Source 1

‘Though A few young upper middle-class women in the cities talked about throwing off the older conventions – they were the flappers – most women stuck to more traditional attitudes concerning ‘their place’ ….. most middle-class women concentrated on managing the home ….. Their daughters, far from taking to the streets against sexual discrimination were more likely to prepare for careers as mothers and housewives. Millions of immigrant women and their daughters … also clung to traditions that placed men firmly in control of the family ….. Most American women concentrated on making ends meet or setting aside money to purchase the new gadgets that offered some release from household drudgery.’

Extract from ‘America in the Twentieth Century’ JT Patterson (1997)

Source 2

“In 1929 I was six years old, but I remember quite a few things from that era, especially growing up and never having too much. What sticks mostly in my mind was losing my money in the bank. I didn’t quite understand why that bank had to close and take my money, which was probably only a few dollars. When they started paying off a few years later, my check was eleven cents. It helped when my brother gave me his, which was eighteen cents, and my older sister’s, which was twenty three cents. I was really in the money then...”

Phyllis Bryant. Published in Michigan History Magazine, January-February, 1982 (Vol.66, No. 1)

Source 3

The Cotton Club Band 1927, made up entirely of African-Americans who were the opening act at New York’s most famous Speakeasy – The Cotton Club. Whilst African-Americans were the head-line acts, most of the customers were White Americans.
Source 4

Extract from a speech by M. King describing life for Blacks in Birmingham Alabama in the 1920s.

“You were born in a jim-crow hospital to parents who probably lived in a ghetto…You would attend a jim-crow school…You would spend your childhood playing mainly in the streets because the ‘coloured’ parks were abysmally inadequate…If you went shopping with your father and your mother, you would trudge along as they purchased at every counter, except one, in the large and small stores. If you were hungry or thirsty you would have to forget about it until you got back to the Negro section of town, for in your city it was a violation of the law to serve food to Negroes at the same counter with whites…If you wanted a job…you had better settle on doing menial work as a porter or labourer. If you were fortunate enough to get a job…you would eat in a separated place and use a water fountain and lavatory labelled ‘Coloured’ in conformity to citywide ordinances (laws).”

Source 5

Extract from Mary Heaton Vovse, *Rebellion in the Cornbelt*, Harper’s, 1932

The following excerpt describes the reaction of some farmers in 1929.

“If we farmers go down bankrupt,” says one of the younger men, “everything in this country goes down. If we get enough to live on, everybody’s going to go to work again.”

“When we can’t buy,” says another, “there can’t be prosperity. We ain’t been buying nothing, not for four years.”

In the town of Fremont, Nebraska, we witnessed a town meeting between farmers and the Governor’s representative, Mr. J. S. Allen. As he closed his address to the farmers an old man got to his feet. He stood in front of the bandstand where the speakers were.

“I want to ask a question,” he quavered. He turned his face up to the Governor’s representative and raised an eloquent work-gnarled hand.

“How soon,” he cried, “can the Governor declare a moratorium? That is what I want to know! Can he do it right off?” He stood there, his anxious blue eyes staring at Mr. Allen. You could have heard a pin drop while Mr. Allen shuffled through an apologetic answer.

Not right off, such things took time.

“You can’t say when, you can’t say how soon?” the old man insisted with terrifying urgency.

It was as though this old farmer represented all the hard-pressed farmers of the country, all the old people who in a short time, in a few weeks, will be driven off their farms, sold out after a lifetime of fruitful work. How soon could a Governor declare a moratorium? Not in time to prevent this catastrophe? He stood there, old and frail and anxious, his arresting hand still raised. A murmur went through the crowd. They had sensed the tragedy behind the old farmer’s question. All of them have felt the approach of bankruptcy and eviction.

*Moratorium* - freeze on prices.
SOURCE 6
(This is how the Washington Eagle Newspaper described the death of a black man accused of murdering a white woman in Georgia in 1921).

“The Negro was taken to a grove, where each one of more than 500 people, in Ku Klux Klan ceremonial, had placed a pine knot around a stump, making a pyramid to the height of ten feet. The Negro was chained to the stump, and asked if he had anything to say. Castrated and in indescribable torture, the negro asked for a cigarette, lit it and blew the smoke in the face of his tormentors.

The pyre was lit and a hundred men and women, old and young, grandmothers among them, joined hands and danced around while the Negro burned. A big dance was held in a barn nearby that evening in celebration of the burning, many people coming by automobile from nearby cities to the gala event”.

