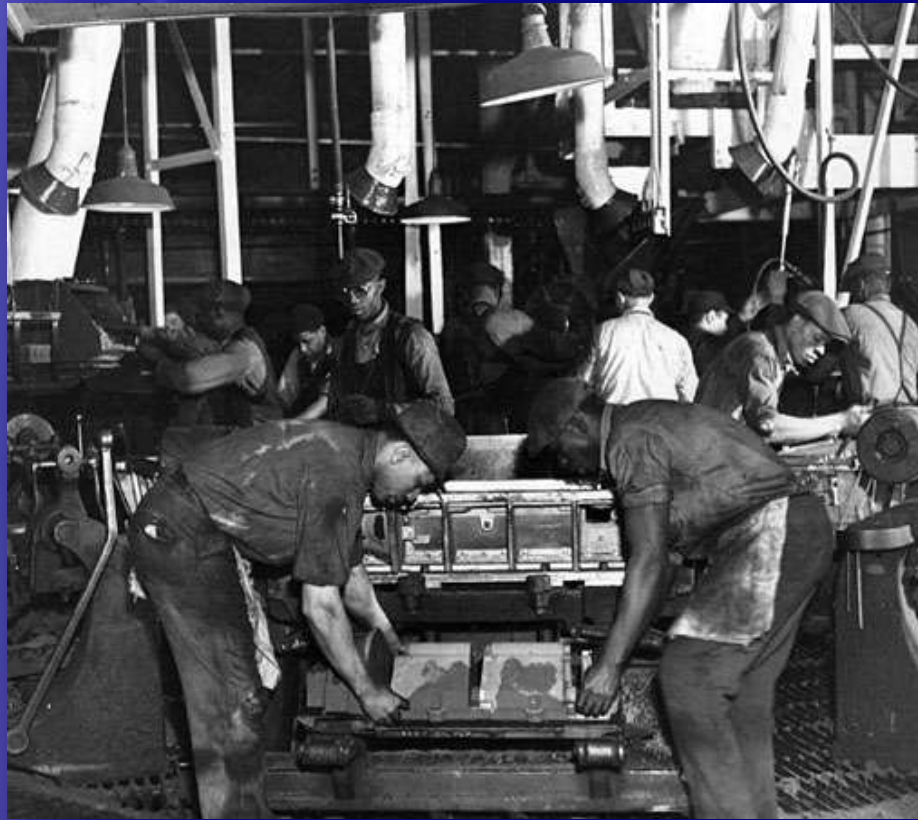
COAL MINERS' STRIKE



- In 1919, United Mine Workers led by **John L. Lewis** called a Strike on November 1
- Lewis met with an arbitrator appointed by President Wilson
- Lewis won a 27% pay raise and was hailed a hero



