I. Seeing Red

- **Bolshevik Revolution** (1919): coming of Communism to Russia
  - Effects on United States:
    - Small Communist Party emerged
    - Blamed for some labor strikes (Seattle, 1919)
    - Big red scare of 1919-1920:
      - Nationwide crusade against left-wingers whose Americanism was suspect
      - Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer “saw red” too easily
      - “Fighting Quaker” rounded up 6,000 suspects
      - Number doubled in June 1919 when a bomb shattered both the nerves and the home of Palmer

I. Seeing Red (cont.)

- Other events highlighted red scare:
  - December 1919: shipload of 249 alleged alien radicals deported on Buford (the “Soviet Ark”) to Russia
  - September 1920, still-unexplained bomb blast on Wall Street killed 38 people and wounded a hundred others
- State legislatures 1919-1920 joined outcry; passed criminal syndicalism laws:
  - Anti-red statutes made unlawful mere advocacy of violence to secure social change
  - Critics protested that mere words not criminal deeds
  - Violence done to freedom of speech as IWW members and other radicals vigorously prosecuted
I. Seeing Red (cont.)

- In 1920 five New York state legislators, all lawfully elected, denied seats because they were Socialists
  - Conservatives used red scare to break fledgling unions
    - Unions called for "closed" or all-union shop; this was denounced as "Sovietism in disguise"
    - Employers hailed their antilabor campaign for "open" shop as American plan
  - Anti-redism and antiforeignism reflected in notorious case—regarded by liberals as "judicial lynching"
    - Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti convicted in 1921 of murder of a Mass. Paymaster and his guard

- Jury and judge prejudiced against defenders because they were Italians, atheists, anarchists, and draft dodgers
- Liberals and radicals the world over rallied to their defense
- Case dragged on for over six years until 1917 when condemned men electrocuted
- Communists and radicals had two martyrs in "class struggle"
II. Hooded Hoodlums of the KKK

• New Ku Klux Klan:
  – Resembled antiforeign “nativist” movement of 1850s rather than antiblack nightriders of 1860s:
    • Antiforeign, anti-Catholic, anti-black, anti-Jewish, antipacifists, anti-Communist, anti-internationalist, anti-evolutionist, antibilitgets, antigambling, anti-adultery, and anti-birth control
    • Pro-Anglo-Saxon, pro-“native” American, pro-Protestant

II. Hooded Hoodlums of the KKK (cont.)

– Klan betokened extremist, ultraconservative uprising against:
  • Forces of diversity and modernity transforming American culture
  • Spread rapidly in Midwest and Bible Belt South where Protestant Fundamentalism thrived
  • Mid-1920s peak had five million dues-paying members and wielded potent political influence
  • “Knights of the Invisible Empire” included among officials Imperial Wizards, Grand Goblins, King Kleagles, and other horrendous “kreatures”

II. Hooded Hoodlums of the KKK (cont.)

• Things of KKK:
  – Impressive “konclaves,” huge flag-waving parades
  – Chief warning was blazing cross
  – Principle weapon bloodied lash, supplemented by tar and feathers
  – Rallying songs and brutal slogan
II. Hooded Hoodlums of the KKK (cont.)

- Collapsed in late 1920s in part because of corruption
  - $10 initiation fee, of which $4 a kickback to local organization as incentive to recruit
  - KKK a manifestation of intolerance and prejudice against pace of social change in 1920s
  - Civil rights activists fought in vain for legislation making lynching a federal crime

III. Stemming the Foreign Flood

- Isolationist America (1920s), ingrown and provincial, had little use for immigrants:
  - 800,000 came in 1920-1921
  - 2/3 from southern and eastern Europe
  - Americans recoiled at these "New Immigrants"
  - Congress passed Emergency Quota Act 1921
    - newcomers from Europe restricted to a quota
  - Immigration Act of 1924 replaced Emergency Act
    - Quota cut from 3% to 2%
    - National origins base shifted from census of 1910 to 1890
III. Stemming the Foreign Flood (cont.)

