Inherit the Wind Allusions Notes for Act 1

Directions:
As you read, you will come across a number of allusions which the playwrights thought their audience would understand, but which might be unclear to you. Look over this list before you begin, and then refer back to it as you read the play. The allusions include: Biblical and religious references, scientific terms and theories, court terms, literature, history, and popular culture.

Act 1 scene 1:

1. Darwin and evolution—Charles Darwin (1809—1882) wrote the Origin of Species in 1859; in it, he claimed that plants and animals (and humans!) developed from a more primitive form through a process of natural selection.
2. Chautauqua (p.8) —Named for the NY town in which the practice started, the first chautauqua was a Methodist summer education program for adults in 1874. This developed into a traveling group which held lectures and concerts under tents. A good speaker was an interesting attraction and drew in a crowd; men like Brady could practice their oratory skills giving religious speeches.
3. Coxey's army (p.11) — In the 1890s, a man named Coxey led a march of unemployed men on Washington; it didn't amount to much, and references comparing something to Coxey's army are generally an insult. In this use, it seems to mean there has never been anything big in this town before, because Coxey's army was really no big deal.
4. Elijah (p.12) —9th century BCE. The greatest prophet of the Bible's Old Testament, Elijah spent his life protesting against the idolatry and corruption of Israel. He clashed with King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. His death was mysterious—he didn't die, but rather disappeared in a chariot of fire and a whirlwind.
5. Bible Belt (p.13) —H.L. Mencken coined this term in 1925; he was referring to regions of the USA, especially in the southeast, where fundamentalist beliefs prevail and Christian (especially Baptist and Protestant) clergymen are particularly influential.
6. Zion (p.15) —means "fortress." Referred to the city of Jerusalem, which was originally a stronghold and became a holy site. "Marching to Zion" is of course a religious song, but in this case, it seems to imply they are heading off to a battle.
7. legions of the Lion-Hearted (p.15) —This refers to Richard I, the Lion Hearted (1157—1199), a hero in English tradition. As King of England, Richard led one of the Crusades against the Moorish "heathens" in the Holy Land but could not retake Jerusalem. During his absence, the mythical Robin of the Hood was fighting to protect the rights of the innocent. In this use, Hornbeck is comparing Brady to Richard.
8. pith helmet (p.16)—Looks like a white helmet; the sort of thing you'd see on pictures of British men on safari in Africa. I have no idea why Brady is wearing one here, except that it would keep the sun off.
9. two Chicago child murderers (p.24)—Darrow (the real life Drummond, remember?) represented Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb in 1924. The two men were intelligent college students on trial for the murder of Bobby Franks, whom they had held for ransom. Darrow saved them from the death penalty when they were ruled insane; their sentence was life + 99 years. (He did not "get them off," as Bannister implies.)
10. Goliath (p.25)—Bible story. A giant in the Philistine army, Goliath supposedly subdued whole armies of Israelites single-handedly. He challenged them to man-to-man combat, and was eventually slain by the shepherd boy, David, who hurled a rock with his slingshot. Evidently, Brady considers himself a modern-day David battling against the larger forces of the non-religious world.
11. St. George (p.26)—A legendary Roman soldier who slew a dragon that had been eating all the sheep and youth of a town in Asia Minor, George was a Christian martyr; he was put to death for his belief in Christianity and later sainted. He became the patron saint of England in 1348, more than 1000 years after he lived.
12. Sodom and Gomorrah (p.28)—In the Bible, these are twin cities destroyed by God for their wickedness. Here, Hornbeck is being sarcastic, as usual. He is referring to the assumptions that Southerners would make about an "evil northern city" like Baltimore, thereby making assumptions himself.

