

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

My **ONE**
and **ONLY**



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The Max Showalter Center for
Education in Musical Theatre

MY ONE AND ONLY

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MUSIC & LYRICS BY
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My ONE *and* ONLY

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THE GERSHWINS

Ira

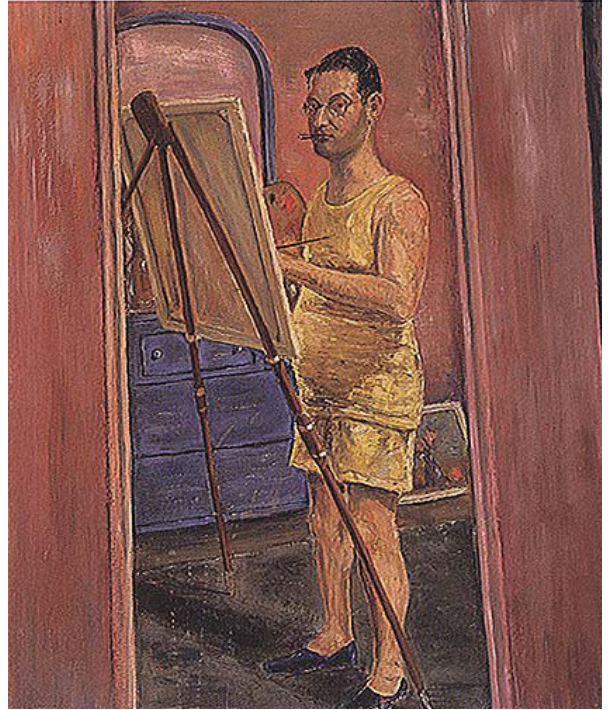
"A song without music is a lot like H2 without the O." - Ira Gershwin



IRA GERSHWIN, lyricist for *My One and Only*, was born in New York City on December 6, 1896. Gershwin was an indifferent student who loved to read and became fascinated by popular music, particularly the song lyrics. At the age of sixteen, Ira enrolled in the College of the City of New York as an English major. He began contributing to school newspapers and magazines, but after demonstrating that he didn't have much talent as a writer, he eventually dropped out.

(and *Far Away*)," and "The Man That Got Away." In 1966 Ira received a Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Maryland, confirming that his work had set new standards for the American musical theatre.

On August 17, 1983, Ira Gershwin died peacefully at his home in Beverly Hills.



A self portrait, "My Body," by Ira Gershwin (1932)

Ira tried out a number of jobs including a business manager to a carnival, a clerk, and a theatre reviewer. While Ira was struggling to find a career path, his younger brother George was already developing a reputation in the music world. In 1918, George asked Ira to collaborate with him on a song. Not wanting to ride his brother's coat tails, Ira added lyrics to George's music under the pseudonym Arthur Francis – a combination of the names of his youngest brother Arthur and sister Frances. Their first song, "The real American Folk Song (Is a Rag)" appeared in the musical comedy *Ladies First*. In 1921, under his pen name, Ira supplied the lyrics for his first Broadway show, *Two Little Girls in Blue*. After writing songs for three more years with a variety of composers, Ira began the successful and lifelong collaboration with George and dropped his pseudonym.

The Gershwin brothers wrote the music for a number of Broadway and Hollywood musicals, and despite George's death in 1937, Ira continued on as a successful lyricist. He collaborated with such composers as Vernon Duke (*The Ziegfeld Follies of 1936*), Kurt Weill (*Lady in the Dark*, 1941), Jerome Kern (*Cover Girl*, 1944), Arthur Schwartz (*Park Avenue*, 1946), Harry Warren (*The Barkleys of Broadway*, 1949), Burton Lane (*Give a Girl a Break*, 1953), and Harold Arlen (*A Star is Born*, 1954).



Ira was the first songwriter awarded the Pulitzer Prize for drama with collaborators George S. Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind for their 1932 musical, *Of Thee I Sing*. He was nominated for three Academy Awards for his film songs "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "Long Ago

"Of Thee I Sing (Baby)" lyrics by Ira Gershwin

From the Island of Manhattan to the Coast of Gold,
From the North to South, from East to West,
You are the love I love the best.
You're the dream girl of the sweetest story ever told;
A dream I've sought both night and day
For years through all the U.S.A.
The star I've hitched my wagon to
Is very obviously you.

Of thee I sing, baby -
Summer, autumn, winter, spring, baby.
You're my silver lining,
You're my sky of blue;
There's a lovelight shining
Just because of you.

Of thee I sing, baby -
You have got that certain thing, baby!
Shining star and inspiration,
Worthy of a mighty nation -
Of thee I sing!

THE GERSHWINS

George

"When I realized beyond any possibility of error, or need of recantation, that the voice of America, the expression of soul, is jazz, a determination to do the best possible in that idiom filled me." – George Gershwin, "Jazz is the Voice of the American Soul." *Theatre Magazine* 45/3 (March 1927): 14, 52B.

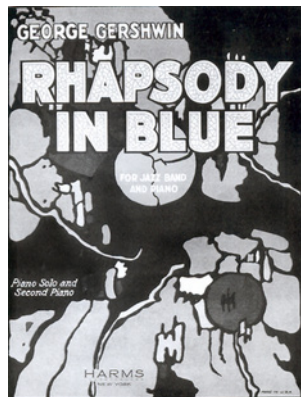


GEORGE GERSHWIN, composer of *My One and Only*, was born in Brooklyn, New York on September 26, 1889. He began his musical training at the age of thirteen and at fifteen he left high school to work as a Tin Pan Alley song plugger. Within three years he had published his first song, "When You Want 'Em, You Can't Get 'Em, When You've Got 'Em You Don't Want 'Em," but it created little interest. It wasn't until he composed "Swanee"

that George gained real fame. The song was popularized by Al Jolson in 1919 in the musical comedy *Sinbad*. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VB5_FScm41Q)

In 1924, George teamed up with his brother Ira and the Gershwins became the dominant Broadway songwriters of the day, creating brisk, infectious rhythmic numbers and poignant ballads. While he was writing the music for numerous musicals and films, George had ambitions to compose serious music and he got his chance when, in late 1923, the bandleader Paul Whiteman asked George Gershwin to write a jazz piece for his band.

