

## "The Roaring Twenties"

The Roaring Twenties was a celebration of youth. The experiences of World War I, the growth of the cities and changing morals opened up a new world to many Americans, especially women. Women got the right to vote in 1920 and a booming economy opened up new roles for women in the workplace. New social changes such as the availability of birth control information led to a decline in the birth rate. This coupled with technological innovations simplified household labor and family life. Many people questioned the values of the past and experimented with new values and behaviors as well as fashions.

The flapper became the new ideal woman in the 1920's. (The name came from a fad of wearing galoshes unbuckled so they flapped around her ankles in a way that commanded attention.) Flappers wore bright waist-less dresses an inch above the knee, silk stockings, strings of beads and bracelets, lipstick and rouge. They wore short "bobbed" hair, taped their breasts flat, cursed, drank, smoked and "necked" and "petted" in "houses of prostitution on wheels". (Cars)

This new look marked a new attitude by women. They became more assertive and demanded the same freedoms as men. In marriage and dating the rules began to change. Women expected more equality in their married life and dating became "casual", not just pursuing a wife or husband. Children were less likely to be working and went to high school in record numbers. Because children spent more time with others, their own age peer groups became more important and parents had less influence and control over their children. Thus, we are left with the image of the rebellious Flapper dancing the Charleston, smoking and drinking, shocking her parents and men by being aggressive in the sexual arena and demanding equality in all aspects of American society.