

Objectives

- Compare economic and cultural life in rural America to that in urban America.
- Discuss changes in U.S. immigration policy in the 1920s.
- Analyze the goals and motives of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.
- Discuss the successes and failures of the Eighteenth Amendment.



Terms and People

- **modernism** – trend that emphasized science and secular values over traditional religious ideas
- **fundamentalism** – belief that emphasizes the Bible as literal truth
- **Scopes Trial** – 1925 “Monkey Trial,” which challenged a law against teaching Darwin’s theory of evolution in Tennessee public schools
- **Clarence Darrow** – defense attorney in the Scopes Trial

Terms and People (continued)

- **quota system** – a formula to determine how many immigrants could enter the U.S. annually from a given country
- **Ku Klux Klan** – a group violently opposed to immigrants, Catholics, Jews, and African Americans
- **Prohibition** – a ban on alcohol
- **Eighteenth Amendment** – a 1919 Constitutional amendment that established Prohibition

Terms and People (continued)

- **Volstead Act** – a law that gave the government power to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment
- **bootlegger** – someone who illegally sold alcohol during Prohibition



How did Americans differ on major social and cultural issues?

In the 1920s, many city dwellers enjoyed a rising standard of living, while most farmers suffered through hard times.

Conflicting visions for the nation's future heightened tensions between cities and rural areas.

In 1920, for the first time, more Americans lived in cities than in rural areas.

In cities, many people enjoyed prosperity and were open to social change and new ideas.

Times were harder in rural areas. Rural people generally preferred traditional views of science, religion, and culture.



An example of this clash of values was the tension between **modernism** and Christian **fundamentalism** in the 1920s.



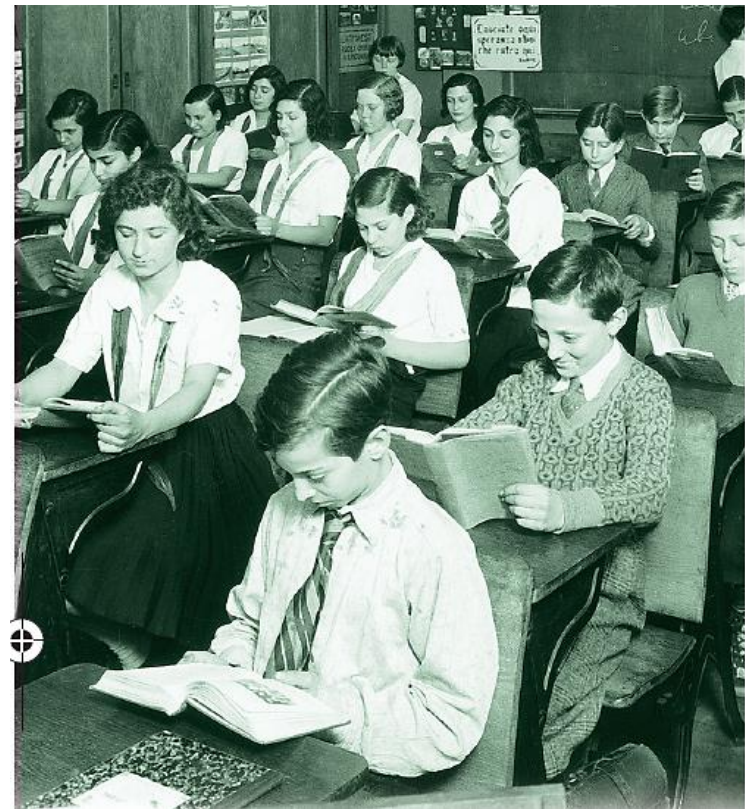
Modernism emphasized science and secular values.

Fundamentalism emphasized religious values and taught the literal truth of the Christian Bible.

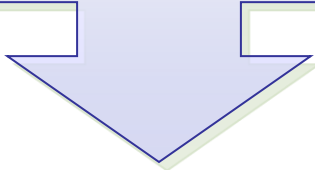


Attitudes toward education illustrate another difference between urban and rural perspectives.

- Urban people saw formal education as essential to getting a good job.
- In rural areas, “book learning” interfered with farm work and was less highly valued.



Education became a battleground for fundamentalist and modernist values in the 1925 **Scopes Trial.**



- Tennessee made it illegal to teach evolution in public schools.
- Biology teacher John Scopes challenged the law.
- Defense attorney **Clarence Darrow** tried to use science to cast doubt on religious beliefs.