- Southern Europeans bitterly denounced device as discriminatory
- Purpose was to freeze America’s existing racial composition, which was largely northern Europeans
- slammed door absolutely against Japanese immigrants
- “Hate America” rallies erupted in Japan
- Exempt from quota system were Canadian and Latin Americans—
  - Easy to attract for jobs when times good
  - Easy to send home when times bad

- Effected pivotal departure in American policy
  - Claimed nation was filling up—“No Vacancy” sign
  - By 1931 more foreigners left than arrived

- Quotas caused America to sacrifice some of its tradition of freedom and opportunity
  - As well as its future ethnic diversity (see Figure 30.1)

- Immigration Act of 1924 marked end of era—
  - Virtually unrestricted immigration had brought some 35 million newcomers, mostly from Europe
  - Immigrant tide now cut off
  - Left on American shores a patchwork of ethnic communities separated by language, religion, and customs
  - “Cultural pluralists” opposed immigration restriction because they celebrated ethnic identity and cultural cross-fertilization
IV. The Prohibition “Experiment”

- Prohibition—
  - Last cause of progressive reform movement
  - **Eighteenth Amendment**: (1919): authorized prohibition (See Appendix)
    - Implemented by **Volstead Act** passed by Congress in 1919
    - Made world “safe for hypocrisy”
    - Legal abolition of alcohol especially popular in South and West
IV. The Prohibition “Experiment” (cont.)

- In West, prohibition an attack on vices associated with western saloons (public drunkenness, prostitution, etc.)
- Strong opposition to "dry" amendment in larger eastern cities
  - Especially for "wet" foreign-born people
  - Sociability built around drinking
- Most Americans assumed prohibition had come to stay
- Prohibitionists naïve:
  - Overlooked tenacious American tradition of strong drink
  - Overlooked weak control by central government, especially over private lives
IV. The Prohibition “Experiment” (cont.)

- Federal government had never satisfactorily enforced a law that majority of people or strong minority rejected
- Lawmakers could not legislate away thirst

• Peculiar conditions hampered enforcement:
  - Wisdom of further self-denial after war
  - Slaking thirst became cherished personal liberty
  - Wets believed way to repeal was to violate law on large scale
  - Soldiers complained prohibition "put over" on them while they were "over there"
  - Workers bemoaned loss of cheap beer

• might have been more successful if there had been large army of enforcement officials
  - Federal agencies understaffed
  - Underpaid snoopers susceptible to bribery

• Prohibition simply did not prohibit:
  - "Men only" corner saloons replaced by "speakeasies"
  - Hard liquor drunk by men and women
  - Zeal of American prohibition agents strained relations with Canada

IV. The Prohibition “Experience” (cont.)

- Worst of homemade "rotgut" produced blindness, even death
  - Bootlegger worked in partnership with undertaker

• Yet "noble experiment" not entirely a failure:
  - Bank savings increased
  - Absenteeism in industry decreased
  - Death from alcoholism and cirrhosis declined
  - Less alcohol consumed than in days before prohibition
V. The Golden Age of Gangsterism

- Prohibition spawned shocking crimes:
  - Profits of illegal alcohol led to bribery of police
  - Violent wars in big cities between rival gangs
    - Rival triggerman "erased" bootlegging competitors
    - Chicago (1920s): 500 mobsters murdered
    - Arrests few and convictions fewer
  - Chicago most spectacular example of lawlessness:
    - 1925 "Scarface" Al Capone began six years of gang warfare
    - Zoomed through streets in armor-plated car with bulletproof windows

V. The Golden Age of Gangsterism (cont.)

- "Public Enemy Number One," could not be convicted of massacre on St. Valentine's Day 1929
  - Of seven unarmed members of rival gang
  - After serving 11 years for income tax evasion, Capone released as syphilitic wreck
- Gangsters moved into other profitable and illicit activities:
  - Prostitution, gambling, narcotics
  - Honest merchants forced to pay "protection money"
  - Racketeers invaded ranks of local labor unions as organizers and promoters
  - Organized crime came to be one of nation's biggest businesses
V. The Golden Age of Gangsterism
(cont.)

