

H-O-H: "America in the 1920s"

Document 1

Mr. Darrow: Do you claim that everything in the Bible should be literally interpreted?

Mr. Bryan: I believe everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is given there; some of the Bible is given illustratively. For instance: "*Ye are the salt of the earth.*" I would not insist that man was actually salt or he had flesh of salt but it is used in the sense of salt as saving God's people.

Mr. Darrow: But when you read that Jonah swallowed the whale -- or that the whale swallowed Jonah -- excuse me please -- how do you literally interpret that?...

Mr. Bryan: One miracle is just as easy to believe as another...

Mr. Darrow: Perfectly easy to believe that Jonah swallowed the whale?...

Mr. Bryan: Your honor. I think I can shorten this testimony. The only purpose Mr. Darrow has is to slur at the Bible, but I will answer his question. I will answer it all at once, and I have no objection in the world, I want the world to know that this man, who does not believe in God, is trying to use a court in Tennessee...

Mr. Darrow: I object to that

Mr. Bryan: (continuing) to slur at it, and while it will require time, I am willing to take it.

Mr. Darrow: I object to your statement. I am examining you on your fool ideas that no intelligent Christian on earth believes.

SOURCE: Clarence Darrow to William Jennings Bryan, Scopes Trial, 1925.

Document 2

The support of national prohibition by the Federal Council of the Churches rests upon four fundamental considerations.

First. The belief that in dealing with gigantic social evils like disease or crime, individual liberty must be controlled in the interest of the public welfare. Second. The belief that the liquor traffic is beyond question such an evil. Third. The conviction that no plan less thoroughgoing than prohibition is sufficient to eradicate the evils of the liquor traffic. Fourth. The evidence of history that other methods of attempting to control the traffic have failed and that prohibition, despite inadequacies of enforcement, is succeeding better than any

other program.

Limitation upon individual freedom in matters affecting society is the price that any people must pay for the progress of its civilization. Personal liberty can not rightly be claimed for practices which militate against the welfare of others or the interests of the community as a whole.

It is especially contrary to democratic ideals and to enlightened public policy to permit any citizen to make profit from a business which is detrimental to his neighbor. This is readily recognized by all as sound policy in regard to the trade in narcotics. It is equally true of the liquor traffic. To insure social protection against a trade whose avowed purpose was to get people to consume the maximum possible amount of alcoholic liquor is the foundation on which our national policy of prohibition rests.

The policy of prohibition was not adopted hastily nor was it foisted upon the country by a puritanical minority. It was first voted in most of the States separately and then nationally, because the people had become convinced that the liquor traffic was a social evil of such magnitude that it had to be destroyed. The eighteenth amendment was made a part of the Constitution by the regular methods which the founders of the Republic devised with a view to making the amendment to the Constitution difficult rather than easy. Yet this amendment was adopted more promptly than any other change in the Constitution ever proposed.

The reasons which led to prohibition not only remain to-day but have been reinforced by the experience of other nations. The social peril of alcoholism is becoming a growing concern to statesmen throughout the world. If serious evils have sprung up since prohibition, they are far less than the evils which arose from the liquor traffic prior to the amendment. The liquor traffic with the accompanying saloon was allied with political corruption, crime, gambling, and prostitution. It meant the wreckage of men and the degradation of families, which social workers and ministers saw constantly in their daily work. It produced needless inefficiency in industry. Moreover, the tendency in the United States, as has been the case in Europe, was toward an increasing consumption of the stronger liquors with consequent intensifying of social hazards. Methods of control short of prohibition, such as taxation, regulations, and the governmentally controlled systems of some of the Canadian Provinces, Norway, and Sweden, have all proved inadequate to cope with the evil.

The proposal to modify the Volstead Act so as to permit the sale of wines and beer presents insuperable objections. It would make enforcement more difficult. It would inevitably mean the return either of the saloon or something equally undesirable. Bootlegging in stronger liquors would become more menacing because it would tend to operate through the places where the milder intoxicants were sold. Moreover, there is no evidence to justify the contention that to permit wine and beer would reduce the consumption of ardent spirits. The teaching of experience is to the contrary.

