

Henry Ford – Transportation

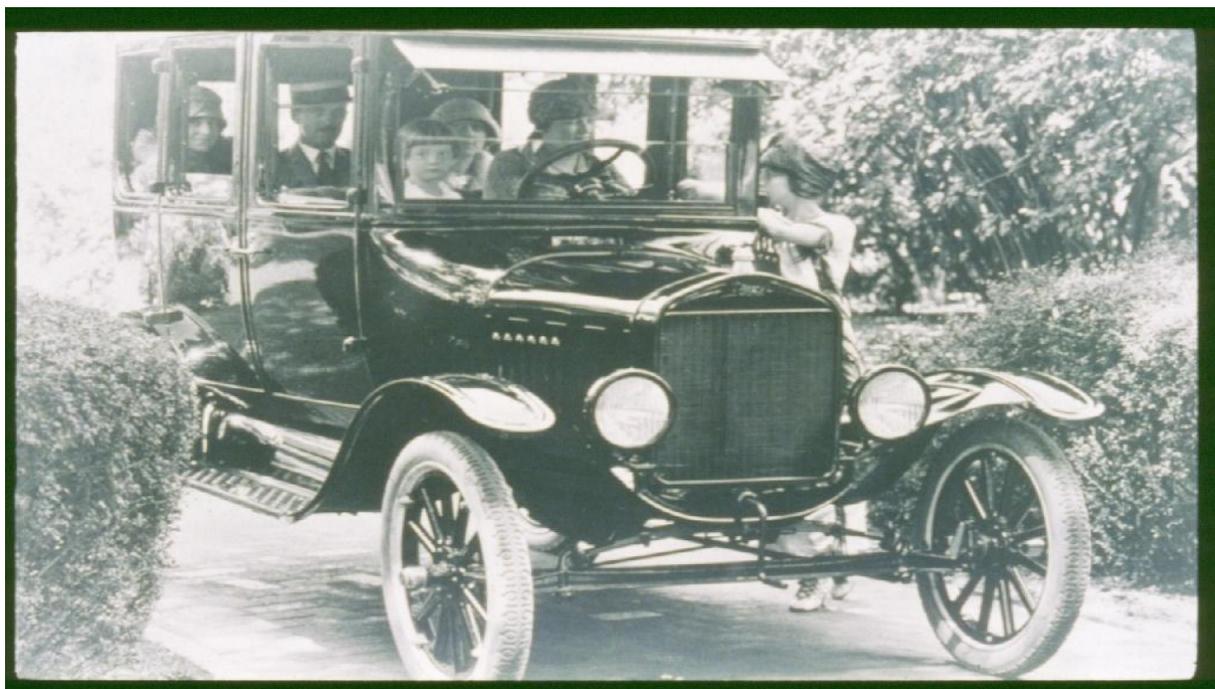
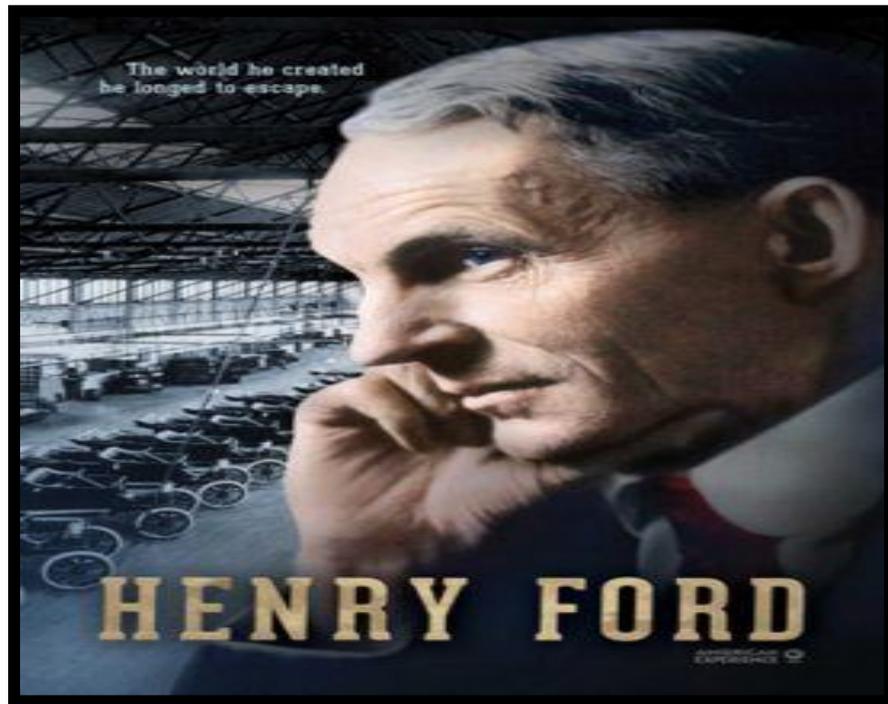
Hi! I am Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Company. I had a lifelong curiosity and fascination with machinery. As a young man, I held several jobs as a mechanic and accepted apprenticeships with car manufacturing companies. In 1896, I built my first experimental car, called the Quadricycle. It ran on bicycle tires and weighed only 500 pounds. In 1903, I started the Ford Motor Company, where I applied the principals of an assembly line to the production of automobiles. Each car was exactly the same, including the color: black.