- By 1930, annual "take" of underworld $12 to $18 billion
- Criminal callousness sank to new depths in 1923:
  - Kidnapping for ransom and eventual murder of infant son of aviator-hero Charles A. Lindbergh
  - Congress passed Lindbergh Law making interstate abduction in certain circumstances a death-penalty offense

VI. Monkey Business in Tennessee

- Educational strides in 1920s:
  - More states required students to remain in school until age 16 or 18, or until graduation
  - High school graduation rates doubled in 1920s
- Change in educational theory by John Dewey
  - Principles of "learning by doing"
    - So-called progressive education with its greater "permissiveness"
    - Believed workbench as essential as blackboard
    - "Education for life" should be primary goal of teacher

VI. Monkey Business in Tennessee
(cont.)

- Science made advancements:
  - Health programs, launched by Rockefeller Foundation in South in 1909, wiped out hookworm by 1920s
  - Better nutrition and healthcare increased life expectancy of newborns (from 50 years in 1901 to 59 years in 1929)
  - Science and progressive education faced unfriendly fire of newly organized Fundamentalists
    - Numerous attempts made to secure laws prohibiting teaching of evolution
    - Tennessee, heart of so-called Bible Belt South, where spirit of evangelical religion robust
VI. Monkey Business in Tennessee (cont.)

• “Monkey Trial”:
  – In 1925, Dayton high-school biology teacher John T. Scopes indicted for teaching evolution
    • Defended by nationally renowned attorneys
  – William Jennings Bryan made to appear foolish by famed criminal lawyer Clarence Darrow
    • Five days after trial, Bryan died of stroke

VI. Monkey Business in Tennessee (cont.)

• Historic clash between theology and biology proved inconclusive:
  – Scopes found guilty and fined $100
  – Tennessee supreme court upheld law but set aside fine on technicality
  – Fundamentalists won only hollow victory

  – **Fundamentalism** (emphasis on literal reading of Bible)
    • Remained vibrant force in American spiritual life
    • Strong in Baptist Church and rapidly growing Churches of Christ, organized in 1906
VII. The Mass-Consumption Economy

- Prosperity put “roar” into twenties:
  - Recent war and Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon’s tax policies:
    - Favorred rapid expansion of capital investment
    - New machinery increased productivity
    - Assembly-line production reached perfection by Henry Ford’s factories where a finished automobile emerged every ten seconds
    - New industries sprouted

VII. The Mass-Consumption Economy (cont.)

- Automobile:
  - Now became carriage of common citizen
  - By 1930 Americans owned almost 30 million cars
  - Created shift in character of economy:
    - American manufacturers
      - Mastered problems of production
      - Shifted focus to consumption
      - Could they find mass markets for goods?
    - New arm of American commerce came into being:

VII. The Mass-Consumption Economy (cont.)

- Advertising
  - Bruce Barton published best seller: *The Man Nobody Knows*:
    - Provocative thesis: Jesus Christ greatest adman of all time
    - “Every advertising man ought to study the parables of Jesus”
    - “Marvelously condensed, as all good advertising should be”
    - Christ’s executive ability: “He picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world”
VII. The Mass-Consumption Economy (cont.)

