

## The Roaring Twenties

### Lesson 3

# Changing Ways of Life

## Key Terms and People

**Prohibition** The era that banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages

**speakeasy** Hidden saloon or nightclub that sold liquor illegally

**bootlegger** Smuggler who brought in alcohol from Canada, Cuba, and the West Indies

**fundamentalism** Religious movement based on the belief that everything written in the Bible is literally true

**Clarence Darrow** Famous trial lawyer

**Scopes trial** Trial of John Scopes for teaching evolution

## Before You Read

In the last lesson you learned about life in postwar America. In this lesson you will read about new lifestyles and values that emerged in the 1920s.

## As You Read

Use a chart to show how the government attempted to deal with problems or conflicts related to Prohibition and with the teaching of evolution.

## RURAL AND URBAN DIFFERENCES

### What was Prohibition?

The 1920 census showed a change in America. For the first time, more Americans lived in large towns and cities than in small towns and on farms.

The values that most Americans had grown up with were small-town values. They included conservative moral and social standards, hard work, and close families.

By the 1920s urbanization, or the movement of Americans from rural areas to the cities, had increased. New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia had become huge cities. There were over 65

cities with more than 100,000 people.

Urban values began to dominate the nation. Life in big cities was different from in small towns. People with different backgrounds came into contact with one another. Also, thousands of workers, cars, buses, and streetcars moved through downtown areas.

City people were more open to new ideas in art, science, and politics. They went out at night. They were more tolerant of drinking and gambling. Life was fast paced. Sometimes it was impersonal and lonely. Many people who were new to city life found it hard to adjust.

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One clash between small-town and city values led to an era known as **Prohibition**. Prohibition was the ban on alcoholic beverages as established by the Eighteenth Amendment. It took effect in 1920. Most support for Prohibition came from religious rural white Protestants.

Even though it was the law, the effort to stop drinking was doomed. There were not enough officers to enforce it. People made their own alcohol illegally.

In cities, even respectable middle-class people flocked to **speakeasies**. These were hidden saloons and nightclubs that served liquor illegally. People also bought liquor from **bootleggers**, or smugglers who brought it in from Canada, Cuba, and the West Indies.

Prohibition caused a general disrespect for the law. It also caused a great deal of money to flow out of lawful businesses and into organized crime. Gangsters took control of the illegal liquor business. The most famous gang was headed by Chicago's Al Capone. Chicago became known for bloody gang killings.

This rise in crime and violence led many people to demand the repeal of Prohibition. By the middle of the decade, only 19 percent of Americans supported it. Prohibition was repealed by the Twenty-first Amendment in 1933.

1. How did Prohibition affect the nation?

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### SCIENCE AND RELIGION CLASH

#### What was the Scopes Trial?

During the 1920s the nation saw the rise of Christian **fundamentalism**. This religious movement was based on the

belief that everything written in the Bible was literally true. Fundamentalists rejected America's growing trust in science.

These beliefs led fundamentalists to reject Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. According to that theory, plant and animal species had developed over millions of years.

Fundamentalists believed that the Bible was correct in stating that the world and all its plants and animals were created by God in six days. They wanted laws prohibiting the teaching of evolution.

Fundamentalist preachers drew large crowds to religious revivals, especially in the South and West. They also gained political power. In 1925 Tennessee passed a law making it a crime to teach evolution.

Many people opposed this law. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) promised to defend in court any teacher who would challenge the law.

John Scopes, a biology teacher from Dayton, Tennessee, challenged the law. He openly taught about evolution. He was arrested, and his case went to trial. The ACLU hired **Clarence Darrow**, the most famous trial lawyer in the nation, to defend Scopes. William Jennings Bryan was the prosecutor.

Scopes was guilty because he broke the law. However, the trial was really about evolution and religion in schools. Reporters came from all over the world to cover the **Scopes trial**.

The highlight of the trial was when William Jennings Bryan took the stand. Darrow questioned Bryan until Bryan said that while the earth was made in six days, they were "not six days of 24 hours." Bryan was admitting that the Bible could be interpreted in different ways.

**Lesson 3, *continued***

Even so, Scopes was found guilty. His conviction was later overturned by the state Supreme Court. But the ban on teaching evolution remained a law in Tennessee.

2. How did fundamentalist beliefs lead to the Scopes trial?

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Answer the questions about how the 1920s reflected conflicts and tensions in American culture related to Prohibition and the teaching of evolution

<b>PROHIBITION</b>	
1. a. Who tended to be supporters of Prohibition at this time?	b. Why do you think they supported it?
2. a. Who tended to be opponents of Prohibition at this time?	b. Why do you think they opposed it?
3. Why was Prohibition repealed?	
<b>THE SCOPES TRIAL</b>	
4. a. Who were Darrow's main supporters?	b. Why did they support him?
5. a. Who were Bryan's main supporters?	b. Why did they support him?
6. What was the outcome of the case?	