George sketched out some possible themes, but didn't go any further with the project. To his surprise, on January 4, 1924, *The New York Tribune* announced that George Gershwin was at work on a "jazz concerto" that would be premiered by the Whiteman Band on February 12 in a concert called *An Experiment in Modern Music*. Although Gershwin was busy with Broadway commitments, he rose to the occasion. George composed a breakthrough piece called *Rhapsody in Blue* in only five weeks. He drew inspiration while riding the train to Boston, as he told biographer Isaac Goldberg in 1931:



"It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is so often so stimulating to a composer – I frequently hear music in the very heart of the noise... And there I suddenly heard, and even saw on paper – the complete construction

of the *Rhapsody*, from beginning to end. No new themes came to me, but I worked on the thematic material already in my mind and tried to conceive the composition as a whole. I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America, of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance."

Rhapsody in Blue premiered to a roomful of influential composers including John Phillip Sousa and Sergei Rachmaninoff, with George Gershwin himself playing the piano. Later termed "symphonic jazz," *Rhapsody* brought jazz, a primarily "black music," out of the night clubs and into an orchestral setting and also brought orchestral music to people who would not normally be welcome in a concert hall. As stated by Whitman in a pre-concert lecture, the piece would "at least provide a stepping stone which will make it very simple for the masses to understand, and therefore, enjoy symphony and opera." Although the piece received mixed reviews from critics and despite some initial resistance, *Rhapsody in Blue* became a hit and is still widely performed and greatly respected today.

Listen to George Gershwin playing *Rhapsody in Blue* here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1U40xBSz6Dc>

The years to follow brought much success to Gershwin. In both the popular and serious music worlds he was the most famous composer alive, although he only composed four concert pieces. Perhaps he would have written more, but George Gershwin's death came tragically early in his life. On July 11, 1937, after an operation which could not remove all of a fast growing malignant brain tumor, George Gershwin died at only 38 years old. His death shocked his fellow composers and an entire generation as the nation mourned their great loss.



A self portrait by George Gershwin

THE GERSHWINS

George & Ira in Collaboration



GEORGE AND IRA GERSHWIN had phenomenal careers as individuals, but when working together, the brothers formed a collaboration that is unmatched. They will forever be remembered as the songwriting team whose voice was synonymous with the sounds and style of the Jazz Age.

By the time of their 1924 Broadway hit, *Lady, Be Good!* starring Fred and Adele Astaire, George had worked on a series of revues called *The George White Scandals*, and Ira had enjoyed several successful collaborations. But from that year until George's premature death in 1937, the brothers wrote almost exclusively together. They composed over two dozen scores for Broadway and Hollywood and while they are best remembered today for their numerous individual song hits, their greatest achievement is the elevation of musical comedy to an American art form.

With *Lady, Be Good!* (1924), *Tell Me More* (1925), *Tip-Toes* (1925), *Oh, Kay!* (1926), *Funny Face* (1927), *Treasure Girl* (1928), and *Girl Crazy* (1930), the Gershwin brothers



achieved a high level of songwriting craftsmanship that powerfully influenced the future of the musical stage. Their trilogy of political satires (*Strike Up the Band*, *Of Thee I Sing*, and *Let 'Em Eat Cake*) helped raise popular musical theatre to a new level of sophistication. Gershwin scores were smart, exuberant, and offered vehicles for some of the best remembered performances by stars such as Gertrude Lawrence, Fred and Adele Astaire, and even the debut of Ethel Merman.

PORGY AND BESS

In 1924, Edwin Du Bose Heyward wrote his first book, *Porgy*. Heyward got the idea for the story from a newspaper article about a maimed black man who committed murder at the height of passion. In 1926, George Gershwin read *Porgy* and immediately wrote to Heyward expressing that he wished to compose an opera based on his book. Nine years later, Heyward and the Gershwins began collaborating on *Porgy and Bess*, an opera that dealt with African American life in Charleston, South Carolina during the 1920s.

In the summer of 1935, George Gershwin worked on the opera in Charleston, drawing inspiration from the James Island Gullah community, which he felt had preserved

some African musical traditions. George's research added authenticity to the work as the music reflects his jazz roots, but also draws upon southern black traditions including the blues, work songs, and spirituals. He masterfully blended all of these with traditional arias and recitatives of the opera genre.

Although the music aimed to reflect the southern black community, the opera's depiction of African Americans attracted controversy – many of its critics voicing concerns that the characters played into a stereotype that African Americans lived in poverty, took drugs and were quick to fight. Over time, however, *Porgy and Bess* gained acceptance from the opera community and some of the African American Community.



Ira Gershwin stipulated that only blacks be allowed to play the lead roles when the opera was performed in the U.S., thus launching the careers of several prominent black opera singers.

THE GERSHWINS' LEGACY

Today, the Gershwin catalog has been enthusiastically revived by a younger generation. Their songs have become integral standards in the American songbook, and many have even been reinterpreted in "new" Gershwin musicals including *My One and Only* (1983) and *Crazy for You* (1992). In 1985, Congress awarded George and Ira Gershwin the Congressional Gold Medal – only the third time that songwriters had been so honored in the United States.



Caricature of Ira and George Gershwin by Al Hirschfeld

Influential Tap Dancers

WILLIAM HENRY LANE, better known as Master Juba, was born a free black man in Rhode Island in 1825. He began his career as a performer in minstrel shows, although only white actors were allowed to perform. In order to hide the color of his skin, Lane was forced to wear blackface on stage. When he performed, Lane combined the juba dance with the jig and reel dances that he had learned from his Irish neighbors. Adding many other ethnic steps such as the shuffle, the slide, and clog, Lane's new dance became known as tap dancing.

FRED ASTAIRE (1907-1988) is often referred to as one of the greatest influences on tap dancing. His background as a Broadway dancer contributed a grace and fluidity to tap that subtly changed the way that future dancers would train and perform. Astaire began his dancing career in vaudeville with his sister Adele and eventually made the move to films. Astaire was granted complete control over his choreography and preferred to have dance numbers move the plot of movies forward instead of just showcasing the actor's talent. He is now credited as the leader in making tap dancing a valued film dance style. **YouTube clip:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFabjc6mFk4>

GREGORY HINES (1946-2003) is considered one of the top tap dancers of his generation. He won a Tony Award for *Jelly's Last Jam* and starred in many other Broadway musicals. Hines landed his first film role in 1981 and continued acting on screen in such films as *The Cotton Club*, *White Nights*, and *Tap* as well as the mini series "Bojangles." Because of his presence on the stage, in movies, and on television, he was well known to the general public and became a driving force that led to the resurgence of tap in the 1980s.