– Sports:
  • Became big business in consumption economy
  • Heroes like George H. ("Babe") Ruth far better known than most statesmen
  • Yankee Stadium became “house that Ruth built”
  • In 1921 heavyweight champion, Jack Dempsey, knocked out light heavyweight George Carpentier
    – Jersey City crowd paid more than a million dollars
    – First in series of million-dollar “gates” in 1920s

VII. The Mass-Consumption Economy (cont.)

– Buying on credit; another innovation of postwar economy:
  • “Possess today and pay tomorrow” was message
  • People went into debt to own all kinds of new marvels—refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, cars and radios—now
  • Prosperity accumulated an overhanging cloud of debt
  • Economy became increasingly vulnerable to disruptions of credit structure
VIII. Putting America on Rubber Tires

- Machinery was new messiah—and automobile its principal prophet
  - Automobile
    - New industrial system:
      - Assembly-line methods
      - Mass-production techniques
    - Americans adapted rather than invented gasoline engine:
      - Europeans can claim original honor
      - 1890s—daring American inventors and promoters
      - Henry Ford and Ransom E. Olds developed infant automotive industry

VIII. Putting America on Rubber Tires (cont.)

- By 1910 sixty-nine car companies rolled out total annual production of 181,000 units
- Detroit became motorcar capital of America
- Scientific Management:
  - stopwatch efficiency techniques of Frederick W. Taylor
  - Eliminate wasted motion
- Henry Ford:
  - More than any other individual, put America on rubber tires
  - His Model T("Tin Lizzie")
    - Cheap, rugged, and reasonably reliable, though rough and clattering
    - Parts highly standardized
VIII. Putting America on Rubber (cont.)

- Devoted himself to gospel of standardization
- Grasped and applied technique of moving assembly line—Fordism
- Sold Ford roadster for $260 (see Figure 30.2)
- Fordism caught fire outside United States
- Flood of Fords phenomenal:
  - In 1914 "Automobile Wizard" turned out his 500,000th Model T
  - By 1930 total had risen to 20 million
  - By 1929, 26 million motor vehicles registered—one for every 4.9 American (see Figure 30.3)
IX. The Advent of the Gasoline Age

– Impact of self-propelled carriage tremendous:
  • Gigantic new industry emerged
  • Employed directly or indirectly 6 million people
  • 1,000s of new jobs created by supporting industries
    – Rubber, glass, and fabrics
    – Highway construction, service stations, and garages
    – America’s standard of living rose to enviable level
  • Petroleum business expanded:
    – Oil derricks shot up in California, Texas, Oklahoma
    – Railroads hard hit by competition with passenger cars, buses, and trucks

IX. The Advent of the Gasoline Age (cont.)

• Speedy marketing of perishable foodstuffs accelerated
• New prosperity enriched outlying farms
• Countless new hard-surfaced roads constructed
• Thanks to installment-plans, countless Americans acquired habit of riding

– Zooming motorcars agents of social change:
  • At first a luxury, rapidly became a necessity
  • Became badge of freedom and equality
  • Ostentation seemed more important than transportation
  • Leisure hours could now be spent more pleasurably
IX. The Advent of the Gasoline Age (cont.)

- Women further freed from dependence on men
- Suburbs spread further from urban core
- Isolation among sections declined
- Autobuses made possible consolidation of schools, and to some extent churches
- By 1951, a million Americans had died in motor vehicle accidents
- Virtuous home life partially broke down as people abandoned parlor for highway
- Morals of youth sagged correspondingly
- Crime wave of 1920s and 1930s aided by motorcar

IX. The Advent of the Gasoline Age (cont.)

- Air and environmental quality improved with less horse use
- Automobile brought more convenience, pleasure, and excitement into more people’s lives than almost any other single invention
X. Humans Develop Wings

• Gasoline engines provided power that enabled humans to achieve flight
  ~ Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, performed “miracle at Kitty Hawk,” N.C. on Dec. 17, 1903
  • Orville stayed airborne for 12 seconds and 120 feet
  • Air age launched by 2 obscure Ohio bicycle repairmen

— Airplanes—“flying coffins” used for:
  • Various purposes during Great War, 1914-1918
  • Private companies operated passenger lines and transported mail

X. Human Develop Wings
(cont.)

— 1927 Charles A. Lindbergh—“Flyin’ Fool;” first solo flight across Atlantic
  • Piloted single-engine plane, Spirit of St. Louis from New York to Paris in grueling 33 hours and 39 minutes
  • Achievement did much to dramatize and popularize flying, while giving boost to infant aviation industry

— Impact of airship tremendous:
  • Provided American spirit with another dimension
  • Gave birth to giant new industry
X. Human Develop Wings (cont.)