The one path of advance is for all good citizens personally to observe the law and to support the great enterprise, born of the idealism of the people, of completely ridding the Nation of as demoralizing a business as the liquor traffic has always proved itself to be. Least of all should our prohibition law be changed in response to the cry of those who by their own disrespect for the law are preventing it from receiving a fair trial or who, because of their special interest in the return of the liquor traffic, are artificially stimulating an agitation for changing our present law. The call of the hour is for such a thoroughgoing work of moral persuasion and legal enforcement as will give the policy of prohibition an adequate opportunity to demonstrate its full value to the Nation and to the world.

SOURCE: Reverend S. Parkes Cadman, president of the Federal Council of Churches, 1926.

Document 3

INCIDENT

by Countee Cullen

Once riding in old Baltimore,
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,
I saw a Baltimorean
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,
And he was no whit bigger,
And so I smiled, but he poked out
His tongue, and called me,
"Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore
From May until December;
Of all the things that happened there
That's all that I remember.

SILHOUETTE

by Langston Hughes

Southern gentle lady,
Do not swoon.
They've just hung a black man
In the dark of the moon.

They've hung a black man
To the roadside tree
In the dark of the moon
For the world to see
How Dixie protects
Its white womanhood

Southern gentle lady,
Be good!
Be good!

SOURCE: Writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

Document 4

We are a movement of the plain people, very weak in the matter of culture, intellectual support, and trained leadership. We are demanding, and we expect to win, a return of power into the hands of the everyday, not highly cultured, not overly intellectualized, but entirely unspoiled and not de-Americanized, average citizen of the old stock. Our members and leaders are all of this class -- the opposition of the intellectuals and liberals who held the leadership, betrayed Americanism, and from whom we expect to wrest control, is almost automatic.

This is undoubtedly a weakness. It lays us open to the charge of being "hicks" and "rubes" and "drivers of second-hand Fords." We admit it. Far worse, it makes it hard for us to state our case and advocate our crusade in the most effective way, for most of us lack skill in language.

The Klan, therefore, has now come to speak for the great mass of Americans of the old pioneer stock. We believe that it does fairly and faithfully represent them, and our proof lies in their support. To understand the Klan, then, it is necessary to understand the character and present mind of the mass of old-stock Americans. The mass, it must be remembered, as distinguished from the intellectually mongrelized "Liberals."

These are, in the first place, a blend of various peoples of the so-called Nordic race, the race which, with all its faults, has given the world almost the whole of modern civilization. The Klan does not try to represent any people but these..

SOURCE: Hiram Wesley Evans, "The Klan's Fight for Americanism," *The North American Review*, March 1926.

Document 5

When, because of what we believe him to be, we gave Lindbergh the greatest ovation in history, we convicted ourselves of having told a lie about ourselves. For we proved that the "things of good report" are the same today as they were nineteen hundred years ago.

We shouted ourselves hoarse. Not because a man had flown across the Atlantic! Not even because he was an American! But because he was as clean in character as he was strong and fine in body; because he put "ethics" above any desire for wealth; because he was as modest as he was courageous; and because--as we now know, beyond any shadow of doubt -- these are the things which we honor most in life.

To have shown us this truth about ourselves is the biggest thing that Lindbergh has done.

SOURCE: Mary B. Mullett, "The Biggest Thing That Lindbergh Has Done," *The American Magazine*, October 1927.

Document 6

...Sister substituted the Gospel of Love for the Gospel of Fear. This doctrine was as strange in Southern California as it is elsewhere in Christendom...

Sister substituted the cheerfulness of the play-room for the gloom of the morgue. She threw out the dirges and threats of Hell, replacing them with jazz hymns and promises of glory. The gospel she created was and is an ideal bed-time story. It has a pretty color, a sweet taste, and is easy.