YouTube clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgWfHn1W1BY>

Tap Dance

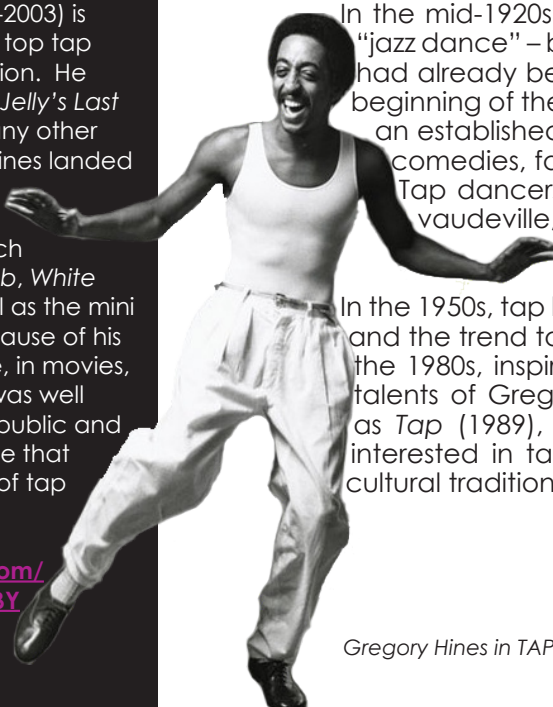
A major component of many musical theatre productions is dance. Dance can be used to elevate a song to an exciting full-cast number, to enhance emotions, or to express something that words can't.



Scott Barnhardt and David Elder tap dancing in Goodspeed's *SINGIN' IN THE RAIN*. Photo by Diane Sobolewski.

rhythms by transferring them to their feet in something called the Juba dance. This plantation dance was a fusion of the Irish Jig and Lancashire Clog, brought over by Scottish and Irish indentured laborers, and traditional West African step dances. The Juba dance, sometimes called handbone or PATTIN' JUBA, involved stomping as well as slapping and patting the arms, legs, chest and cheeks while walking in a counter-clockwise circle. As a result of this fusion, African dance styles became more formal while European elements became more fluid and rhythmic, forming an American hybrid called tap.

Tap didn't become a stage dance until the rise of the minstrel show in the late 1800s. Before the end of the Civil War, black and white performers were rarely allowed to appear on stage together so white dancers would blacken their faces with burnt cork and stage performances based on their interpretations of African American dance and music styles.



Gregory Hines in *TAP*.

Choreographers have utilized styles ranging from ballroom to break dance in musicals, but *My One and Only* is filled with exciting tap numbers. Tap has been a primary dance style in musical theatre since the very first musical in 1866, *The Black Crook*.

Tap is a uniquely American dance form that began as a collision of cultures in the New World. The fusion of British Isles Clog and Step dancing with the rhythms of West African drumming and dancing created an art form that continues to flourish today.

During the early days of slave trade in America, Africans would communicate with each other through the use of drums. Fearful that the drumming contained secret codes of revolt, slave owners began to panic and forbid the use of drums and other native instruments in African religious ceremonies. The slaves held onto their traditional

Check it Out

For a video tap dance dictionary, visit this website: <http://www.unitedtaps.com/Tap Dance Dictionary in Video Format.html#alexander>

In the mid-1920s, jazz music took the country by storm, accompanied by "jazz dance" – better known as tap. At the turn of the century tap dancing had already been in existence for over fifty years, but it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that tap dancing took off and truly became an established American art form. By 1916, Broadway was overrun with comedies, farces, revues, and musicals – many of which featured tap. Tap dancers were major stars in minstrel shows, burlesque, carnivals, vaudeville, theater, radio, speakeasies, revues, nightclubs, and by 1928, talking motion pictures.

In the 1950s, tap lost its popularity, due in part to the changing style of music and the trend towards using classical ballet dances in films. At the end of the 1980s, inspired by the Broadway success of *Black and Blue* and the talents of Gregory Hines who starred on Broadway and in movies such as *Tap* (1989), many young African American male dancers became interested in tap again. Today, tap continues to evolve into a varied cultural tradition that encompasses many generations and all races.

Did You Know...

The Jazz Age was a name given to the 1920s by author F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Polls of historians and scholars have consistently ranked Harding as one of the worst Presidents. This evaluation was based on his presidential records, accomplishments, and numerous administration scandals.

The Miss America Pageant was originally started to keep tourists in Atlantic City after Labor Day.

Calvin Coolidge, nicknamed Silent Cal, had an electronic horse installed in the White House.

Only 16 countries competed in the 1924 Winter Olympics. The U.S. won 4 medals.

The Indian Citizenship Act granted citizenship to about 125,000 of 300,000 indigenous people in the United States, but even Native Americans who were granted rights under the Act may not have had full citizenship and voting rights until 1948.

J. Edgar Hoover was the FBI Director for 48 years.

THE 1920s Timeline

Whether you call it the “**Jazz Age**” or the “Roaring Twenties,” the popular image of the 1920s is that it was a decade of prosperity and riotous living, bootleggers and gangsters, flappers and jazz. This image glamorizes the decade, but it also provides insight into the decade's underlying force – social change. The most obvious signs of change were in the rise of a consumer-oriented economy and in the growth of mass entertainment. Gender roles, hair styles, and dress all changed profoundly during the 1920s, demonstrating the liberation of Americans from their Victorian past.

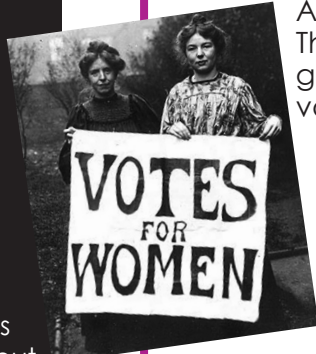
Below is a timeline of landmark events that shaped the 1920s.