13. Happy Hooligan, Barney Google, Abe Kabibble (p.28)—These comic strip characters of the 1920s were sad clowns and failures in life.
14. Socrates (p.29)—Socrates (469?—399 BCE) was one of the great philosophers of Western tradition. He was put on trial for corrupting the youth of Athens, Greece by teaching them to think; he was also critical about the government. Given the choice between recanting all he had said and death, he chose to drink poisonous hemlock.
15. Dreyfus(p.29)—Alfred Dreyfus (1859—1935) was a French army officer accused of spying for Germany. Arrested in 1894, his first trial resulted in a sentence of life imprisonment on Devil's Island. Supporters got him another trial, but it didn't help: all testimony that favored Dreyfus was barred from the court. Worldwide public opinion eventually convinced the French president to pardon him. This reference seems to provide some subtle foreshadowing.
16. Romeo (p.29)—You know this one, of course. Romeo was one of the star-crossed lovers doomed by his family's foolish feud.
17. Little Eva and the Tree of Knowledge (p.29)—Although Little Eva is an angelic character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, this use of the name seems to refer to the story of the Garden of Eden in the Bible's book of Genesis. Eve was tempted by the serpent into tasting a forbidden apple from the Tree of Knowledge; she then shared it with Adam. This transgression led to their banishment from Eden.
18. Sleeping Beauty (p.31)—In the story, a princess is cursed into sleeping for 100 years, to be awakened only by the kiss of a prince. Hornbeck implies that she is "asleep" to, or clueless about, the way things really are, the way modern things are replacing the old. See next…
19. Henry's Lizzie (p.31)—This refers to Henry Ford's Tin Lizzie, the nickname of Ford's 1908 Model T-Ford; it was the first mass-produced automobile, and could be put together in 93 minutes.
20. Messiah (p.31)—This term generally refers to Christ; it literally means the "anointed one." In this usage, it seems to point to Brady as a prophet, but one who has been left behind by the changing times.
21. flivver (p.31)—a cheaply made car or aircraft
22. Marconi (p.31)—In 1896, the Italian physicist Guglielmo Marconi (1874—1937) patented the wireless telegraph which he developed into the commercial radio. To understand the difference the radio made, try to imagine yourself back before email and cell phones, before the internet (the world wide web didn't exist before the 1990s), before television (which came around in the 1950s)…and then back before radio. Imagine that the only way to get information from another place was through a letter or newspaper. The first experimental radio broadcast was in 1906; the first news program was in 1920 out of Detroit, Michigan. In the 1920s, radio became really possible for many people in the United States and Europe; until radios were really affordable, people would gather around a radio to listen to the news. It was a huge change; suddenly information could be disseminated in almost no time at all.
23. Montgomery Ward (p.31)—In the late 19th century, Ward started a mail-order catalog business. You can thank him for all the unsolicited catalogs that fill your mailbox. Note: You might want to think about whether Rachel has any idea what Hornbeck is talking about during this speech.

Act 1 scene 2:

24. Choosing a jury: Both lawyers are entitled to ask possible jury members questions, and to either accept or reject them; the idea is to eliminate anyone who might be unfairly prejudiced about the case.
25. Endicott Publishing case (p.42)—According to another teacher's notes, this was a real case defended by Darrow (the real life Drummond); however, I couldn't find information when I did a quick internet search.
26. Barnum and Bailey (p.44)—P.T. Barnum and James Bailey were American showmen and circus operators who teamed up in 1860 and began to tour the USA with acts and side shows. They are known for the phrase, "There's a sucker born every minute," referring to their ability to make money off their shows.

Inherit the Wind Allusions Notes for Act 2

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Act 2 scene 1:

1. Milton Sills and Douglas Fairbanks (p.55)—Both men were stars of silent films, and they played handsome, swashbuckling heroes, like Zorro.
2. Book of Genesis (throughout scene 1)—"Genesis" means origin or beginning. Genesis is the first book of the Bible, and of the Pentateuch (see below). Genesis covers the origin of the world (creation), and of the first man (Adam and Eve and their descendents), and of Noah and his descendents.
3. Pharoahs (p.59)—Honorary title for chief rulers of Egypt during early dynasties; the word means "king" and pharaohs were considered to be gods.