1920s: TOUGH TIMES FOR UNIONS



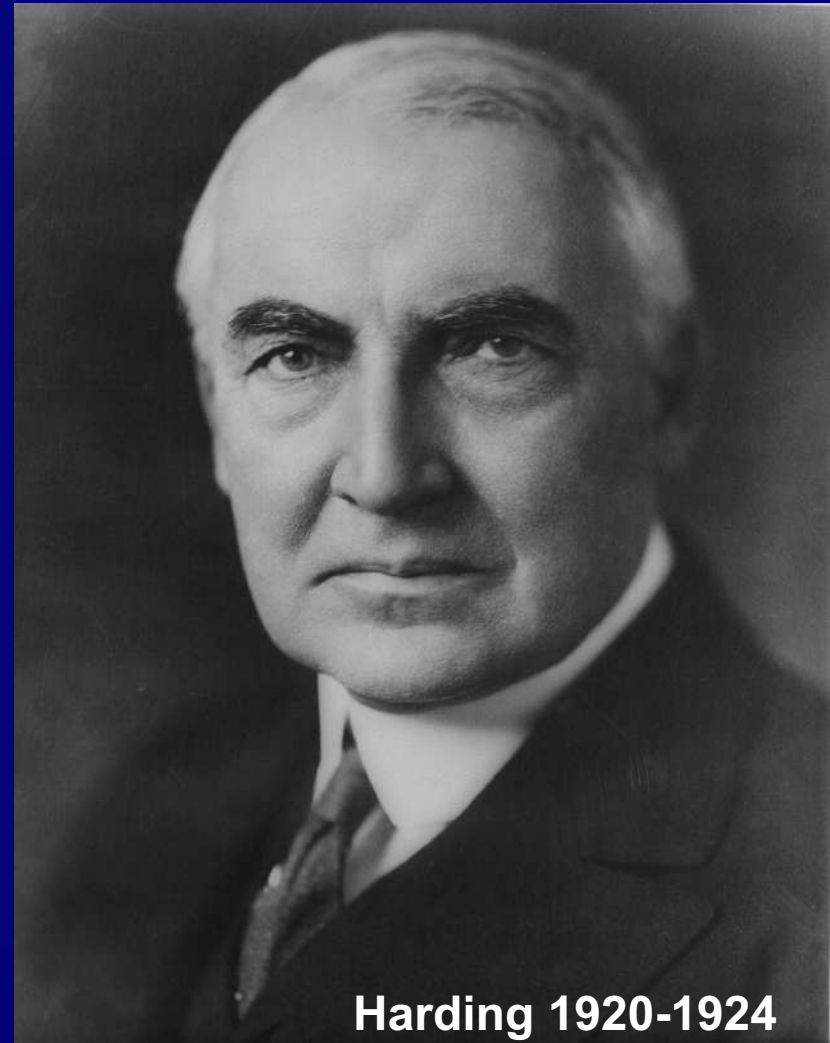
Ford Foundry workers in 1926;
only 1% of black workers were in
Unions at the time

- The 1920s hurt the labor movement
- Union membership dropped from 5 million to 3.5 million
- Why? **African Americans were excluded** from membership and immigrants were willing to work in poor conditions