JANUARY 20, 1920
Prohibition goes into effect



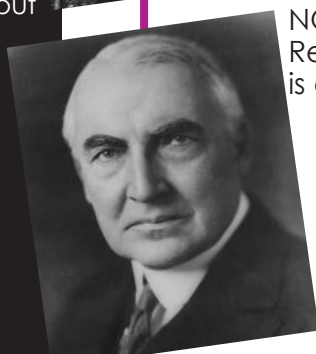
AUGUST 2, 1923
President Harding dies in office and is succeeded by his Vice President, Calvin Coolidge



AUGUST 18, 1920
The 19th Amendment gives women the right to vote



JANUARY 24, 1924
The first Winter Olympic Games are held in the French Alps in Chamonix, France



NOVEMBER, 1920
Republican Warren G. Harding is elected as president



JUNE 15, 1924
All Native Americans are designated U.S. citizens under the Indian Citizenship Act



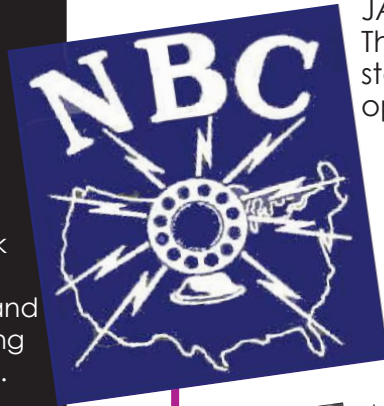
SEPTEMBER 7, 1921
The first Miss America pageant is held in Atlantic City, NJ



MAY 10, 1924
J. Edgar Hoover is appointed to lead the new FBI

Did You Know...

NBC broadcast radio's earliest mass hit, "Amos 'n' Andy," beginning in 1926-27 in its original fifteen-minute serial format. The show set a standard for nearly all serialized programming in the original radio era.



Philo Farnsworth started work on his image dissector (or television) at the age of 14 and demonstrated the first working version when he was only 21.

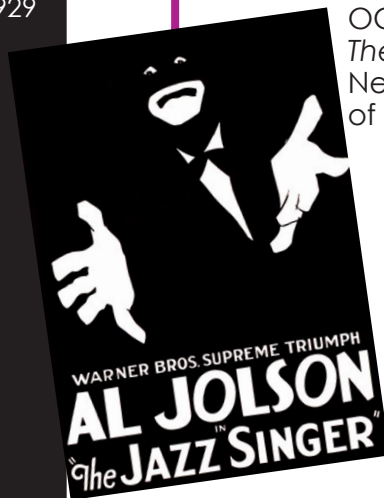
Plane Crazy was first released as a silent film, but failed to impress audiences. After releasing the successful *Steamboat Willie*, Disney decided to re-release *Plane Crazy* with sound on March 17, 1929. You can watch *Plane Crazy* here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCZPzHg0h80>.



After Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic in 1927, Amelia Earhart was inspired to be the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, and she did just that. On June 16, 1928 she departed Newfoundland with Wilmer Stultz and Louis Gordon, landing in Wales exactly 20 hours and 40 minutes later.



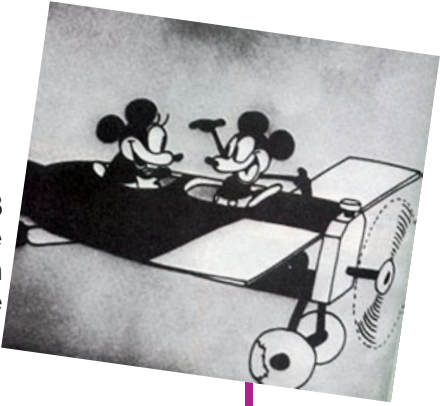
The Stock Market Crash of 1929 was the most devastating stock market crash in the history of the United States. It began the 12-year Great Depression that affected all the Western industrialized countries.



THE 1920s Timeline

JANUARY 15, 1926
The first network radio station, NBC, is formed, opening with 24 stations

MAY 15, 1928
Mickey and Minnie Mouse make their film debut with the release of *Plane Crazy*



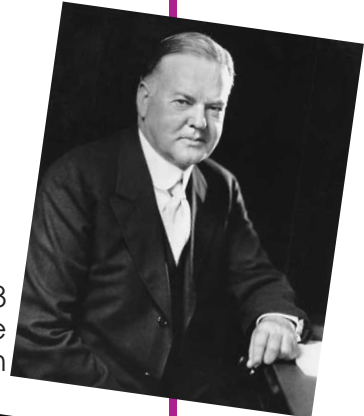
MAY 20, 1927
Charles Lindbergh becomes the first man to fly solo, non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean

JUNE 16, 1928
Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly over the Atlantic Ocean



SEPTEMBER 7, 1927
Philo Taylor Farnsworth invents the first successful television system

NOVEMBER 6, 1928
Herbert Hoover wins the Presidential election



OCTOBER 6, 1927
The Jazz Singer debuts in New York City and the age of talking pictures begins

OCTOBER 29, 1929
The Stock Market crash ends post-war prosperity and begins the Great Depression



THE 1920s

Music

In the 1920s, people couldn't purchase their music from iTunes or listen to mp3's through headphones. Popular music, for the most part, was consumed in the form of sheet music. For entertainment, families would gather around the piano to play and sing the newest song by the Gershwins or Irving Berlin.

TIN PAN ALLEY

After the Civil War, over 25,000 new pianos a year were sold in America and by 1887, over 500,000 youths were studying piano. As a result, the demand for sheet music grew rapidly and so more and more publishers began to enter the market. Because New York was becoming an important hub for the performing arts, the city emerged as the center of popular music publishing, as much of the talent was already there.

Publishers such as Harms, Inc., M. Witmark & Sons, and Remick Music Co. hired song composers, giving the publisher exclusive rights to popular composers' works. Once a song was written, it was tested with performers and listeners to determine whether or not it would be published. After a song was published, people called song pluggers would play the latest sheet music releases to persuade performers to use the new songs in their acts, giving the music public exposure.

By the end of the 1800s, a number of the most important music publishers had offices on 28th Street between 6th Avenue and Broadway. This area in New York City became known as Tin Pan Alley. Tin Pan Alley got its name from a newspaper writer named Monroe Rosenfeld who coined the term while staying in New York. "Tin Pan" symbolizes the cacophony of sound coming from all the pianos being played in publishers' offices. Rosenfeld said it sounded as though hundreds of people were pounding on tin pans.

Tin Pan Alley reached its peak in the 1890s when vaudeville was in its prime. Performers would often visit various publishing firms to find new songs for their acts. Second and third-rate performers often paid for rights to use a new song while famous stars were given free copies of a publisher's new numbers, giving the song a valuable advertisement.