Mrs. McPherson describes the Holy City literally — the jewelled walls, pearly gates, golden streets, milk and honey. She says she is not sure — she is not *sure*, mind you -- but she has a pretty good idea that Heaven will resemble a cross between Pasadena, California, and Washington, D.C. That will give an idea of what may be expected at Angelus Temple. The atmosphere bubbles over with love, joy, enthusiasm; the Temple is full of lowers, music, golden trumpets, red robes, angels, incense, nonsense and sex appeal. The service may be described as supernatural whoopee.

SOURCE: Morrow Mayo, "Aimee Rises from the Sea," *The New Republic*, December 25, 1929. (about evangelical preacher Aimee Semple McPherson)

Document 7



SOURCE: Movie marquee for the premiere of *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson, 1927 (first "talkie")

Document 8

None of the Victorian mothers-and most of the mothers were Victorian-had any idea how casually their daughters were accustomed to be kissed. Amory saw girls doing things that even in his memory would have been impossible; eating three o'clock, after dancing in impossible cafes, talking of every side of life with an air half of earnestness, half of mockery, yet with a furtive excitement that Amory considered stood for a real moral let-down. But he never realized how widespread it was until he saw the cities between New York and Chicago as one vast intrigue.

SOURCE: F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*, 1920.

Document 9



SOURCE: Young women of the 1920s.

Document 10

Fellow men of the Negro Race, Greeting:

For four and a half years the Universal Negro Improvement Association has been advocating the cause of Africa for the Africans -- that is, that the Negro peoples of the world should concentrate upon the object of building up for themselves a great nation in Africa.

When we started our propaganda toward this end several of the so-called intellectual Negroes who have been bamboozling the race for over half a century said that we were crazy, that the Negro peoples of the western world were not interested in Africa and could not live in Africa. One editor and leader went so far as to say at his Pan-African Congress that American Negroes could not live in Africa, because the climate was too hot. All kinds of arguments have been adduced by these Negro intellectuals against the colonization of Africa by the black race. Some said that the black man would ultimately work out his existence alongside of the white man in countries founded and established by the latter. Therefore, it was not necessary for Negroes to seek an independent nationality of their own. The old time stories of "Africa fever," "African bad climate," "African mosquitoes," "African savages," have been repeated by these "brainless intellectuals" of ours as a scare against our people in America and the West Indies taking a kindly interest in the new program of building a racial empire of our own in our Motherland.

A "Program" at Last?

I trust that the Negro peoples of the world are now convinced that the work of the Universal Negro Improvement Association is not a visionary one, but very practical, and that it is not so far fetched, but can

be realized in a short while if the entire race will only co-operate and work toward the desired end. Now that the work of our organization has started to bear fruit, we find that some of these 'doubting Thomases' of the three and four years ago are endeavoring to mix themselves up with the popular idea of rehabilitating Africa in the interest of the Negro. They are now advancing spurious "programs" and in a short while will endeavor to force themselves upon the public as advocates and leaders of the African idea.

It is felt that those who have followed the career of the Universal Negro Improvement Association will not allow themselves to be deceived by these Negro opportunists who have always sought to live off the ideas of other people.

The Dream of a Negro Empire

It is only a question of a few more years when Africa will be completely colonized by Negroes, as Europe is by the white race. It is for us to welcome the proffered help of such men as Senators McCullum and France. Though their methods are a little different to that of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, yet it is felt that the same object will be achieved. What we want is an independent African nationality, and if America is to help the Negro peoples of the world establish such a nationality, then we welcome the assistance.

It is hoped that when the time comes for American and West Indian Negroes to settle in Africa, they will realize their responsibility and their duty. It will not be to go to the natives, but it shall be the purpose of the Universal Negro Improvement Association to have established in Africa the brotherly co-operation which will make the interest of the African native and the American and West Indies Negro one and the same, that is to say, we shall enter into a common partnership to build up Africa in the interest of our race.

Your obedient servant,
Marcus Garvey, President General
Universal Negro Improvement Association
New York, April 18, 1922

SOURCE: Excerpt from the *Negro World*, Vol. XII, No. 10? New York, Saturday, April 22, 1922.