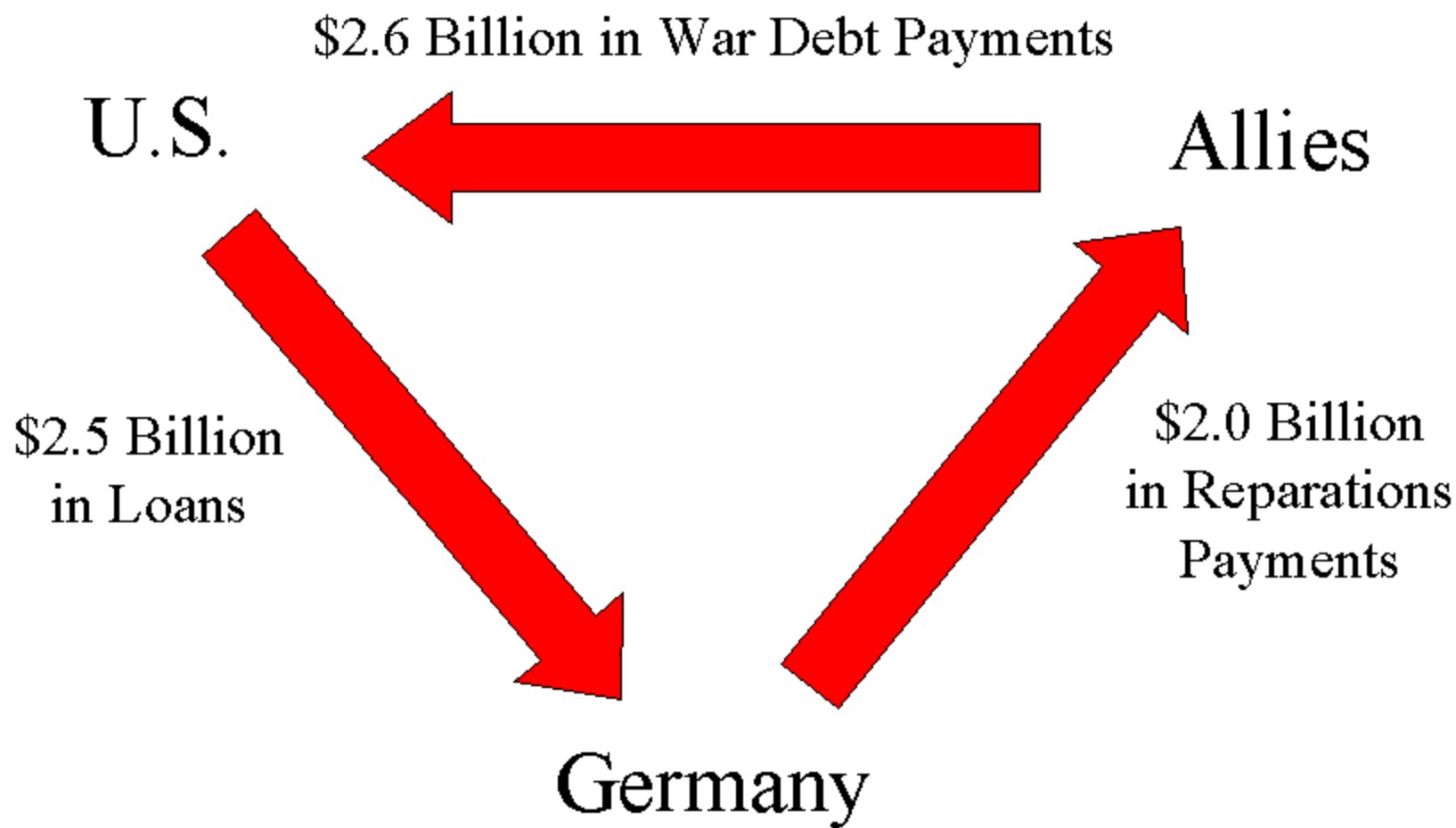
SECTION 2: THE HARDING PRESIDENCY

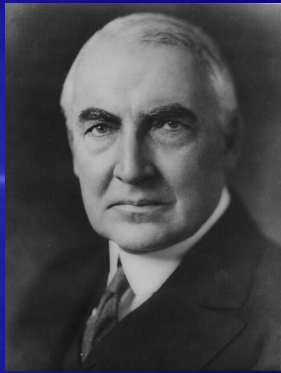
- Warren G. Harding's modest successes include the **Kellogg-Briand Pact** which renounced war as a means of national policy (signed by 15 nations, but difficult to enforce), and the **Dawes Plan** which solved the problem of post-war debt by providing loans to Germany to pay France/Britain who then paid the U.S.