This mass production of automobiles allowed my cars to be produced at affordable prices. Before my Model T, cars were produced individually and cost about \$2,000. The cost of a Model T was less than \$500, making it affordable for many more families. This helped make Americans more mobile and allowed for the growth of new industries, such as gas stations and motels that served mobile Americans.

During the 1920's somewhat more than eight million autos were registered; in 1929 the number was more than twenty-three million. This increase represented not only cars but gasoline, road construction, traffic control signals, and a host of other products that came into being because of the motor vehicle.

Henry Ford

Transportation



Charlie Chaplin – Radio & Movies

In the age of celebrities, the most glamorous of all were the movie stars. Hello! I am Charlie Chaplin, famous film actor. I spent much of my youth in London orphanages. At the age of 10, I left school to work in British vaudeville. In 1913, I joined Keystone Films in New York for \$150 a week. By 1916, I was earning \$10,000 a week, making me the highest-paid actor in the world at that time.

In 1914, I introduced the character that was to become my trademark: the Tramp. I wrote, directed, and edited most of the films I appeared in. I made many of the funniest, most popular movies of the time. I was also one of the most popular silent film stars. By the end of my career, I owned my own studio and had cofounded United Artists, a motion picture production and distribution company.

By 1920 some 35 million Americans were going to the movies at least once a week, mainly to see melodramatic love stories and Westerns; in 1926 the first war films began to appear; and in 1927 gangster pictures started to become popular. The top movie personalities – whether they were cowboys, vamps, flappers, or comedians, cops, or robbers – were now receiving about 32 million fan letters a year. Al Jolson's "The Jazz Singer", 1927, ushered in the talkies. A 1995 worldwide survey of film critics named me the greatest actor in movie history.

Charlie Chaplin

Radio & Movies



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Alice Stokes Paul - Woman's Rights

Hello darling! I am Alice Stokes Paul, a woman's rights advocate. I was a highly educated woman with six college degrees. After hearing a British suffragette speaker in London, I was inspired to join the Women's Social and Political Union in the United States. Due to my activity in this organization, I was arrested and jailed three times. While in jail, I went on hunger strikes to protest women not having the right to vote.

I was a major organizer of the U.S. women's suffrage movement. I was also one of the leading figures responsible for passage of the Nineteenth Amendment which gave woman the right to vote. In 1923, I drafted the equal rights amendment (ERA) and presented it at the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the 1848 Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments. The amendment was a simple one, which stated, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex [gender]."

I never saw the ERA become law. Although it was introduced in every session of Congress between 1923 and 1970, it never made it to the floor for discussion until 1971. Although both houses of Congress approved it in 1972, it fell three states short of being ratified. It has since been reintroduced in every session of Congress since 1982.

Alice Stokes Paul

Woman's Rights



Babe Ruth - Sport Mania

Howdy! I am Babe Ruth, one of the most famous baseball players to ever live! By 1927, when I hit 60 home runs, I was a better known American to most foreigners than President Calvin Coolidge. I do admit I was somewhat of a womanizer and heavy drinker, but those facts never bothered the newspaper writers or my fans. Everyone loved me!