- Unfortunately, initial accident rate high
- By 1920s and 1930s, travel by air on regularly scheduled airlines significantly safer
- Humanity’s new wings increased tempo of already breathless civilization
  - Railroads further hurt by loss of passengers and mail
  - Lethal new weapon given to war with use of bombs
  - Isolation behind oceans becoming bygone dream as world slowly shrinks

XI. The Radio Revolution

- Speed of airplane far eclipsed by speed of radio waves:
  - Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian, invented wireless telegraph in 1890s
    - Used for long-range communication during World War I
  - Next came voice-carrying radio:
    - Red-letter day in November 1920 when Pittsburgh radio station broadcast news of Harding’s landslide victory

XI. The Radio Revolution (cont.)

- Later miracles achieved in transatlantic wireless phonographs, radio, telephones, and television
- Earliest radio programs reached only local audiences
  - By late 1920s technological improvements made long-distance broadcasting possible
    - National commercial networks drowned out local programming
  - Advertising “commercials” made radio another vehicle for American free enterprise, as contrasted to government-owned systems of Europe
XI. The Radio Revolution (cont.)

• Radio drew people back home and knitted nation together
  – Programs sponsored by manufacturers and distributors of brand-name products helped make radio-touted labels household words and purchases
• Sports further stimulated
• Politicians adjusted speaking techniques to new medium
• Host of listeners heard their favorite newscaster
• Music of famous artists and orchestras beamed into countless homes

XII. Hollywood's Filmland Fantasies

• Flickering movie fruit of numerous geniuses:
  • 1903: birth of first story sequence on screen:
    – *The Great Train Robbery* – in five-cent theaters, popularly called "nickelodeons"
    – First full-length classic: was D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915):
      » Glorified Ku Klux Klan of Reconstruction days and defamed blacks and Northern carpetbaggers
  • Hollywood became movie capital of world
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<tr>
<th>XII. Hollywood's Filmland Fantasies (cont.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used in World War I as engine of anti-German propaganda:</td>
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<td>• “Hang the kaiser” films helped sell war bonds and boost morale</td>
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<td>• 1927—success of first “talkie” — <em>The Jazz Singer</em>:</td>
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<td>• “Silents” ushered out as theaters “wired for sound”</td>
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<td>• Early color films produced</td>
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<th>XII. Hollywood's Filmland Fantasies (cont.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Phenomenal growth in popularity of films</td>
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<tr>
<td>— Movie “stars” commanded much higher salaries than president of United States</td>
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<td>• $100,000 for single film</td>
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<td>• Many actors and actresses more popular than nation’s political leaders</td>
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<td>• Critics bemoaned vulgarization of popular tastes with films and radio</td>
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<th>XII. Hollywood's Filmland Fantasies (cont.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Effects of new mass media not all negative:</td>
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<tr>
<td>— Insularity of ethnic communities eroded as immigrants’ children took to public media</td>
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<tr>
<td>— Some diversity of immigrants’ Old Country culture lost, but:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Standardization of tastes and language hastened entrance into American mainstream</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Set stage for working-class political coalition that would overcome divisive ethnic differences of past</td>
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XIII. The Dynamic Decade

– Changes in lifestyles and values:
  • More lived in urban areas than in countryside by 1920
  • Women continued to find employment in cities
  • Organized birth control movement:
    – Led by fiery feminist Margaret Sanger, who openly
      championed contraceptives
  • Campaign for Equal Rights Amendment
    – By Alice Paul's National Woman's party
  • Churches affected:
    – Fundamentalists lost ground to Modernists
    – Some churches tried to fight devil with worldly weapons
XIII. The Dynamic Decade
(cont.)

