



1927 and the Rise of Modern America (Cultureamerica) (Culture America (Hardcover))

Charles Shindo

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When Charles Lindbergh landed at Le Bourget Airfield on May 21, 1927, his transatlantic flight symbolized the new era—not only in aviation but also in American culture. The 1920s proved to be a transitional decade for the United States, shifting the nation from a production-driven economy to a consumption-based one, with adventurous citizens breaking new ground even as many others continued clinging to an outmoded status quo.

In his new book, Charles Shindo reveals how one year in particular encapsulated the complexity of this transformation in American culture. Shindo's absorbing look at 1927 shatters the stereotypes of the Roaring '20s as a time of frivolity and excess, revealing instead a society torn between holding on to its glorious past while trying to navigate a brave new world. His book is a compelling and entertaining dissection of the year that has come to represent the apex of 1920s culture, combining references from popular films, music, literature, sports, and politics in a captivating look back at change in the making.

As Shindo notes, while Lindbergh's flight was a defining event, there were others: *The Jazz Singer*, for example, brought sound to the movies, and the 15 millionth Model T rolled off of Ford's assembly line. Meanwhile, the era's supposed live-for-today frivolity was clouded by Prohibition, the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, and the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. Such events, Shindo explains, reflected a fundamental disquiet running beneath the surface of a nation seeking to accommodate and understand a broad array of changes from new technology to natural disasters, from women's forays into the electorate to African-Americans' migration to the urban north.

Shindo, however, also notes that this was an era of celebrity. He not only examines why Lindbergh and Ford were celebrated but also considers the rise and growing popularity of the infamous, like convicted murderers Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray, and he illuminates the explosive growth of professional sports and stars like baseball's Babe Ruth. In addition, he takes a close look at cinematic heroines like Mary Pickford and the "It" girl Clara Bow to demonstrate the conflicting images of women in popular culture.

Distinctive and insightful, Shindo's richly detailed analysis of 1927's key events and personalities reveals the multifaceted ways in which people actually came to grips with change and learned to embrace an increasingly modern America.

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