In the 1920's baseball became America's past time. New laws limiting working hours led to more leisure time, so many Americans spent that extra time watching sports. Other sports that were popular at the time were; boxing, golf, football, tennis and swimming. Most sports at this time were segregated by race.

I was nicknamed "**the Bambino**" and "**the Sultan of Swat**", and began my career as a stellar left-handed pitcher for the Boston Red Sox, but achieved my greatest fame as a slugging outfielder for the New York Yankees. I established many MLB batting (and some pitching) records, including career home runs (714) and runs batted in (RBIs) (2,213) I was one of the first five inductees into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936.

Babe Ruth

Sports Mania



Bruce Barton - Consumerism

Hello. My name is Bruce Barton and I was one of the most successful advertising executives of the 1920s. I started by selling newspapers. At the age of 16, I was making more than \$600 a year selling my uncle's maple syrup. I got my start in advertising by selling ad space for *Collier's* magazine.

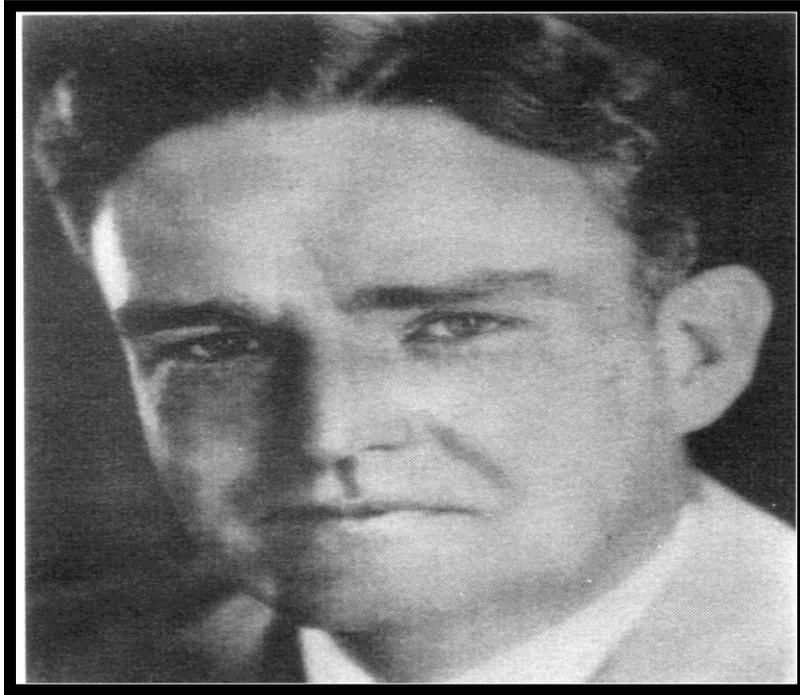
In 1919, I cofounded the advertising firm that would become Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn. My agency's main clients included General Electric, General Motors, and U.S. Steel. My philosophy was that good advertising appealed to consumers and created desire for a product. I believed "The American conception of advertising is to arouse desires and stimulate wants, to make people dissatisfied with the old and out-of-date." This was called the "psychology" of selling.

I told my employees that their ads should have a theme, an interesting headline, and a purpose to direct consumers to act in a particular way (usually to buy a product). My ads often used catchy slogans. My advertising firm was also one of the first agencies to use radio, rather than newspapers and magazine, for advertising. As part of an ad campaign, I created the character Betty Crocker.

In the 1920's the national income rose dramatically therefore, people had discretionary income to purchase the new creations such as the automobile, vacuum, refrigerator, irons and fans. Even if people could not afford these "luxury" items, they could purchase them on credit.

Bruce Barton

Consumerism



Charles Lindbergh - Transportation

Hello, my name is Charles Lindbergh. I was the first person to fly an airplane across the Atlantic Ocean. I bought my first airplane in 1923 and worked as a stunt pilot around the country. I earned many nicknames, the most famous of which was "Lucky Lindy." While working as an airmail pilot between Chicago and St. Louis, I decided to compete for a \$25,000 prize to be the first person to fly nonstop from New York City to Paris.