Harding 1920-1924

The International Financial System Under the Dawes Plan and Young Plan 1924-30





SCANDAL HITS HARDING

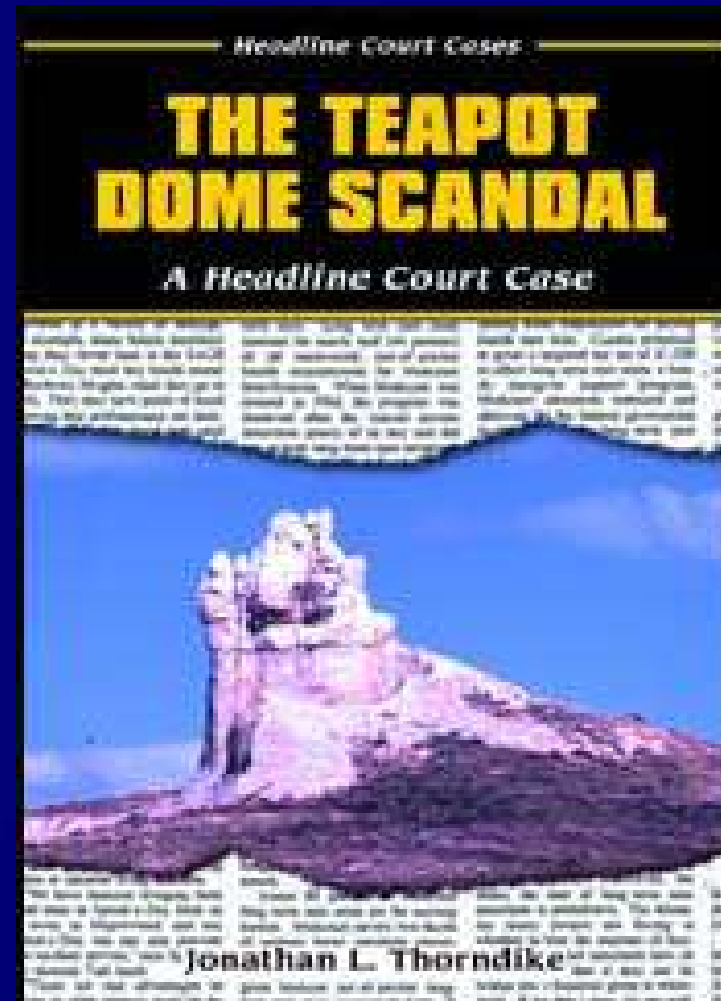
- The president's main problem was that he didn't understand many of the issues
- Several of Harding's appointees were **caught illegally selling government supplies to private companies**



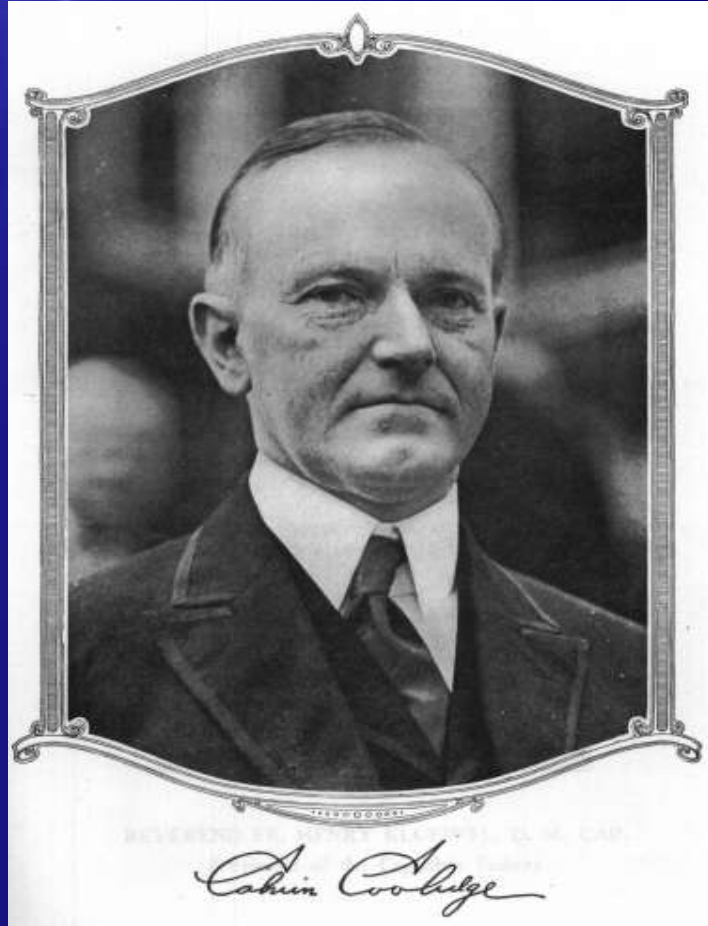


TEAPOT DOME SCANDAL

- The worst case of corruption was the Teapot Dome Scandal
- The government set aside oil-rich public land in Teapot, WY
- **Secretary of Interior Albert Fall** secretly leased the land to two oil companies
- Fall received \$400,000 from the oil companies and a **felony conviction** from the courts



