

## America After WWI

### The Basics

#### **Time Required**

1-2 class periods

#### **Subject Areas**

10<sup>th</sup> Grade US History

Emergence of Modern America, 1890-1930

#### **Common Core Standards Addressed:**

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

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### The Lesson

#### **Introduction**

Words by Sam Lewis, & Joe Young with music by Walter Donaldson "How Ya' Keep 'Em Down on the Farm" was written in 1919. The trio got their start in Tin Pan Alley creating songs to be sung on stage by people like Al Jolson and Fanny Brice. This song was reportedly inspired by Donaldson's service in the camps as an entertainer during WWI. The song is in the form of the question & answer form using the old conversational duet story from the 1871 song "Rueben & Cynthia."

"The Charleston Rag" is a song which became a popular dance tune created by Eubie Blake in 1926, which he claims got its roots from the African-American dance called the Black Bottom. Blake's song is considered the theme song of the flappers of the day.

#### **Guiding Questions**

What were some of the cultural changes in the United States at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

How did industrialization change the US economy?

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Level One – The student will explain the dynamics of social reform after WWI.
- Level Two – The student will summarize the various aspects of the Roaring 20's through analysis, essay, story, song & dance.
- Level Three – The student will appraise the impact of WWI on the American people.

## **Preparation Instructions**

### ***Songs used in lesson:***

“How Ya’ Gonna Keep ‘Em Down on the Farm ( after they’ve seen Paree)” Words by Sam Lewis & Joe Young, Music by Walter Donaldson, 1919.

“The Charleston Rag” Eubie Blake, 1926.

“She’s Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage” Harry Von Tilzer, 1908.

## **Lesson Activities**

### ***Introductory learning activities:***

Play the song “How Ya’ Keep ‘Em Down on the Farm (After They’ve Seen Paree)”, listening for certain words and have them answer the following questions:

- Who is the “them” in the song?
- When did they see “Paree”?
- Where did they think their children were moving too?
- Why would returning soldiers have problems returning to the farm according to the song?
- What things may have changed as a result of the war?

### ***Song discussion questions and activities:***

#### ***AP US History:***

1. Compare and Contrast the song “She’s Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage” with “How ‘ya Gonna Keep ‘em Down on the Farm.”
2. Discuss with the students how the attitude towards women changed (if any) when the men returned home after WWI or as a result of the war.
3. Examine the role of dance, such as “The Charleston” and its effect on the culture.

#### ***Regular US History:***

- Define terms with students from the Jazz Age.
- Show a film of people doing “The Charleston,” the “Lindy,” and the “Black Bottom.”
- Go over timeline with the students of the Roaring '20s.
- Have students answer the following questions about “ How ‘Ya Gonna Keep ‘Em Down on the Farm”:

What is the main theme of this song?

How did women react to the return of the men from WWI? What changes in fashion started in the 1920’s?

How did music and dancing change culture in America in the 1920s?

How does this song work describe the lives of the soldiers of WWI?

Name some of the writers, artists and musicians of the 1920s.

***Follow-up learning activities:***

The student will answer the following questions (AP Class - Essay form):

- How did an expanding mass culture change the contours of everyday life in the decade following WWI?
- How did some portion of society resist this change?
- What effect did WWI have on the role of women in America, concerning changes in political, social and economic structure?

For the Regular US History class, students will identify the following:

- flappers
- The Model T
- speakeasies
- suffrage
- prohibition
- The Palmer Raid
- 19th Amendment
- expatriate

**Assessment**

***At Level 1, the student is able to***

- recognize the progress of political and social reform in America during this era (i.e., Women's Suffrage, Regulation of food and drug, Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, protection of workers' rights, Antitrust Supreme Court decisions, Muckrakers).

***At Level 2, the student is able to***

- recognize the new trends, ideas, and innovations of the 1920's popular culture (i.e., radio, automobile, phonograph, Prohibition, birth control, organized crime, sports).
- recognize the role of Tennessee in the women's suffrage movement. (i.e. "the perfect 36", Anne Dallas Dudley, Harry Burn, Governor Albert Roberts).
- read and interpret a primary source document reflecting the social dynamics of the 1920s. (e.g. Harlem Renaissance, Lost Generation, Ida Turnball, Upton Sinclair, Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt).

***At Level 3, the student is able to***

- analyze the American isolationist position versus interventionist arguments.
- trace America's entry and involvement in World War I by using a timeline.
- examine the transition of America's foreign policy in reaction to international dynamics spawned from World War I.
- summarize the various aspects of the "Roaring '20s" through the analysis of stories, essays, song, or dance.
- evaluate the long term political impact of laissez faire policies.
- critique American art and literature from the Social Realists to the Harlem Renaissance to the "Lost Generation."

- compare and contrast President Theodore Roosevelt's style of Progressivism and Wilsonian Progressivism.

## **Resources**

### **Lyrics**

“How ‘Ya Gonna Keep Them Down on the Farm?” available at

<http://lyricsplayground.com/alpha/songs/h/howyagonnakeepemdownonthefarmformeandmygalthemusical.shtml>

“She’s Only A Bird in a Gilded Cage” available at

<http://ingeb.org/songs/shesonly.html>