Act 2 scene 2:

4. Et tu, Brute (p.67)—Latin for "and you, too, Brutus?" This famous line is from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, though it was supposedly was taken from historical accounts of the assassination; the about-to-be assaulted Caesar turns to find his supposed-best friend Brutus is among those who have plotted to kill him. The line implies that the stab from a friend is worse than any other.
5. baptism (p.68)—Christian rite started by John the Baptist's ministry in which infants are baptized with water and pledged by their parents to be Christians. Adults who convert are baptized also.
6. Jonah and the whale (p.78)—Bible story. Jonah was a prophet sent by God to preach repentance. He rebelled and set out by ship; when a storm threatened the ship, the crew threw him over and he was swallowed by a great fish. When he was finally spit up, he began preaching.
7. Joshua (p.78)—Bible story. Successor of Moses and a military genius, Joshua entered the Promised Land to fight a battle against Jericho. He made the sun stand still (to keep the world in night) so he could kill five enemy kings.
8. Houdini (p.78)—Harry Houdini was a famous magician (1874—1926); his real name was Erich Weiss. An illusionist, he was especially noted for his escapes from impossible situations.
9. Copernicus (p.80)—A Polish astronomer (1473—1543), Copernicus is especially famed for his theory that the earth rotates on an axis and revolves around the sun. (The previous theory was that everything revolved around the Earth, which was the center of the universe.)
10. Begat (p.81) —Biblical word for "fathered." The Bible sets out a list of who begat whom, thereby recording a family tree.
11. Original sin (p.82)—According to the Christian belief that Brady espouses, people tend to be evil, and not good. Original sin is connected to sexuality, but it is specifically a reference to the first sin, when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree and were banished from the Garden of Eden.
12. hex the Pentateuch (p.90)—Penta means five and hex, six. In this case, Drummond means that they can add a sixth book to the first five books of the Bible, which are called the Pentateuch; these include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Other thoughts:
→ "God did not create man. Man created God."—Refers to the atheist, or possible agnostic belief, that people "made up" their ideas about God, that perhaps they wanted to believe in a higher power and so they do. This idea may be extremely offensive to devout religious people who believe that doubting God is a sin in itself.

Inherit the Wind Allusions Notes for Act 3

Directions:
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1. Moorish and Methodist (p.95)—The Moors were the Islamic "heathens" that Richard the Lionhearted (and others) attacked in the Crusades. Remarkably beyond the Europeans for centuries, the Moors were able to hold Jerusalem as well as territory as far away as central Spain. "Methodist" refers to one branch of Christianity; the people of Hillsboro are likely to be Methodists. Here, Hornbeck seems to be suggesting that the courthouse is a mix of middle ages (when trials were not at all dependent on clear evidence) and Methodist (which could refer either to forgiveness and gentleness or to close-minded fundamentalism.)
2. Middle Ages and the Coronation of Charlemagne (p.101)—The Middle Ages again (see #1). Charlemagne (742—814) was King of the Franks (France, Germany, & Italy) from 768 to 814 and also King of the Holy Roman Empire from 800 to 814; he was dedicated to justice and good government. Hornbeck is not comparing anyone to Charlemagne, however; his point is simply that this court decision is taking modern progress back to the Middle Ages.
3. Mount Sinai (p.105)—In the Bible story, this is the mountain where Moses received the Ten Commandments.
4. Excalibur (p.106)—King Arthur's sword, supposedly given to him by the Lady of the Lake, which established him as King of all England when England was not yet one unified country.

Scientific terms and theories:
Longitude and latitude—Measured in minutes, seconds and degrees, these two measurements can be used to locate every specific place on the face of the earth.

Court terms:
Hearsay evidence—when a witness gives testimony, it must be about only what he has directly heard or seen; anything someone else reported to him is "hearsay," and is inadmissible in a court of law

Literature and history:
"There's nothing either wrong or right but thinking makes it so."—This Shakespearian line from _____ _____ indicates that wrong and right, like beauty, are in the eye of the beholder; in other words, there is no absolute right or wrong because different people have different opinions about what is right. How does this idea connect to our play?

Popular culture:
Radio in the courtroom—Radio was a great news innovation because it enabled people to listen to accounts of important events as they were happening. Of course, the idea of bringing radio into a courtroom to broadcast the important moments—like the verdict—was probably rather startling to the judge and attorneys; today, people still argue about whether trials should be televised.