Document 11

IMMIGRATION ARRIVAL (in the thousands)

	1921	1925	1928
Eastern Europe & Poland	138	10	14
Southern Europe	299	8	22
Asia	25	4	4
Mexico	31	33	40
TOTAL	805	294	280

SOURCE: *Historical Statistics of the United States*, I, 401.

Document 12



SOURCE: *Sacco and Vanzetti* painted by Ben Shahn (1932-33).

Document 13

...You are all a lost generation...

...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 clear up the mess they had made....

SOURCE: Epigraph from *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway, 1926; second quote from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, 1926.

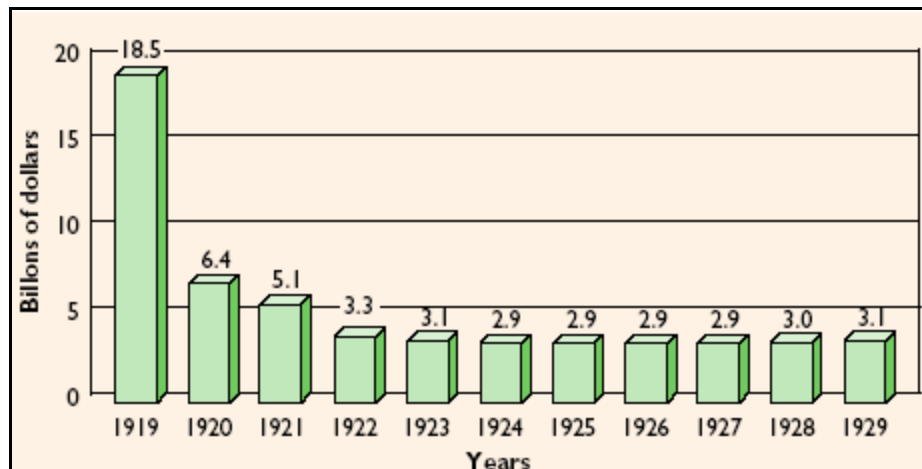
Document 14



SOURCE: Scott Tissue and Eden Washing Machine ads, 1920s.

Document 15

FEDERAL SPENDING



Document 16



SOURCE: St. Valentine's Day Massacre, 1929, on the left; "Scarface" Al Capone on the right.

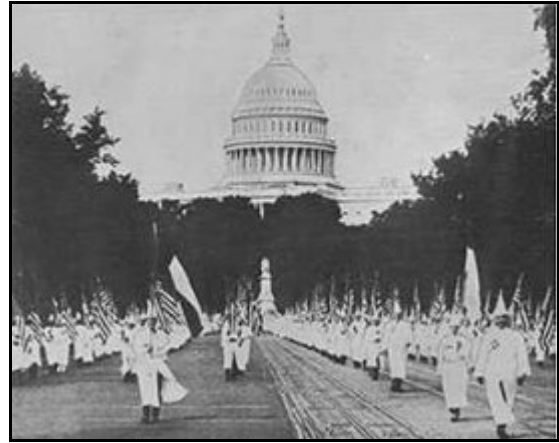
Document 17

It seems to me the point as to this measure—and I have been so impressed for several years—is that the time has arrived when we should shut the door. We have been called the melting pot of the world. We had an experience just a few years ago, during the great World War, when it looked as though we had allowed influences to enter our borders that were about to melt the pot in place of us being the melting pot.

I think that we have sufficient stock in America now for us to shut the door, Americanize what we have, and save the resources of America for the natural increase of our population. We all know that one of the most prolific causes of war is the desire for increased land ownership for the overflow of a congested population. We are increasing at such a rate that in the natural course of things in a comparatively few years the landed resources, the natural resources of the country, shall be taken up by the natural increase of our population. It seems to me the part of wisdom now that we have throughout the length and breadth of continental America a population which is beginning to encroach upon the reserve and virgin resources of the country to keep it in trust for the multiplying population of the country.