SECTION 3: THE BUSINESS OF AMERICA



President Calvin Coolidge
1924-1928

- The new president, **Calvin Coolidge**, fit the **pro-business** spirit of the 1920s very well
- His famous quote:
“The chief business of the American people is business . . .the man who builds a factory builds a temple – the man who works there worships there”





AMERICAN BUSINESS FLOURISHES

- Both Coolidge and his Republican successor Herbert Hoover, favored governmental policies that **kept taxes down and business profits up**
- Tariffs were high which helped American manufacturers
- Government interference in business was minimal
- Wages were increasing



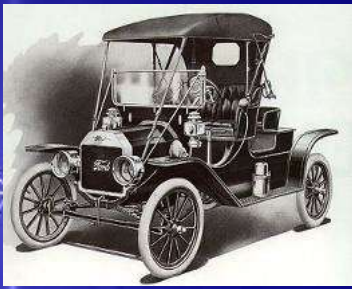
THE IMPACT OF THE AUTO



The Ford Model T was the first car in America. It came only in black and sold for \$290. Over 15 million were sold by 1927.

- The auto was the backbone of the American economy from 1920 through the 1970s
- It also **profoundly altered** the American landscape and **society**





IMPACT OF THE AUTO

Among the many changes
were:

- Paved roads, traffic lights
- Motels, billboards
- Home design
- Gas stations, repair shops
- Shopping centers
- Freedom for rural families
- **Independence** for women and young people
- Cities like Detroit, Flint, Akron grew
- By 1920 80% of world's vehicles in U.S.



Crossroads



AIRLINE TRANSPORT BECOMES COMMON



- The **airline industry** began as a mail carrying service and quickly “took off”
- By 1927, Pan American Airways was making the transatlantic passenger flights

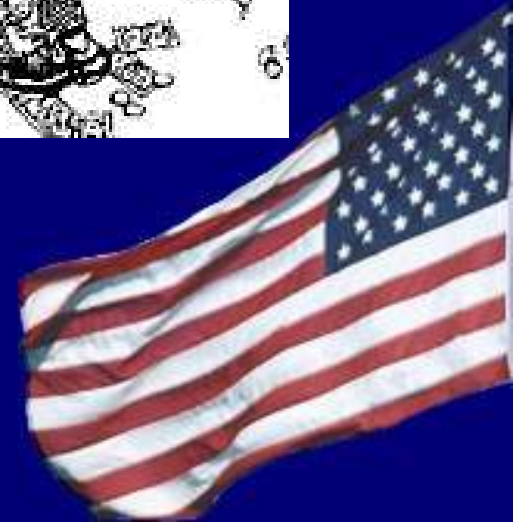
When commercial flights began, all flight attendants were female and white





AMERICAN STANDARD OF LIVING SOARS

- The years 1920-1929 were prosperous ones for the U.S.
- Americans owned 40% of the world's wealth
- The average annual **income rose 35%** during the 1920s (\$522 to \$705)
- Discretionary income increased



ELECTRICAL CONVENIENCES



- While gasoline powered much of the economic boom of the 1920s, the use of **electricity** also transformed the nation



Electric refrigerators, stoves, irons, toasters, vacuums, washing machines and sewing machines were all new

YOUR
AD
HERE

MODERN ADVERTISING EMERGES

- Ad agencies no longer sought to merely “inform” the public about their products
- They hired psychologists to study how best to appeal to Americans’ desire for youthfulness, beauty, health and wealth
- **“Say it with Flowers”** slogan actually doubled sales between 1912-1924



"Show me somethin' that says: 'Darlin, sorry I killed your boss.'"

A SUPERFICIAL PROSPERITY



- Many during the 1920s believed the prosperity would go on forever
- Wages, production, GNP, and the stock market all rose significantly
- **But. . . .**



PROBLEMS ON THE HORIZON?

- Businesses expanded recklessly
- Iron & railroad industries faded
- Farms nationwide suffered losses due to overproduction
- Too much was bought on **credit** (installment plans) including stocks