On May 20, 1927, my plane, the *Spirit of St. Louis*, took off from Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York, and landed 33 hours later at Le Bourget Aerodrome in Paris. On my transatlantic flight, I brought only five sandwiches with me. After my heroic flight, I was honored with awards, celebrations, and parades. I received the largest ticker-tape parade in New York City's history. President Calvin Coolidge gave me the Congressional Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Flying Cross. I used my fame to promote the development of commercial aviation.

Despite the fame that surrounded us, my family tried to lead a normal quiet life. However, tragedy struck on the evening of March 1, 1932, when my 20-month-old son was kidnapped from our home and murdered.

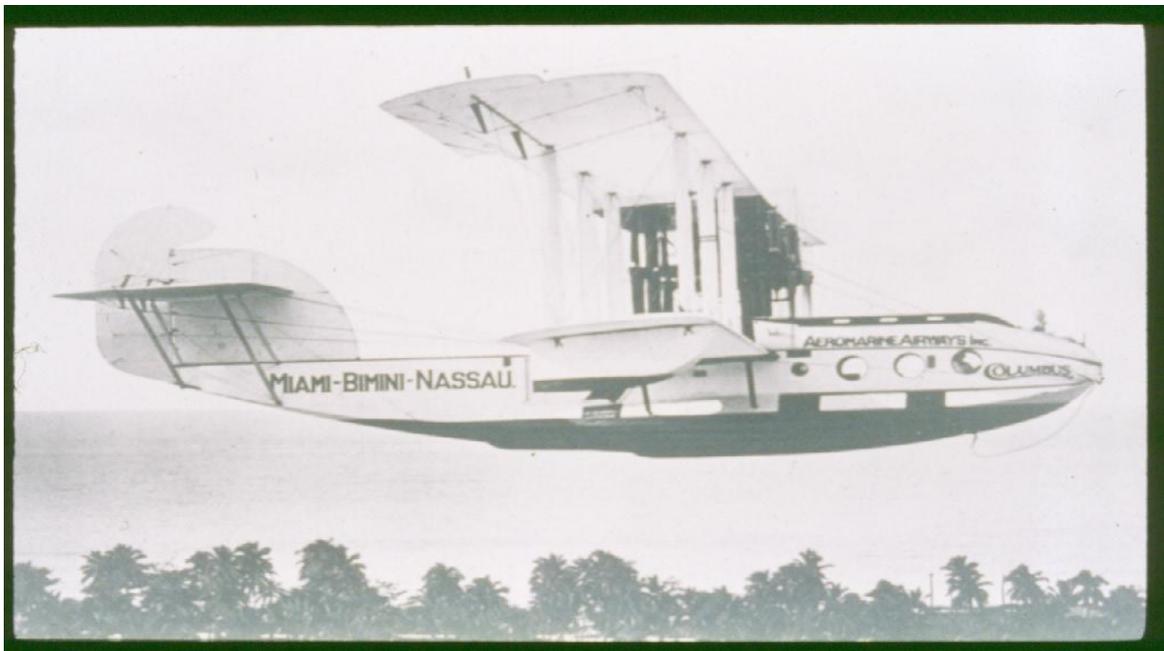
After my flight to Paris, Americans took to the skies in increasing numbers. Watching air passenger figures quadruple in 1928, financiers decided that aviation might actually prove profitable.

Charles Lindbergh

Transportation



COURTESY LINDBERGH FOUNDATION



Amelia Earhart – Transportation

Hello! My name is Amelia Earhart and I am the first woman to complete a solo transatlantic flight. My first flight, piloted by Frank Hawks, was the beginning of my dream to make my mark in aviation. Odd jobs, borrowed money, and a strong desire to succeed pushed me closer to my dream.

In 1921, I received my pilot's license. Seven years later in June 1928, I became the first woman to fly across the Atlantic as a passenger, making me very popular worldwide. In 1932, I became the first woman to complete a solo transatlantic flight. Then, in 1935, I became the first person to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean, from Hawaii to California.

