

Ku klux klan, the harlem renaissance and the scopes trial on the united states: a...

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1920's DBQ Throughout the centuries it has always seemed as if America is always changing. It is always on the rise to bigger and better things. Every era seems to get caught up with people who are all for new revolutions and ideas, and then there are those who want to hold onto the past and move along at a slower pace. The 1920's seemed to be a period in history where there was a great deal of tension between those who were into new ideas and those who were into the traditional American ideas. The Ku Klux Klan, the Harlem Renaissance and the Scopes trial seemed to sum up both sides of this tension. The Ku Klux Klan made a strong uprising during the 1920's. The new image of the Ku Klux Klan was that it represented every good American citizen. The Klan was known to be antiforeign, antiblack, anticatholic, and antijewish. At its peak in the 1920's, the klan reached 5 million in number. The majority of the members of the klan were people living in the midwest or south who believed in traditional American values and were not necessarily interested in the growing industries in the North. The burning cross became a vivid symbolic image of hatred in the United States. Another area that marked the growing success of city life was the Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance was a period that brought forth innovations in music, literature, dance and life. The city of Harlem was a thriving city where people went to experience a little taste of the night life. Harlem's population consisted of 100, 000 African Americans and it spawned many great people in our history. Louie Armstrong and Duke Ellington were two keynote musicians who are well recognized to this day as the pioneers of Jazz. Their music sparked blues, rock and much of the music that is still around today. Harlem had a culture that gave birth to a great poet named Langston

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Hughes. Marcus Garvey became a respected icon in the African American community. He led a "Back to Africa" revolt which would ship African Americans back to Africa to live where they came from. Even though his Association went bankrupt, he still managed to lift self-confidence and self-reliance among many blacks. There does not seem to be a better example of old versus new than the Scopes trial of 1925. During the early 1920's, mainly in the Bible Belt, the teaching of evolution in Science classes became strictly prohibited. It was the general feeling of the public that theories of evolution went strictly against the teachings of the bible. In 1925 though, a biology teacher named John Scopes was indicted for teaching evolution in his classroom.

Scopes was prosecuted by William Jennings Bryan, a devout fundamentalist and was represented by Clarence Darrow. In the end Scopes was found guilty and charged a fine of 100 dollars which was later taken away due to technicalities in the case. Throughout history there have always been instances where the older generation does not want to except the rapid speed which society is headed. It seems that there are always people who do not want to advance economically because they want life to remain simple and plain the way it is. Many times people due their best to stop new revolutions but if the revolution is meant to happen it always does. If there are enough people behind a theory or an idea, it will always make its way into society.