

## “The 1920s”

*In the 1920s, there was war again; this time it was America, fightin' from within*

*Fighting for your mind, fighting for your soul, a fight between the new and the old:  
A fight between the city and small town, when Jim Tunney knocked Jack Dempsey out;  
A fight between the flapper and the Gibson Girl and Charleston spread all over the world.*

*And kids went to the movies; Fatty Arbuckle on the screen, and the big jazz bands and the Ku Klux Klan were marching in the street, and it was all in the 1920's.*

*There was a Renaissance in Harlem, and a trial in Tennessee, and a battle in Chicago for control of the streets; and out in California the movies started to speak, and when Lindbergh crossed the ocean, it was coast-to-coast, live on NBC.*

*(Chorus)*

*And a Lost Generation: you can't drink in this nation; we got to stop immigration; it's the monkey or creation. And it was all in the 1920's...*

*There was mass production of everything, credit cards and advertising, thirty million cars and radios, and a hundred thousand miles of roads; there was anything you wanted to buy and the stock market climbed and climbed and climbed.*

*(Chorus)*

*And a Lost Generation...*

### **Historical Background:**

The term “Roaring Twenties,” commonly used to describe the decade, is in many ways not accurate. In fact, most historians characterize this period as one of the most conservative or traditional in United States history. Quota laws passed to restrict immigration, Prohibition, and the rise of fundamentalist religious groups contrast sharply with speakeasies, flappers and the Jazz Age. In fact, the twenties were a clash between traditional American values and emerging social changes and modernization.

In many ways the twenties were a battle between the big city and the small town. For the first time in this country's history the urban population surpassed that of the rural. The Scopes Monkey Trial, dealing with the teaching of evolution in public schools, typified this clash in American values.

The 1920s brought back a policy of laissez-faire economics as well as support for big business through high protective tariffs. This was in sharp contrast to the trust-busting restrictions placed on big business, and the progressive reforms passed during the administrations of Teddy Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson. The Twenties witnessed the greatest increase of industrial output in this country's history. By 1929, however, because of poor distribution of income, over-speculation, and a host of complex economic issues, it all came crashing down.