On June 1, 1937, I set off on her 29,000-mile trip around the world. By June 29, when I and my navigator, Fred Noonan, landed in Lae, New Guinea, all but 7,000 miles had been completed. On July 2, we disappeared. The last report was received at 8:45 A.M. that day. The U.S. government reportedly spent \$4 million searching for us. At the time, it was the most expensive, intensive air-and-sea search in history.

Amelia Earhart

Transportation



COURTESY FRESNO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION

David Sarnoff – Radio & Movies

Hello, I am David Sarnoff. I was president of Radio Corporation of America (RCA).

My first taste of fame came from my job as a wireless telegraph operator in New York during the *Titanic* disaster. I was one of the first to hear and report the incident. I spent 72 hours straight reporting the names of the survivors to relatives and the media.

I quickly became a leader in the media industry, proposing new ideas and inventions, such as the “radio music box.” Until this time, radios were used primarily by the military for communication. I predicted that radios would soon be used for entertainment purposes. In 1920, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) hired me to develop the idea. In 1921, I was promoted to general manager and then, in 1930, became president of the company. My vision and passion brought radio into the homes of many Americans. RCA sales rose considerably during his time there.

I also pushed for the creation of the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in 1926. In 1928, I co-created the Radio-Keith-Orpheum (RKO) movie production company. I predicted the invention of both color television and the videocassette recorder.

David Sarnoff

Radio & Movies



Margaret Sanger - Woman's Rights

Hello! I am Margaret Sanger, a woman's rights advocate. I started *The Woman Rebel*, a radically feminist newspaper. My mother, Anne Higgins, died from tuberculosis at the age of 50. I was the sixth of 11 children, and I blamed my mother's early death on her frequent pregnancies. That belief was the driving force behind my great work on behalf of the women's birth control movement.

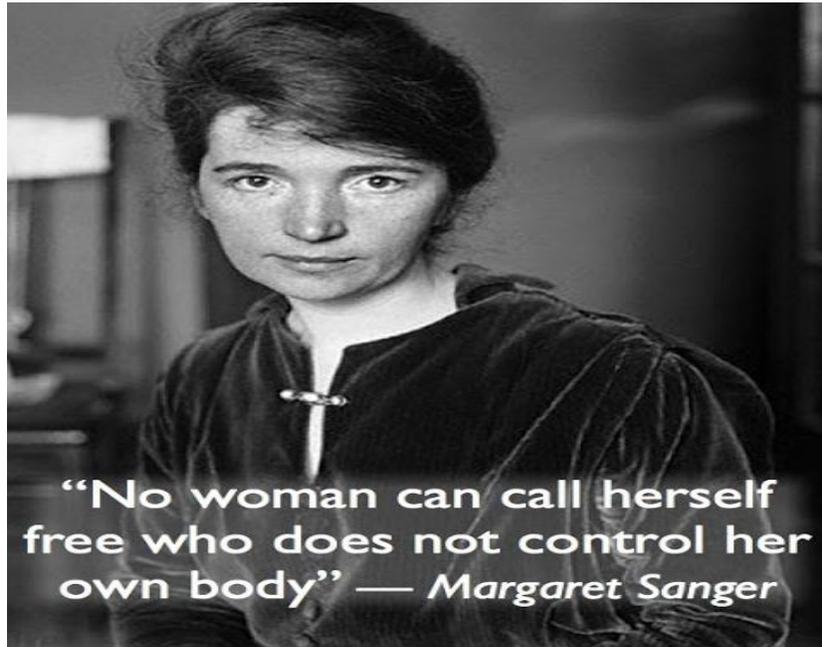
By 1914, I was challenging laws that banned distribution of contraceptive information. In 1916, I opened the nation's first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York. After being in business only nine days, the clinic was raided. My staff and I were put in jail. 1923, I opened the nation's first legal birth control clinic. I later formed a committee to lobby for birth control legislation granting physicians the right to distribute contraceptives legally.

Although I was considered wildly radical, my efforts and ideas paved the way for middle-class voices to be heard and for less costly, more effective contraceptives to become available. My work led to the 1965 Supreme Court decision *Griswold v. Connecticut*, which made birth control legal for married couples—a right that was extended to unmarried people in 1972.