During the 1920s, Broadway musical theatre began replacing vaudeville as Tin Pan Alley's prime showcase for new songs. As many as fifty new musicals with star-studded casts could premier in one season. Because so many shows were being produced, Tin Pan Alley had an instant market in which to advertise its songs. A song that was received well on Broadway was sure to be recorded for radio, meaning it would also sell thousands of copies of sheet-music to the public.

Season after season, Broadway was enriched with the latest Tin Pan Alley tunes by such famous composers as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, and the Gershwins, but because the hub of the theatre world was concentrated on Broadway between 40th and 50th streets, the publishers began to move. Tin Pan Alley was becoming decentralized for the first time in more than fifty years.

While the 1920s was a landmark decade for musical theatre, it also brought the onset of commercial radio. By 1921 commercial radio stations were popping up all over the country, their programs broadcast to millions of homes each night. In their homes, people could listen to a variety of popular music with the flip of a dial. They no longer needed to purchase sheet music and gather around the piano to hear their favorite song. The American public liked to hear hit songs by popular performers over and over again and the only way to satisfy this need was through recordings.

The death of Tin Pan Alley came after the Great Depression in 1930. Sheet music sales had sunk to about 75% below where it was a few decades earlier. Most hit songs now sold fewer than 100,000 copies, and with sales this low, publishers could no longer sustain their businesses. Many firms merged with movie studios and the film industry now became the driving force behind the music industry.



Tin Pan Alley publishing firms

THE 1920s

Music

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Of all the new appliances to enter homes during the 1920s, none had more of an impact than the radio. Sales of radios rocketed from \$60 million in 1922 to \$426 million in 1929. The first commercial radio station began broadcasting in 1919, and during the next decade, the nation's airwaves were filled with musical variety shows and comedies.



A family gathered around the radio.

Radio drew the nation together, bringing the same news and entertainment to more than 10 million households by 1929. Radio created a mass culture, imposing similar tastes and lifestyles to many regions which had previously been divided by local tastes.

The 1920s also brought the record player into American households. Piano sales dropped as phonograph production rose from just 190,000 in 1923 to 5 million in 1929. The popularity of jazz, blues, and "hillbilly" music fueled the phonograph boom as the public wanted to hear famous performers sing their favorite songs over and over again.

THE JAZZ AGE

F. Scott Fitzgerald dubbed the 1920s the "Jazz Age," and it truly was a golden age for jazz. A new, made-in-America, genre of music emerged in New Orleans around 1900. The music, jazz, fused the spirituals of southern blacks with other traditions such as ragtime into a rhythmic, improvisational sound. By 1920, jazz had moved north with the migration of blacks into cities, particularly Chicago, New York, St. Louis and Kansas City.



Jazz clubs flourished during the twenties, but because jazz grew out of African American culture, racism played a strong role in critical opposition to the music. Black musicians like Duke Ellington, King Oliver, and Louis

Armstrong weren't allowed to play in most establishments so they were forced into brothels, speakeasies and other venues of ill repute. Because of the negative connotations associated with these venues (prostitution, alcohol, drug addiction, gambling, and organized crime), jazz was considered immoral and viewed as a symptom of cultural decline.

Jazz appealed to a primarily black audience, but in the 1920s, it gained a wider following when white musicians began to imitate and adapt it. White musician Paul Whiteman, nicknamed "King of Jazz," became the decade's most popular bandleader. Whiteman assembled a large band that avoided improvisation and used semi-classical devices to produce a symphonic sound. George Gershwin introduced the new genre of symphonic jazz with the premier of his *Rhapsody in Blue*.



A family gathered around the radio.

THE 1920s

Film

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You ain't heard nothin' yet!" – Al Jolson, THE JAZZ SINGER (1927)

The film industry blossomed and expanded greatly during the 1920s. By the end of the decade there were twenty Hollywood studios and films were more in demand than ever. In fact, the greatest output of feature films in the U.S. occurred in the 1920s and 1930s, averaging about 800 releases in a year.

THE HOLLYWOOD ASSEMBLY LINE

Throughout most of the decade, silent films were the predominant output of the film industry, but the films were becoming bigger, longer, costlier, and more polished. They were being manufactured assembly-line style in Hollywood's "entertainment factories" in which production was broken down and organized into its various components of writing, costuming, makeup, directing, etc.

Films were organized into genres with instantly recognizable storylines, settings, costumes, and characters. Some of the major genres included swashbucklers, historical extravaganzas, melodramas, horror films, gangster and crime films, war films, romances, mysteries, and comedies.



Film production was primarily dominated by five major studios: Warner Brothers Pictures, Paramount, RKO Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), and Fox Film Corporation/Foundation; and three minor studios: Universal, United Artists, and Columbia. Other studios or independents also existed

in an area of Hollywood dubbed "Poverty Row." Poverty row housed such companies as Disney Studios, Monogram Picture Corporation, Selznick International Pictures, Samuel Goldwyn Pictures, 20th Century Pictures, and Republic Pictures. These studios usually specialized in horror films, westerns, science-fiction, or thrillers.

MOVIE PALACES

The major film studios built extravagant "picture palaces" that were designed for orchestras to play music to accompany the silent films. By 1920, there were more than 20,000 movie houses operating in the U.S. The Roxy Theatre opened in 1927 as the largest theatre in the world, boasting over 6,000 seats.

Sid Grauman built a number of movie palaces in the Los Angeles area during this time period. Grauman was dubbed as "Hollywood's Master Showman" and established the tradition of having Hollywood stars place their prints in cement in front of the Grauman's Chinese

Theatre to create an instant tourist attraction and has continued as one ever since. Legend has it that during the theatre's construction, silent screen actress Norma Talmadge accidentally stepped into wet cement and inspired the tradition.



A crowd gathered to see the first movie with sound

SILENT STARS

Two of the biggest silent movie stars of the era were Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. Pickford had been a child star and as an adult she had become one of the most influential figures in Hollywood. In 1916, she was the first star to become a millionaire.

Pickford was married to another star, Douglas Fairbanks. In 1920, as a wedding gift, the two received a twenty-two room palatial mansion in the agricultural area of Beverly Hills, marking the start of stars owning lavish homes in the suburbs of West Hollywood and the making of Hollywood royalty.



Pickford and Fairbanks

Other top box office stars included Harold Lloyd, Gloria Swanson, Norma Talmadge, Rudolph Valentino, Norma Shearer, John Barrymore, Greta Garbo, and Charlie Chaplin.

