

3) What changed in us society during the 1920's due to the economic boom?

The US economy grew rapidly from 1921 to 1929. It became the world's largest industrial producer; by 1929 it was producing 46% of the world's industrial goods. Its steel industry was booming, with the manufacture of 42 billion tonnes being produced each year. Furthermore during this time the gross national product of the USA increased from \$74 billion in 1922 to \$104 billion in 1929. This major rise in income within the country was to do with a large economic boom which happened in 1920's America which affected both business and society.

Due to the increase of national money within the 1920's the amount of roads in the US were increased, with the mileage doubling companies had access to a much wider market mail order companies especially benefited from the increase in roads as they could reach costumers who were located far away from their main base, both within the large cities of America and the rural areas. To raise awareness to their products around the country many companies invested in advertisement during the 20's. The advertising campaigns were bold, brightly coloured and made use of catch phrases to gain the attention of the general public of America.

With the rise of women working in business and earning wages the advertising companies aimed quite a bit of their marketing towards this new consumer group, with adverts using images of woman enjoying their new freedom and the changes in fashion within the time period. Furthermore advertisements made their way into newspapers and magazines which were also aimed at women, these showed images of women doing such things as smoking, socialising with men, wearing new fashions and attending dances. Another form of advertising that flourished during this decade was radio broadcasting. Having been mass produced almost 40% of homes in the US had a radio by 1930 which mean that advertising had found yet another way of reaching it potential market. As well as advertising radio also broadcasted new music to both men and women as well as national sporting events.

Within the 10 years between 1920 and 1930 25% more women were employed in business than before this decade. Many of these work opportunities were opened up to women by the mechanisation of the work place, which mean that physical strength no longer played such an important role in employment. Along with mechanisation came mass production, the process which involved one worker doing the same job continuously as the product was passed down the line of production meant that items could be assemble much quicker and for less amounts of money and therefore business flourished.

With the boom of business there was a growth in demand for construction for new buildings to accommodate the new workers and machinery of industry. Therefore this lead to a demand for electricity, during the 1920's this demand doubled and by 1929 over 70% of America has electrical lights. The construction industry lead to a growth in employment in industries that collected raw materials as did the power stations that were built to create the electricity demand. These factors were very important in the reduction of unemployment in the 1920's with a decrease of 8% form 11% in 1921 to 3% in 1929.

The general public began to be able to afford new luxury items which before the 1920's were to only be purchased by the rich. This change in economy came with the introduction of credit. It meant that goods were readily available for purchase and the price could be paid back over a number of weeks. Strangely enough even though the

average working week fell from 47 to 44 hours due to the mechanisation of the workplace: American people were richer and more well off than before the 1920's because of a wage increase of an average of 10%. Items such as radios and labour saving devices such as vacuum cleaners and refrigerators were now to be commonly found throughout the homes of the American people

During this decade of the 1920's there was a boom in the music industry as radio stations began broadcasting it. Jazz music grew greatly in popularity and led to a growth of music halls, clubs and musicals in the northern cities. With the new jazz craze, expectations of what women could wear changed as hemlines rose, however some people questioned what effect this change was having on America's morals. The women's clothes were being mass produced in factories and were being sold in chain stores such as Sears and Roebuck which had become the norm in large cities and sold to over a third of the market. There was also the invention of rayon; a cheap alternative to silk that soon became widely sold across the United States. As well as a variety of clothes made from new materials which were made into clothes of many different styles for women to enjoy wearing.

Women: during the 1920's found a new social freedom. They could travel more and did not have to be accompanied outside the home by a chaperone, which meant they found it much easier to socialise with men, such women became known as 'flappers' and became the trend in fashion. Women were also allowed to smoke in public places and many women purchased cars. Their purchasing power which had arisen due to their influx into the work place meant they were the perfect target for advertising. Furthermore people realised how powerful women had become with money with some taking over the family accounts that almost all their advertising was turned towards women. At the forefront of this campaign was Henry Ford and his Ford Model T's. The cars were mass produced in black as this was the most popular colour amongst women at the time. The cars however were a major success of the decade. Beginning at a cost of \$1000 in 1909, with the introduction of mass production and assembly lines the price soon fell to only \$250 dollars by the 1920's which when brought on credit was only a few months wages to the average American at the time. The mass production of cars also led to an increase in other industries such as steel, rubber and glass to provide the raw materials for the cars manufacturing process.

The cinema became a part of American life in the 1920's. The film industry, based in Hollywood, became much larger and with the continuous sunny climate many movies could be made in a year. At first the films were silent but in 1927 the first 'talkies' were released. Film stars such as Charlie Chaplin became national icons and films helped change the moral values of American society. Young men and women would visit the cinema 2-3 times a week during the decade. The film stars' lives were well documented in the now mass produced magazines. Furthermore they found themselves becoming household names thanks to the radio.

The radio brought everything to the American's. Those who lived in small town rural America that had had no way of knowing what was going on in the rest of the country were able to keep up to date with the latest news, sport plays and advertising through the national or local radio station. The radio also created a new national habit of listening to the live sporting events that were being broadcasted.

The economic boom led to many changes within the society of America. The increase in wealth and the introduction of mass production and labour saving devices, the latter of which led to a decrease in the working hours of the week meant that people had more leisure time to spend socialising in the new jazz clubs, partaking in the new fast dances such as the 'Charleston' or by going to watch sport such as baseball or American football. The young took great pleasure in this new social freedom they had received and the increase in the nation's wealth by going to the pictures and by travelling to other cities on the country's increased road systems, they also enjoyed the freedom from their parents that the decade brought.

The 1920s were one of the most prosperous periods in American history due to the increase in economy and the nation's wealth. As a result the country's wealth reflected in every aspect of life but it mainly stood for the idea that American's should just to enjoy life and the new freedom they had received. The prosperity of the people influenced society, culture and industry all due to the boom of the economy during 1920's America.