

Pop Culture during the 1920s

Unit 6

Standards:

US.29 Describe the growth and effects that radio and movies played in the emergence of popular culture as epitomized by celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin, Charles Lindbergh, and Babe Ruth.

US.30 Examine the growth and popularity of country and blues music, including the rise of: the Grand Ole Opry, W.C. Handy, and Bessie Smith.

Education

- During the 1920s, developments in education had a powerful impact on the nation
- Enrollment in high schools quadrupled between 1914 and 1926
- Public schools met the challenge of educating millions of immigrants

Expanding News Coverage

- As literacy increased, newspaper circulation rose and mass-circulation magazines flourished
- By the end of the 1920s, ten American magazines -- including Reader's Digest and Time -- boasted circulations of over 2 million

Radio Comes of Age

- Although print media was popular, radio was the most powerful communications medium to emerge in the 1920s
- Used primarily for news at first
 - News was delivered faster and to a larger audience
- Americans could hear the voice of the president or listen to the World Series live

The Rise of Country Music

- Country music became a viable recorded genre during the 1920s
- The first country record was made in 1922 and had the first national country hit in 1924
- Most historians point to 1927, the year Victor Records signed Jimmie Rodgers and The Carter Family, as the true moment country music was born



The Grand Ole Opry

- A weekly American country music stage concert in Nashville, Tennessee, as a one-hour radio "barn dance" on WSM Radio
- Founded on November 28, 1925
- Is the longest running radio broadcast in US history
- Their slogan is "The Show That Made Country Music Famous" and "Country's Most Famous Stage."



American Heros

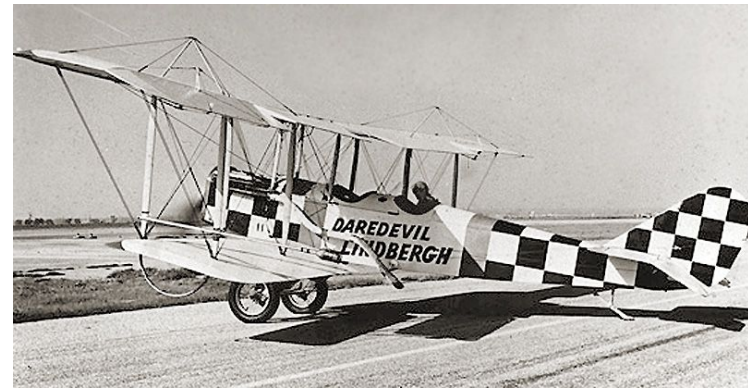
- In 1929, Americans spent \$4.5 billion on entertainment (including sport)
 - People crowded into baseball games to see their heroes
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Babe Ruth

- His career in the MLB spanned 22 seasons, from 1914 through 1935
- Nicknamed "The Bambino" and "The Sultan of Swat"
- He began his career as a left-handed pitcher for the Boston Red Sox, but achieved his greatest fame as an outfielder for the New York Yankees
- Is regarded as one of the greatest sports heroes in American culture and is considered by many to be the greatest baseball player of all time



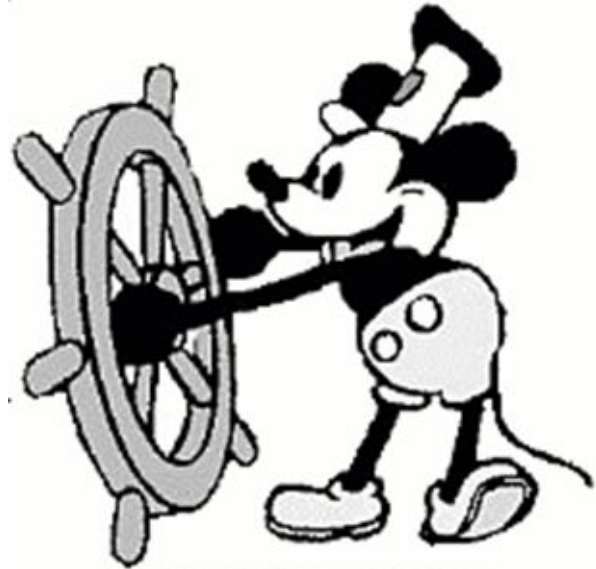
Charles Lindbergh



- America's most beloved hero of the time wasn't an athlete, but a small-town pilot named Charles Lindbergh
- Lindbergh made the first nonstop solo trans-atlantic flight
- He took off from NYC in the Spirit of St. Louis and arrived in Paris 33 hours later to a hero's welcome

Entertainment and Arts

- Even before sound, movies offered a means of escape through romance and comedy
- First sound movies: Jazz Singer (1927)
- First animated with sound: Steamboat Willie (1928)
- By 1930 millions of Americans went to the movies each week



STEAMBOAT WILLIE

Walt Disney's animated *Steamboat Willie* marked the debut of Mickey Mouse. It was a seven minute long black and white cartoon.

Charlie Chaplin

- Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin was an English comic actor, filmmaker, and composer who rose to fame in the era of silent film
- Is considered one of the most important figures in the history of the film industry
- His career spanned more than 75 years



The Circus © Roy Export SAS

A black and white film still from 'The Circus' showing Charlie Chaplin as the Tramp. He is wearing a dark suit, a bowler hat, and a white collar. He has a surprised or nervous expression on his face. He is holding a baby wrapped in a white blanket. In the background, a large letter 'G' is visible on a wall.

The Circus
Charlie Chaplin

W.C. Handy



- “Father of the Blues”
- One of the most influential songwriters in the United States
- Handy did not create the blues genre, but was the first to publish music in the blues form, taking the blues from a regional music style (Delta blues) to a new level of popularity
- used elements of folk music in his compositions

Bessie Smith

- An American blues singer
- Nicknamed the “Empress of the Blues”
- Was the most popular female blues singer of the 1920s and 1930s and often regarded as one of the greatest singers of her era
- Was a major influence on fellow blues singers, as well as jazz vocalists
- was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee
- Her career was cut short by the Great Depression