SOURCE 7 - (Extract from legislation in the state of Missouri, USA 1929)

“Separate free schools shall be established for the education of children of African descent; and it shall be unlawful for any colored child to attend any white school, or any white child to attend a colored school.”
—Missouri State Law, 1929

Source 8

Anti-evolution books enjoyed record sales in Dayton, Tennessee during the Scopes Monkey Trial. Circa 1925
Source 9


By the mid 1920s, estimates of membership in the Klan and its auxiliary, Women in the Klan, ranged from two million to five million. The revived Klan, its targets not only blacks but Catholics, Jews and immigrants, thrived in the midwest and far west as well as the South...

Klan bigotry varied from region to region. In the South the anti-black theme loomed large, but Klaverns in the North and West more often targeted Catholics and Jews. In the southwest the Klan focused on violators of prohibition and traditional morality...

The Klan filled important needs for its members. Although riddled with corruption at the top, the organisation consisted primarily of ordinary people, not criminals or fanatics. The Klan's promise to restore the nation to an imagined purity - ethnic, moral and religious - appealed powerfully to ill-educated and deeply religious Americans... Klan membership, moreover, bestowed a sense of importance and group cohesion on people who doubted their own worth.

Source 10

Extract from *Address to the Republican Party Convention by Herbert Hoover*, 12 August 1928

'We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poorhouse is vanishing from among us. We have not yet reached the goal, but, given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, we shall soon with the help of God be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation... That is the primary purpose of the economic policies we advocate.'

Source 11 - A ‘Hooverville’, Chicago, 1931
**SOURCE 12**

‘Why do they lynch Negroes anyhow? All over in the South, with a white judge, a white jury, white public sentiment, white officers of the law, it is just as impossible for a Negro accused of a crime, or even suspected of a crime, to escape the white man’s vengeance or his justice as it would be for a young deer that wanders accidentally into a den of hungry lions to escape.’

A Black Newspaper Editor from South Carolina, 1924

**SOURCE 13**

‘Suppose a man .... begins a regular savings of $15 a month .... If he invests in common stocks (company shares) .... He will, at the end of twenty years, have at least $80,000 and an income from investments of around $400. I am firm in my belief that anyone can not only be rich, but ought to be rich’

John Raskob, Director of General Motors, 1926

**SOURCE 14** - Extract from ‘Higher School Certificate Modern History Revision Guide’, 2006. 'The Image of the Flapper'

“The flapper was the modern young women of the 1920s. Flappers were portrayed dressed in knee-length skirts and rolled-down silk stockings. They were typically small-breasted, had no waistline and wore short haircuts. Flappers also smoked cigarettes, wore makeup, drank alcohol and indulged in sexual experimentation.

The image of the flapper was popularised in films and advertisements as the ideal women of the age and was used to sell makeup, cigarettes and the latest fashions. While there were certainly some women who became flappers, the lifestyle of the liberated flapper was not necessarily the experience of most young women. Rather, the flapper was an idealisation of what advertisers and film-makers believed women should look like and how they should behave.”
Extract from a speech by Hiram Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, 1926.

"... The Klan, therefore, has now come to speak for the great mass of Americans of the old pioneer stock. We believe that it does fairly and faithfully represent them, and our proof lies in their support. To understand the Klan, then, it is necessary to understand the character and present mind of the mass of old-stock Americans. The mass, it must be remembered, as distinguished from the intellectually mongrelized "Liberals."

These are, in the first place, a blend of various peoples of the so-called Nordic race, the race which, with all its faults, has given the world almost the whole of modern civilization. The Klan does not try to represent any people but these... the moral breakdown that has been going on for two decades. One by one all our traditional moral standards went...or were so disregarded that they ceased to be binding. The sacredness of our Sabbath, of our homes, of chastity, and finally even of our right to teach our own children in our own schools fundamental facts and truths were torn away from us. Those who maintained the old standards did so only in the face of constant ridicule... .

The old-stock Americans are learning, however. They have begun to arm themselves for this new type of warfare. Most important, they have broken away from the fetters of the false ideals and philanthropy which put aliens ahead of their own children and their own race. . . .

The Ku Klux Klan, in short, is an organization which gives expression, direction and purpose to the most vital instincts, hopes, and resentments of the old-stock Americans, provides them with leadership, and is enlisting and preparing them for militant, constructive action toward fulfilling their racial and national destiny. Thus the Klan goes back to the American racial instincts, and to the common sense which is their first product, as the basis of its beliefs and methods. . . . . They are condensed into the Klan slogan: "Native, white, Protestant supremacy."