The Scopes Trial illustrated a major cultural and religious division, but it did not resolve the issue.

- Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution and fined.



- The conflict over teaching evolution in public schools continues today.

Immigrants were at the center of another cultural clash.

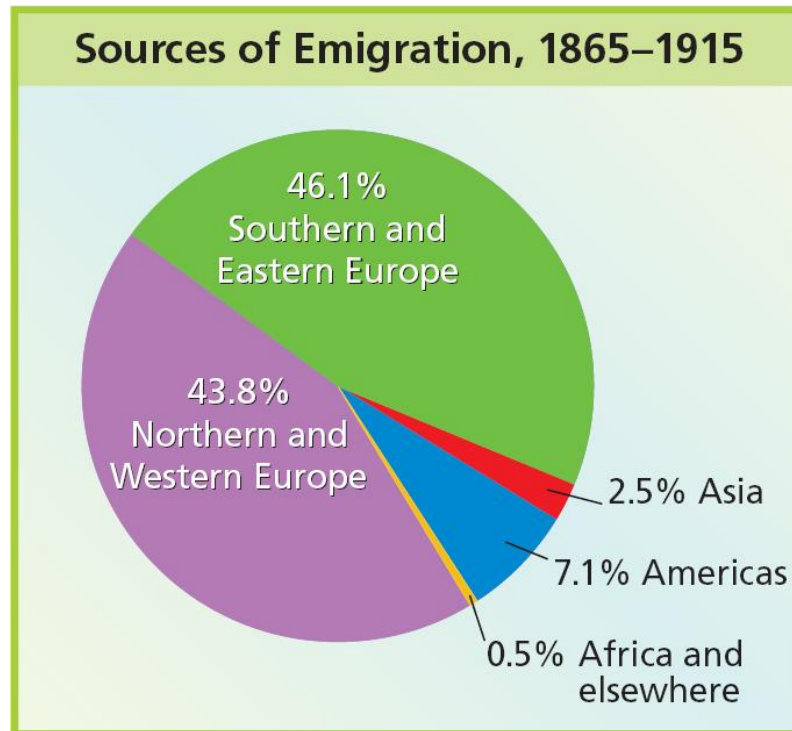
Many Americans recognized the importance of immigration to U.S. history.

Many Mexicans settled in the sparsely populated areas of the southwest.

Nativists feared that immigrants took jobs away from native-born workers and threatened American traditions.

After World War I, the Red Scare increased distrust of immigrants.

In 1924, the **National Origins Act** set up a **quota system** for immigrants.



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*

For each nationality, the quota allowed up to 2% of 1890's total population of that nationality living in the U.S.

Trends such as urbanization, modernism, and increasing diversity made some people lash out against change.

- Beginning in 1915, there was a resurgence of the **Ku Klux Klan**.
- The Klan promoted hatred of African Americans, Jews, Catholics, and immigrants.
- By 1925, the Klan had between 4 and 5 million members.



Others embraced the idea of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity.

- Many valued the idea of the United States as a “melting pot.”
- Groups such as the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and the Jewish Anti-Defamation League worked to counter the Klan and its values.

By the late 1920s, many Klan leaders had been exposed as corrupt.

Alcoholic beverages were another divisive issue.

In 1919, the **Eighteenth Amendment**, which banned the making, distributing, or selling of alcohol, became part of the Constitution.

The **Volstead Act** enabled the government to enforce the amendment.



Prohibition became law in the United States.

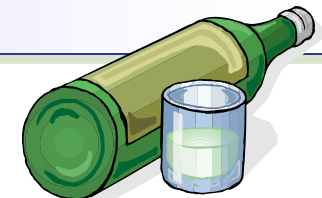
“Drys” favored Prohibition,
hailing the law
as a “noble
experiment.”

Drys believed that
Prohibition was
good for society.



“Wets” opposed Prohibition,
claiming that it did
not stop drinking.

Wets argued
that Prohibition
encouraged
hypocrisy and
illegal activity.



Prohibition did not stop people from drinking alcoholic beverages.

- A large illegal network created, smuggled, distributed, and sold alcohol, benefiting gangsters such as Al Capone.
- People bought alcohol illegally from **bootleggers** and at speakeasies.

Prohibition contributed to the rise of organized crime.