For an example of silent film, view a clip from Charlie Chaplin's 1921 film, *The Kid*:

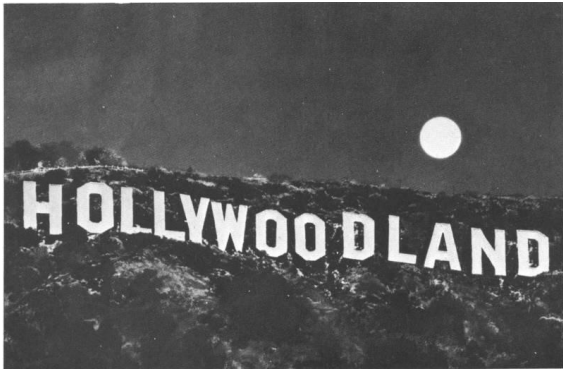
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xh3z89u1NtY>

THE 1920s

Film

HOLLYWOODLAND

In 1919 the population of Hollywood was 35,000, but by 1925 it had swelled to 130,000. To advertise how Hollywood was becoming the film capital of the world, the Hollywood sign (originally spelling out HOLLYWOODLAND) was built above the town in 1923 by a real estate developer.



The original Hollywoodland sign

THE BIRTH OF THE TALKIES

By the late 1920s, the art of silent film had become remarkably mature. Although they were called silents, the films were never really silent, but accompanied by sound organs, gramophone discs, musicians, sound effects specialists, live actors who delivered dialogue, and even full-scale orchestras.

In 1925-1926, America technologically revolutionized the entire film industry with the formation of the Vitaphone Company – a subsidiary created by Warner Bros. and Western Electric. Warner Bros. launched sound and talking pictures by developing a revolutionary synchronized sound system called Vitaphone. Although the development of talking pictures was off to a start, Vitaphone had inherent synchronization problems allowing them only to use the system for recorded music and sound-effects.



A Fox Movietone Projector

THE JAZZ SINGER

In April 1927, Warner Bros. built the first studio to produce a feature film with sound. The sound feature they released on October 6, 1927 revolutionalized motion pictures forever. *The Jazz Singer* was the first feature-length Hollywood talkie film in which spoken dialogue was used as part of the dramatic action. The film, starring Al Jolson, was the most expensive in the studio's history with a budget of about

\$500,000. Although it was considered a talkie, the film had only about 350 "spontaneously spoken" words as well as six songs. View Jolson performing "Blue Skies" in *The Jazz Singer* here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Djd1XfwDAQs>



Movie poster for THE JAZZ SINGER

The other major film studios realized that the sound revolution would bring along expensive and challenging ramifications, but that talkie films would be the wave of the future. Film studios were confronted with many problems related to sound, including restricted markets for English-language talkies, the lack of good voices and stage experience among many Hollywood actors and actresses, and new difficulties with cameras and microphones. For a period of time, the quality of films suffered, but eventually the studios adapted to the changes and accepted sound as a mainstay for the industry.

For a comical look at the problems sound created during film production, watch this clip from *Singin' in the Rain*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6jsXQm5lrM&feature=related>

PROHIBITION

THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

Prohibition was the period in the United States from 1920 to 1933 in which the manufacture, sale and transportation of alcohol was outlawed. The push for Prohibition began in the 19th century when drinking was on the rise after the Revolutionary War. To combat this, a number of societies were organized as part of a new Temperance Movement which attempted to discourage people from drinking too much. At first, these organizations were concerned with moderation, but after several decades, the focus changed to complete prohibition of alcohol consumption.

The Temperance Movement blamed alcohol for many of society's evils such as crime and murder. Members of the Temperance Movement urged that Prohibition would stop husbands from spending all the family income on alcohol and prevent accidents in the workplace caused by workers who drank during lunch.

In the early 1900s, Temperance organizations were cropping up in nearly every state and by 1916, over half of the U.S. states already had laws prohibiting alcohol. In 1919, the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibited the sale and manufacture of alcohol, was ratified and went into effect on January 16, 1920.

During Prohibition, anyone who owned any item designed to manufacture alcohol was fined or put in jail, but there were several loopholes that allowed people to legally drink. The 18th Amendment did not outlaw the actual drinking of liquor and since there was about a year's warning before the law went into effect, people bought cases of then-legal alcohol and stored them for personal use. Alcohol consumption was also allowed if it was prescribed by a doctor, so, needless to say, a great number of new prescriptions were written for alcohol.



Men disposing of liquor during prohibition

CRIME & GANGSTERS

Enforcing Prohibition law proved to be almost impossible. Prohibition quickly produced bootleggers, speakeasies, moonshine, bathtub gin, and rumrunners who smuggled supplies of alcohol across state lines. In 1927, there were estimated to be 30,000 illegal speakeasies – twice the number of legal bars before Prohibition.

As people took notice of the high level of demand for alcohol within society, a new breed of gangster arose to illegally fulfill the wants of the average citizen who didn't stock up on alcohol in advance or have a prescription. Gangsters, such as Al Capone, hired men to smuggle rum from the Caribbean or hijack whiskey from Canada and bring it into the US. Others would buy large quantities of liquor made by bootleggers or in homemade stills. The gangsters would then open up secret bars, or speakeasies, for people to drink and socialize. A profitable and often violent black market for alcohol flourished. Homicides

increased in many cities as a result of gang wars and an increase in open drunkenness. Powerful gangs corrupted law enforcement agencies making their crimes incredibly difficult to stop.

To make matters worse, popular culture glamorized bootleggers like Chicago's Al Capone. He and other gangsters became the model for characters in such films as *Little Caesar* and *Scarface*. In rural areas, moonshiners became folk heroes.

REPEAL



Almost immediately after Prohibition was instated, organizations formed to repeal it. The perfect, alcohol-free nation that was championed by the Temperance movement failed to materialize and so people joined the fight to bring back liquor. The anti-prohibition movement gained strength throughout the 1920s. When the Stock Market crashed in 1929, bringing about the Great Depression, people needed jobs and the government needed money. Prohibition had devastated the nation's brewing industry and by making alcohol legal again, many job opportunities would open up and additional sales taxes would provide revenue for the government.

On December 5, 1933, the 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified. This Amendment repealed the 18th Amendment, making alcohol legal again.