- Turned to new entertainment
- Some even included moving pictures for youth

- Chimes "struck sex o'clock in America":
  - Advertisers exploited sexual allure to sell everything
  - Young women's clothing and styles changed
  - "Flapper" symbolized more independent lifestyle
  - Adventurous females shocked elders when they sported new one-piece bathing suits
  - Justification for new sexual frankness found in writings of Dr. Sigmund Freud

XIII. The Dynamic Decade
(cont.)

- Many taboos flew out window
- Sexual freedom became more prevalent
- Flapper as goddess of "era of wonderful nonsense," and jazz its sacred music:
  - Moved up from New Orleans with migrating blacks
  - Wailing saxophone became trumpet of new era
  - W.C. Handy, "Jelly Roll" Morton, Louis Armstrong, and Joe "King" Oliver gave birth to jazz
• New racial pride blossomed in northern black communities:
  – Harlem in NYC—130,000 African American residents in 1920s
    – One of largest black communities in world
  – Culture nurtured by poets like Langston Hughes
    – The Weary Blues (1926)
  – Harlem spawned charismatic political leader, Marcus Garvey
    – Founded United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) to
      promote resettlement of blacks in “African homeland”
    – Sponsored black businesses to keep money in black pockets
    – Helped newcomers to northern cities gain self-confidence and
      self-reliance
    – Example proved important to founding of Nation of Islam
      (Black Muslim) movement
XIV. Cultural Liberation

• Literature and the arts:
  – Most of earlier genteel writers had died by 1920s
    • New Yorker Edith Wharton and Virginia-born Willa Cather continued to be popular
  – Now new modernists becoming popular (see Thinking Globally section)
  – Modernism questioned social conventions and traditional authorities, considered outmoded by accelerating changes of 20th century life

XIV. Cultural Liberation (cont.)

– H.L. Mencken best personified this iconoclasm:
  • Known as “Bad Boy of Baltimore”
  • Promoted modernist causes in politics and literature
  • Assailed marriage, patriotism, democracy, prohibition, Rotarians, and other sacred icons of middle-class American “booboisie”
  • He dismissed South as “Sahara of the Bozart”
  • Attacked hypocritical do-gooders as “Puritans”
    – Puritanism, he jabbed, was “haunting fear that someone, somewhere, might be happy”
XIV. Cultural Liberation (cont.)

– Young writers jolted by WWI out of complacency about traditional values and literary standards
  • Probed for new codes of morals and understanding, as well as fresh forms of expression
  • F. Scott Fitzgerald—*This Side of Paradise* (1920)
    – “He found all gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken”
    – *The Great Gatsby* (1925) brilliant commentary on illusory American ideal of self-made man
    » James Gatz reinvented himself as tycoon Jay Gatsby only to be destroyed by those with wealth and social standing

XIV. Cultural Liberation (cont.)

• Theodore Dreiser’s masterpiece *An American Tragedy* (1925) explored pitfalls of social striving

• Ernest Hemingway:
  – Among writers most affected by WWI
  – His hard-boiled realism typified postwar writing
  – *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) told of disillusioned, spiritually numb American expatriates in Europe
  – In *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) he turned his own war story into one of finest novels about the war
  – His literary successes and flamboyant personal life made him one of most famous writers in world
  – Won Nobel Prize in literature in 1954
XIV. Cultural Liberation (cont.)

- “Lost Generation”:
  - Hemingway, Fitzgerald and other American writers and painters formed artistic cadre:
    - As expatriates in postwar Europe
    - Found shelter and inspiration in Paris salon of Gertrude Stein:
      - Studied under William James at Harvard and her early works applied his theory of “stream of consciousness”
      - Friends with Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, she wrote radically experimental poetry and prose
      - Joined fellow American poets Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot in vanguard of modernist literary innovation