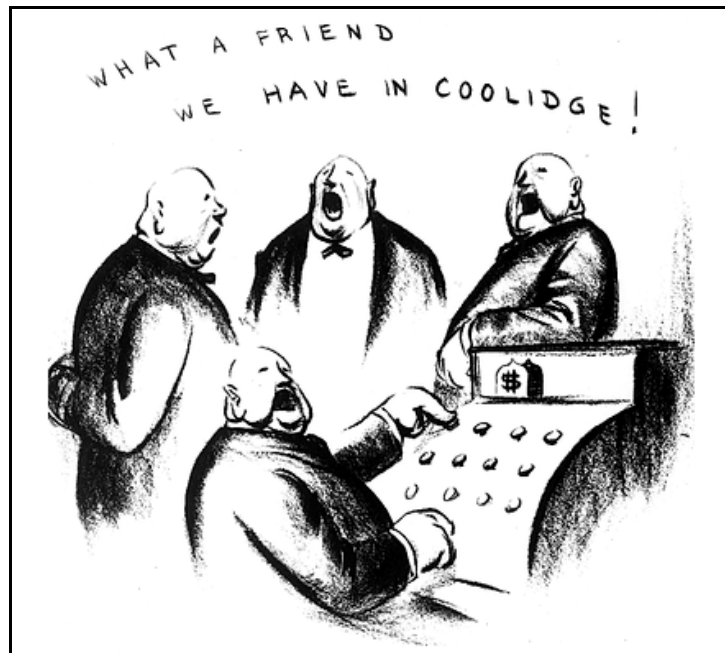
SOURCE: Senator Ellison DuRant Smith (SC) during the debate over the Immigration (Johnson-Reed) Act of 1924.

Document 18



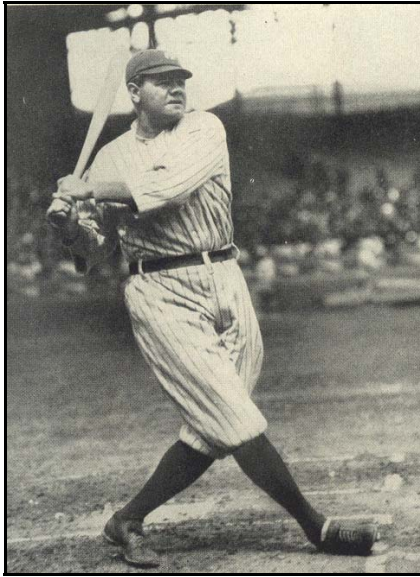
SOURCE: Klan rally in Washington, 1925.

Document 19

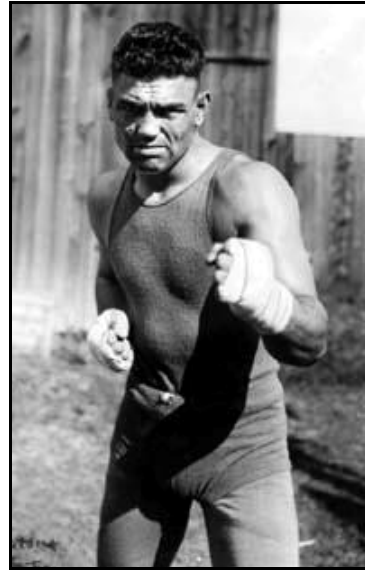


SOURCE: Political cartoon of the mid-1920s.

Document 20



Babe Ruth, New York Yankees
(breaks homerun record in 1927 with 60).



Jack Dempsey, championship boxer



Gertrude Ederle, first woman to swim the English Channel (Olympic star athlete).



Bill Tilden, 6-time Men's Singles champion
in the U. S. Open (1920-1925).

SOURCE: Very popular 1920s sports figures.

Document 21



LUCKY LINDY

From coast to coast we all can boast
And sing a toast to one Who's made a name,
for being game---
He was born with wings as great as any
bird that flies,
A lucky star guides him afar.