In the 1920's women felt free and more independent. Those women who often challenged traditional ideas of women's role in society were called "flappers". They often wore shorter skirts, cut their hair into a "bob", wore makeup, smoked, danced the "Charleston", and used birth control.

Margaret Sanger

Woman's Rights



Louis Armstrong – Music

Hi! I am Louis Armstrong, a famous jazz musician. I helped write the first ever autobiography of a jazz musician, *Swing That Music*. I was born into extreme poverty in New Orleans. As a child, I would sing for pennies with other kids who wandered the New Orleans streets, trying to earn money for food. I taught myself to play the cornet, a brass instrument similar to a trumpet.

I played in brass bands on steamboats traveling along the Mississippi River, often entertaining wealthy white audiences. As a young man, I traveled to Chicago and New York, playing with well-known band leaders. I later began recording my own music.

I first achieved fame as a cornet and trumpet player, and my improvisations were legendary. As his career progressed, my talent as a jazz vocalist became more important, and I was remembered for my gravelly voice and inspiring duets. I am often remembered for making jazz music widely popular to both white and black audiences.

The time period in which Jazz music became popular was called the Harlem Renaissance. It was a time in which African-American literature, art, music, dance, and social commentary began to flourish in Harlem, a section of New York City. It also became known as "The New Negro Movement" and later as the Harlem Renaissance.

Louis Armstrong

Music



Bessie Smith – Music

Hi! I am Bessie Smith. I was considered one of the most popular blues singers of all time. I was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and was orphaned by the time I was nine years old.

In 1912, I was hired as a dancer in a famous traveling show. By 1920, I had gained a reputation as a performer and had developed my own act in the vaudeville circuit, which included singing the blues.

In the early 1920s, blues had become popular enough to sell records. Columbia Records signed me in 1923. Throughout the 1920s, I made and sold many recordings, often with other famous jazz musicians, like Louis Armstrong. I was known as the “Empress of the Blues” and one of the biggest African American stars of the time. I toured and performed constantly, which also made me one of the highest paid musicians in the world, with a reported salary of more than \$2,000 a week.

I was popular with both blacks and whites. My broad singing range, as well as the emotional intensity of my stage performances, served as inspiration to other musicians.

Bessie Smith

The Jazz Age



Georgia O'Keeffe – Art & Literature

Hi. I am Georgia O'Keeffe. I was one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. My natural talent was recognized and encouraged early in her life. I studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League in New York. After initial success, I stopped painting, believing I could never achieve greatness working within the confines of traditional art. Four years later, at a summer course for art teachers, I was introduced to a new method of approaching art. I began painting again, this time using more abstract methods.

In the mid-1920s, I began painting flowers up close. These have become my most famous works. Nature and the environment affected my work profoundly. Whether painting a flower, a skyscraper, or the southwestern horizon, I successfully used magnification and geometric patterns in my art. My work is described as calm and mystical. It was driven by emotion and passion.

I was heavily influenced by, and had an influence on the modern art movement of the 1920s. I continued to produce art into my 90's and was an inspiration to artists.

Georgia O'Keeffe

Art and Literature



F. Scott Fitzgerald – Arts & Literature

Hi! My success as a writer came at an early age. I began neglecting my studies while at Princeton in favor of writing. I then dropped out of college and enlisted in the army during World War I, although the war ended before I was to be sent overseas. I wrote my first novel during that time. *This Side of Paradise* was published and I won overnight fame and fortune.

