



Reader's Guide

The Roaring Twenties is one of the most colorful eras in U.S. history. Bordered on one side by the end of World War I (1914–18) and on the other side by the Great Depression (the severe economic downturn that began in 1929 and lasted until the early 1940s), this short period would later be remembered by historians largely as a time of excitement and fun. It was the decade, after all, when daring young women called flappers danced the Charleston, and Charles “Lucky Lindy” Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic Ocean in a tiny airplane. It was a time when the economy was strong, and many had extra money in their pockets. Yet this was also a period of changes. Some of these changes, such as advances in technology and medical care and new freedoms for women, were welcomed by many people. There were others, however, who found some of the changes—such as the new reliance on science over religion, or the large number of immigrants living in the nation’s cities, or the fact that not everyone shared in the economic prosperity of the Twenties—more troubling.

The Roaring Twenties: Biographies presents the life stories of twenty-five notable personalities of the 1920s drawn from the

worlds of politics and government, literature, music, sports, aviation, religion, art, anthropology, and crime. Included are baseball great Babe Ruth, anthropologist Margaret Mead, artist Georgia O'Keeffe, author Zora Neale Hurston, composer George Gershwin, and gangster Al Capone. Profiles are also provided for lesser-known though no less interesting figures, including evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, writer H.L. Mencken, and boxer Jack Dempsey.

Features

The entries in *The Roaring Twenties: Biographies* contain numerous sidebar boxes that highlight people and events of special interest, and each biographical profile offers a list of additional sources students can go to for more information. More than fifty black-and-white photographs help illustrate the material. The volume begins with a timeline of important events in the history of the 1920s and a “Words to Know” section that introduces students to difficult or unfamiliar terms. The volume concludes with a general bibliography and a subject index so students can easily find the people, places, and events discussed throughout *The Roaring Twenties: Biographies*.

The Roaring Twenties Reference Library

The Roaring Twenties: Biographies is only one component of the two-part U•X•L The Roaring Twenties Reference Library. The other title in the set is:

- *The Roaring Twenties: Almanac and Primary Sources* (one volume) presents a comprehensive overview of events and everyday life that occurred within the United States during the 1920s. The Almanac section begins with some background to the Roaring Twenties, followed by coverage of the political, economic, technological, and social events and changes that occurred during the decade. Some of the darker aspects of life in this period are explored, such as the rise of organized crime and the effects of nativism, then the focus shifts to developments in arts and entertainment and finally to the 1929 stock market crash, which launched the United States into the Great Depression, and its aftermath. The Primary Sources section tells the story of the 1920s in the words of the people who lived and shaped the decade.

Excerpted and full-text documents provide a wide range of perspectives on this period of history. Included are excerpts from political speeches; influential books of the era; and reflections by individuals who lived through the times.

Comments and Suggestions

We welcome your comments on *The Roaring Twenties: Biographies* and suggestions for other topics to consider. Please write: Editors, *The Roaring Twenties: Biographies*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Rd. Farmington Hills, Michigan 48331-3535; call toll free: 1-800-877-4253; fax to (248) 699-8097; or send e-mail via <http://www.gale.com>.