CHORUS:

Lucky Lindy! Up in the sky
Fair or windy, He's flying high--
Peerless, fearless, knows ev'ry cloud,
The kind of a son, makes a mother feel
proud.
Plucky Lindy! Rides all alone--
In a little plane of his own.
Lucky Lindy! Showed them the way--
He's the hero of the U. S. A....

SOURCE: Charles Lindbergh and his "Spirit of St. Louis" airplane. First solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927 on the right;
"Lucky Lindy" lyrics by L. Wolfe Gilbert and music by Abel Baer, 1927.

Document 22

The most far-reaching social development of modern times is the revolt of woman against sex servitude. The most important force in the remaking of the world is a free motherhood. Beside the force, the elaborate international programs of modern statesmen are weak and superficial. Diplomats may formulate leagues of nations and nations may pledge their utmost strength to maintain them, statesmen may dream of reconstructing the world out of alliances, hegemonies and spheres of influence, but woman, continuing to produce explosive populations, will convert these pledges into proverbial scraps of paper; or she may, by controlling birth, lift motherhood to the plane of a voluntary, intelligent function, and remake the world. When the world is thus remade, it will exceed the dream of statesman, reformer and revolutionist.

....Woman's acceptance of her inferior status was the more real because it was unconscious. She had chained herself to her place in society and the family through the maternal functions of her nature, and only chains thus strong could have bound her to her lot as a brood animal for the masculine civilizations of the world. In accepting her role as the "weaker and gentler half," she accepted that function. In turn, the acceptance of that function fixed the more firmly her rank as an inferior.

Caught in this "vicious circle," woman has, through her reproductive ability, founded and perpetuated the tyrannies of the Earth. Whether it was the tyranny of a monarchy, an oligarchy or a republic, the one indispensable factor of its existence was, as it is now, hordes of human beings-human beings so plentiful as to be cheap, and so cheap that ignorance was their natural lot. Upon the rock of an unenlightened, submissive maternity have these been founded; upon the product of such a maternity have they flourished. .

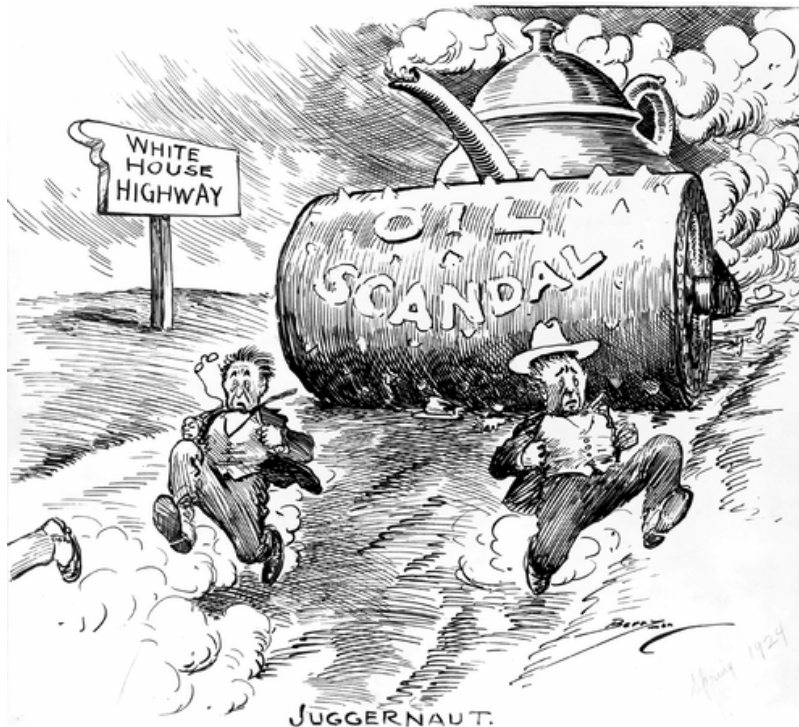
SOURCE: *Women and the New Race*, Margaret Sanger, 1921.

Document 23



SOURCE: 1929 Minerva automobile on the left and a mid-1920s radio on the right.

Document 24



SOURCE: This cartoon appeared in many papers in April, 1924.