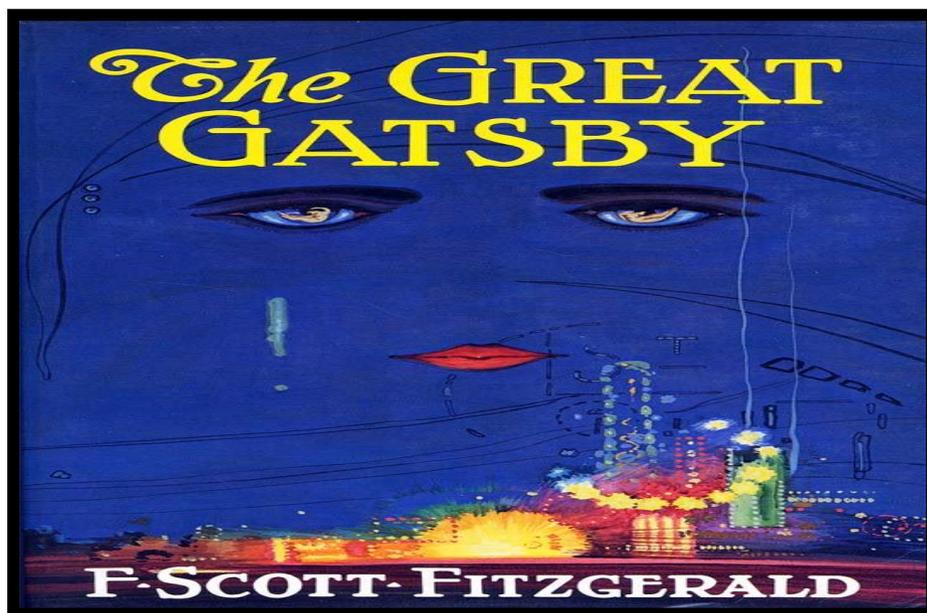
My writing was primarily a social history of the Jazz Age. I wrote, “It was an age of miracles, it was an age of art, it was an age of excess, and it was an age of satire.” My second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, was popular at the time. However, it was my third novel, *The Great Gatsby* that secured my place as one of America’s most enduring writers.

Great Gatsby is about a young and mysterious millionaire Jay Gatsby and his obsession for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan. The book explores themes of decadence, idealism, resistance to change, social upheaval, and excess, creating a portrait of the Jazz Age or the Roaring Twenties that has been described as a cautionary tale regarding the American Dream.

Although I made a good living from my writing, my wife and I lived extravagantly, renting beautiful homes and partying and traveling extensively. By the mid-1930s, I was an alcoholic, in debt, and unable to write. Despite my enduring legacy, I died believing myself a failure.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Arts and Literature



Gertrude “Trudy” Ederle – Sports Mania

Hello, my name is Gertrude Ederle. People call me Trudy for short. I am a famous athletic swimmer of the 1920's. At the age of 14, I demonstrated my long-distance swimming abilities by defeating 51 other women in a 312 -mile race. By the age of 17, I held 18 world swimming records and was a member of the U.S. Olympic swimming team.

In the 1924 Olympics, I competed in all five swimming events that were open to women, winning gold and two bronze medals. The following year, I swam from the Battery, in lower Manhattan, to Sandy Hook, New Jersey. I made the 21-mile swim in 7 hours 11 minutes, beating the men's record. By that time, I already held 29 national and world records.

I was most famous for being the first woman to swim across the English Channel. My second attempt was successful, despite wind, rain, and heavy swells. I completed the trip in 14 hours 31 minutes, shattering the existing record, which had been set by a man, by nearly 2 hours. As a result of ear damage that I got during my swim across the English Channel, I eventually became deaf.

I was among the first female athletes to prove that women were neither physically inferior to men nor incapable of heavy physical activity. My determination and hard work illustrated that women could achieve greatness in the sports arena.

Gertrude "Trudy" Ederle

Sports Mania



Al Capone - Prohibition

I was an American gangster in the 1920's during Prohibition. Prohibition was the time period in American history when alcohol was illegal. In 1919 the 18th Amendment (Volstead Act) was passed. The 18th Amendment prohibited the manufacture, transportation, and sale of beverages containing alcohol.

Those who wanted to make alcohol illegal ("dry's") had many reasons for their beliefs. Some of the reasons they supported prohibition were to:

- Close dangerous saloons
- Cut crime in half
- Improve public health
- Cleanse the race of birth defects
- Reduce poverty
- Cut taxes
- Stimulate the economy
- Stop on the job accidents and absenteeism
- Slow down the labor movement
- Prevent riots and violence
- Protect and preserve "native" morals

Unfortunately for those who supported prohibition, it actually made society worse. People began to drink more, make alcohol illegally, and go to illegal bars called "speak-easies". Crime and "gangsterism" also increased. I was the most famous "gangster".

Eventually, the 18th amendment will be overturned with the 21st amendment in 1933, making the manufacture of alcohol legal again.

Al Capone

Prohibition