THE IMPACT OF PROHIBITION

Even today, the debate still rages about the impact of Prohibition. Critics argue that the amendment failed to eliminate drinking, made drinking more popular among the young, spawned organized crime and disrespect for the law, encouraged solitary drinking, and led beer drinkers to hard liquor and cocktails. They argue that it is counterproductive to try to legislate morality.

On the other side of the debate, opponents argue that alcohol consumption declined dramatically during Prohibition. Deaths from liver disease in men fell about 30% from 1911 to 1929.

Visit this link to watch a newsreel announcing the repeal of prohibition:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUeMD057wcu>

FLAPPERS



John Held Jr.'s illustration of a flapper

Women's suffrage brought about more than just the right to vote in 1920. Women felt liberated and growing numbers went to college and entered the workplace. Nonconformist conduct and clothing started appearing at a rapid rate and gender roles were in a state of flux. For the first time, women presented themselves as sexual beings and that sexual liberation entered the middle class mainstream with the flappers.

The flappers defined a social and sexual behavior and style for the Roaring Twenties. After the destruction of World War I, young people were disillusioned. They reacted with cynicism to the traditional Victorian values of their elders and viewed the standards of propriety and morality as hypocritical. The

flappers broke free from the restraints of the past and moved in the opposite direction.

THE FLAPPER IMAGE

Flappers were the epitomes of modernity – they were androgynous, working women who had a siren-like appeal. The flappers' image consisted of drastic changes in women's clothing and hair. Nearly every article of clothing was trimmed down and lightened in order to make movement easier.

Flappers discarded the restrictive and curve-flattering corsets they were once forced to wear. The new, energetic dances of the Jazz Age required women to move freely - something that corsets wouldn't allow. Following Coco Chanel's influence, flappers imitated the Parisian "garconne" or "little boy" look. They preferred to be slender and would diet or bind themselves to appear thin, flat-chested, and long-limbed. Unconstructed dresses with low waists helped to mask curves. Newly bobbed hair also added to the "garconne" image.

Flappers wore shortened skirts, daring to raise their hems at first to the ankles and eventually to the knees. Stockings made of rayon were worn starting in 1923, to show off the flappers' legs.

Accessories were an important part of the flapper look. Foreheads were usually covered by close-fitting hats, turbans, or headbands that were designed to be worn with bobbed hair. Newly bare legs were accentuated by lower-cut shoes and stylish handbags shrunk in size. Long ropes of pearls were worn around the neck and multiple bracelets were wrapped around wrists. Flappers also started wearing make-up, something that was previously reserved for prostitutes and actresses. They donned pale skin, bright red lips, and owl-ringed eyes.

THE FLAPPER ATTITUDE

Flappers seemed to cling to youth as if it were to leave them at any moment. They took risks and were reckless. They wanted to differentiate from Victorian morals so they smoked – something only men had done previously. Flappers also drank alcohol which was particularly shocking during Prohibition. Some even carried hip-flasks to have alcohol on hand at all times

One of the most popular past-times for flappers was dancing. Dances such as the Charleston, Black Bottom and the Shimmy were considered taboo by older generations. For the younger generation, the dances fit their fast-paced lifestyle. They also took advantage of Henry Ford's new automobile. Cars were fast and risky; and flappers didn't just ride in them, they drove them.



THE END OF FLAPPERHOOD

Though many were shocked by the flappers' provocative attire and behavior, a less extreme version of the flapper became respectable among the old and the young. Some women cut off their hair and stopped wearing their corsets without going to the extremes of the lifestyle.

At the end of the 1920s, the stock market crashed and the Great Depression caused frivolity and recklessness to come to an end. Many of the changes brought about by the flappers still remained, though. They created what many consider the modern woman.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The term flapper first appeared in Great Britain after World War I. It was used to describe awkward young girls who had not yet entered womanhood. Appropriately, the 1922 dictionary defined flapper as "a fledgling, yet in the nest, and vainly attempting to fly while its wings have only pin-feathers."

Author F. Scott Fitzgerald and artist John Held Jr. brought the term in the U.S., helping to create the image and style of the flapper. Fitzgerald described the ideal flapper as "lovely, expensive, and about nineteen." Many others have tried to define flappers. In William and Mary Morris' *Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*, they state, "In America, a flapper has always been giddy, attractive and slightly unconventional young thing who, was a somewhat foolish girl, full of wild surmises and inclined to revolt against the precepts and admonitions of her elders."

CHARLES LINDBERGH

"The life of an aviator seemed to me ideal. It involved skill. It brought adventure. It made use of the latest developments of science. Mechanical engineers were fettered to factories and drafting boards while pilots have the freedom of wind with the expanse of sky. There were times in an aeroplane when it seemed I had escaped mortality to look down on earth like a God." – Charles A. Lindbergh, 1927



In 1927, Charles Lindbergh became an international hero by being the first person to fly solo, non-stop over the Atlantic Ocean. Lindbergh's amazing accomplishment gave him a permanent place in history and made him a cultural icon.

BORN TO FLY

Charles Augustus Lindbergh was born on February 4, 1902 in Detroit, Michigan. In childhood, Lindbergh proved to have exceptional mechanical ability. When

he was 18, he entered the University of Wisconsin to study engineering, however, Lindbergh was more interested in the new and exciting field of aviation than he was in school. After two years, he left school to become a barnstormer, a pilot who performed daredevil stunts at fairs.

In 1924, Lindbergh enlisted in the U.S. Army in order to receive training as an Army Air Service Reserve pilot. A year later he graduated from the Army's flight-training school as the best pilot in his class. His success afforded Lindbergh the opportunity to work for the Robertson Aircraft Corporation of St. Louis flying mail between St. Louis and Chicago.

AND THE RACE IS ON!

In 1919, a New York City hotel owner named Raymond Orteig offered \$25,000 to the first aviator to fly non-stop from New York to Paris. Several pilots made the attempt, but were killed or injured while competing. By 1927, the Orteig prize had still not been claimed and Lindbergh believed he could be the one to win it if he had the right airplane.