- “High modernists”:
  - Experimented with breakdown of traditional literary forms
  - Exposed losses associated with modernity
  - Wrote in self-consciously internationalist mode
  - Haughtily rejected parochialism they found at home
  - Pound rejected old civilization and proclaimed doctrine: “Make It New,” he strongly influenced Eliot
  - Eliot in *The Waste Land* (1922) produced one of most impenetrable but influential poems of century
  - E.E. Cummings used unorthodox diction and peculiar typesetting to produce startling poetic effects

- Not all American writers radical:
  - Many continued familiar regionalist style
  - Robert Frost wrote hauntingly about nature and folkways of his adopted New England
  - Carl Sandburg extolled working classes of Chicago in strong, simple cadence
  - Sherwood Anderson in *Winesburg, Ohio* dissected various fictional personalities, finding them warped by their cramped psychological surroundings
XIV. Cultural Liberation (cont.)

• Sinclair Lewis:
  – Main Street (1920) best-selling story of one woman’s unsuccessful revolt against provincialism
  – In Babbitt (1922) affectionately pilloried George Babbitt, who slavishly conforms to respectable materialism of his group

• William Faulkner:
  – Focused on displacement of agrarian Old South by rising industrial order
  – His work offered fictional chronicle of an imaginary, history-rich Deep South county
  – In powerful books: The Sound and the Fury (1929) and As I Lay Dying (1930) he peeled back layers of time and consciousness from constricted souls of his ingrown southern characters

XIV. Cultural Liberation (cont.)

– Faulkner experimented with multiple narrators, complex structure, and “stream of consciousness” techniques
– His extended meditation culminated in what some consider his greatest work: Absalom, Absalom! (1936)
– American composers and playwrights made valuable contributions:
  • Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein’s Show Boat (1927) was America’s first “musical play”
  • Eugene O’Neill’s Strange Interlude (1928) laid bare Freudian notions of sex and subconscious in succession of dramatic soliloquies
  – Garnered Nobel Prize in Literature (1936)

XIV. Cultural Liberation (cont.)

• Harlem Renaissance:
  – Black cultural renaissance in uptown Harlem:
    • Led by writers Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neale Hurston
    • And jazz artists Louis Armstrong and Eubie Blake
  – Argued for “New Negro” who was a full citizen and social equal to whites
  • Adopted modernist techniques, Hughes and Hurston captured oral and improvisational traditions of contemporary blacks in dialect-filled poetry and prose
XV. Wall Street's Big Bull Market

- Economic conditions of 1920s:
  - Several hundred banks failed annually
  - Florida boom: numerous underwater plots sold to eager purchasers for preposterous sums
  - Stocks provided even greater sensations:
    - Speculation ran wild
    - Boom-or-bust trading pushed market to dizzy peaks
    - Stock market became veritable gambling den
XV. Wall Street’s Big Bull Market (cont.)

– In 1920s many bought stocks “on margin”
  • Intoxicated by lure of quick profits, few heeded warnings that this kind of prosperity could not last
  • Little done by Washington to curb speculators
  • 1921 Congress moved toward budget sanity by creating Bureau of the Budget:
    – Assisted president in preparing estimates of receipts and expenditures to be submitted to Congress as annual budget

XV. Wall Street’s Big Bull Market (cont.)

– Burdensome taxes from war distasteful to Secretary of Treasury Mellon
  • Argued high taxes forced rich to invest in tax-exempt securities rather than in factories that provided payrolls
  • Argued high taxes not only:
    – Discouraged business, but
    – Brought in smaller return to Treasury than moderate taxes
  • Mellon helped engineer series of tax reductions from 1921 to 1926
XV. Wall Street's Big Bull Market (cont.)

- Congress:
  - Repealed excess-profit tax
  - Abolished gift tax
  - Reduced excise taxes, the surtax, the income tax, and estate taxes

- Mellon's spare-the-rich policies shifted tax burden from wealthy to middle-income groups

- Mellon, lionized by conservatives as "greatest secretary of Treasury since Hamilton" remains controversial figure:
  - Reduced national debt by $10 billion
  - Accused of indirectly encouraging bull market