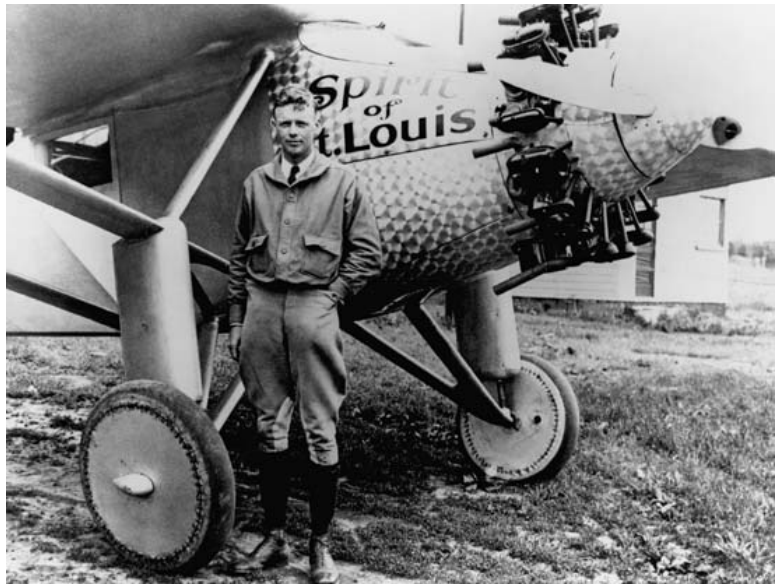
Lindbergh persuaded nine St. Louis businessmen to help him finance the cost of a plane. He chose Ryan Aeronautical Company to manufacture a special plane, which Lindbergh himself helped to design. Lindbergh named the plane the Spirit of St. Louis and on May 10, 1927, he took a test flight from San Diego to New York City with an overnight stop in St. Louis. The flight took 20 hours and 21 minutes, setting a transcontinental record.

HERO OF THE SKIES

On May 20, 1927, Lindbergh took off in the Spirit of St. Louis from Roosevelt Field near New York City at 7:52 am. He landed at Le Bourget Field near Paris on May 21 at 10:21 pm, Paris time. Lindbergh had flown more than 3,600 miles in 33.5 hours and thousands of cheering people had gathered to meet the first man to fly solo, non-stop, across the Atlantic Ocean.

While in Paris, Lindbergh met with Harry Guggenheim, a multimillionaire and aviation enthusiast who was eager to sponsor Lindbergh on a three-month tour of the United

States. Flying the Spirit of St. Louis, Lindbergh touched down in 49 states, visited 92 cities, gave 147 speeches and rode 1,290 miles of parades. "Lindbergh was seen by literally millions of people as he flew around the country," said Richard P. Hallion, Guggenheim historian. "Airmail usage exploded overnight as a result," and the public began to view airplanes as a viable means of travel.



Charles Lindbergh and the Spirit of St. Louis

In later years, Lindbergh invented an artificial heart, received a German medal of honor, flew a number of combat missions for the U.S. Army and Navy, and developed cruise control techniques that increased the capabilities of American fighter planes.

Lindbergh died of cancer on August 26, 1974 in his home on the Hawaiian island of Maui.



BARNSTORMERS

Barnstormers were the most exciting daredevils of their day. Also known as stunt pilots or aerialists, barnstormers performed every imaginable dangerous feat you could do with an airplane. During the 1920s, barnstorming became one of the most popular forms of entertainment and provided pilots and stunt people with an thrilling and invigorating way to make a living.

DEVELOPMENT OF BARNSTORMING

Before barnstorming became an official phenomenon in the 1920s, some aviators such as the Wright brothers and Glenn Curtiss had flying exhibition teams. Barnstorming began to grow in North America after the war when World War I aviators wanted to make flying their profession. Also attributing to the growth was the multitude of Jenny planes manufactured during the war. These planes were used to train military aviators and almost every U.S. airman had learned to fly using a Jenny. During the post-war period, the federal government priced its surplus planes for as little as \$200 allowing many servicemen to purchase their own planes.

BARNSTORMING SHOWS

Most barnstorming shows followed a typical pattern. A pilot or team of pilots would fly over a small rural town to attract the attention of the local inhabitants. The pilot or team of aviators would then land at a local farm (earning it the name "barnstorming") and negotiate with the farmer for the use of one of his fields as a temporary runway from which to stage an air show and offer plane rides to customers. After they reached an agreement, the pilot would fly back over the town, or "buzz" the village, and drop handbills offering airplane rides for a fee and advertising the daring feats that would be displayed. Crowds would then follow the airplane to the field and purchase tickets for rides. For many rural towns, the appearance of a barnstormer or an aerial troop in the sky was just like a holiday – almost everything in the town would shut down instantly so that people could watch the show.



Aerialists playing tennis on the wings of a plane

STUNTS

Barnstormers performed a wide array of stunts. Many handled all their own tricks, but others became specialists – either stunt pilots or aerialists. Stunt pilots performed daring spins and dives with their planes, including the loop-the-loop and barrel roll maneuvers. Aerialists performed feats such as wing walking, soaring through the air with winged costumes, stunt parachuting, and mid-air plane transfers.



Barnstormers, particularly the aerialists, seemed to have no limit to what they could accomplish. Some played tennis, practiced target shooting, or even danced on the wings of their plane.

FLYING CIRCUSES

Although many barnstormers worked solo or in small teams, there were several that formed large flying circuses with several planes and stunt people. These acts had their own promoters who would book the show in a town ahead of time, making them the largest and most organized of all the barnstorming acts.

The Ivan Gates Flying Circus was perhaps the most traveled of all the major barnstorming acts. It toured almost every state and traveled internationally. Gates' circus was famous not only for the stunts displayed, but also for having started the one-dollar-joy ride. This ride was so popular that in a single day, one of Gates' pilots took 980 passengers up into the sky. Historian Don Dwiggins noted that many scholars believe that during the barnstorming era, "the Gates Flying Circus turned out more famed pilots than the Army and Navy put together."

THE BARNSTORMER'S DEMISE

Barnstorming thrived in North America during the first half of the 1920s, but by 1927, new safety regulations forced the demise of the popular entertainment. The federal government decided to take action to protect the public after several aircraft accidents had occurred. The government was also responding to local pilots who were upset that barnstormers were stealing their customers. The new laws outlawed several forms of aerial stunts and made it nearly impossible for barnstormers to keep their fragile Jenny planes up to specifications. Barnstormers found it too difficult to continue making a living doing stunts and abandoned the business altogether. Although some modern pilots still continue to put on barnstorming exhibitions, nothing can compare to the magnitude and popularity of aerialists and stunt pilots in the 1920s.

Visit this link to watch vintage barnstorming clips:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6wwizlzmY&feature=channel>