Only Yesterday: Research paper on 1920's
Introduction

Only Yesterday by Frederick Lewis Allen is an initiative to inform, and in some ways to analyze, the tale of what in the future may be perceived as a unique period in US history: the period between the conclusion of the conflict with Germany (1918) and the share-market hysteria which started on November 1929, speeding and triggering the annihilation of what had been pertained to as Coolidge Prosperity.

Unlike that other well known and fancied American period of the 20th century, the '60s, majority of which truly happened in the '70s, the '20s truly were a self-contained period. Yes, they started with the conclusion of World War I in 1918 and the start of Prohibition in 1919, but these were just the beginnings, just as the transition into global Depression in 1930 was aftermath (Allen, 2000). The author had the intelligence to know this instantly, and the capability to analyze a huge quantity of important material, to analyze it with superior understanding, and to tackle about it with passion and creativity.

Only Yesterday provides an overview into the 1920s from somebody who really lived it. Initially released in 1931, the author discusses a period that had just slipped by. Majority of history experts will inform readers that it takes approximately 20 years after a decade prior to an individual finally realizing the significance of the decade. However, this was not the scenario with Allen's book. He was able to demonstrate and discuss the 1920s for what it signified, a totally astonishing achievement in 1931!

His objective was to demonstrate future periods of time, what his generation perceived as significant in identifying their times. In doing so Allen aided to establish a bridge between his period of the 1920s and incoming generations who would eventually do some investigations on the 1920s. In truth, while analyzing this decade people eventually discovered, majority of the
historical masterpieces on the 1920s refer to Only Yesterday in their references. The reality is a deep and extensive analysis of this decade cannot happen unless it involves Allen's book.

**Topics Discussed in the Book**

Majority of Only Yesterday is related on social and cultural phenomena, which is one of the best aspects in his work. Excluding chapters 2 and 6, Allen's arguments are pointed towards the ordinary individuals and the way happenings of the day and the cultural developments impacted them. These happenings and cultural developments are evidently portrayed in chapters 5 and 8. The author was also able to demonstrate to his readers the huge social/cultural happenings of the 1920s.

**A. The presidential administrations**

The end of World War I saw America go back into an inner-looking approach. Despite President Woodrow Wilson's unwavering initiatives, the Senate did not agree to enact the Versailles Peace Treaty that concluded World War I, and America was not able to be a member of the League of Nations. In the initial parts of the 1920s America increased taxes on imported products, and free immigration was stopped.

Voted as president in 1920, Warren G. Harding implemented a nationwide policy of going back to normalcy, which started the emergence of nationalism and denial of the progressive period's federal activism. According to Allen, Harding's programs mirrored a traditional, laissez-faire approach (Lindop, 2004). His government was highlighted by plenty of scandals, but majority of them did not emerge until after his demise of a heart problem while still serving as President in 1923. One of the most famous of them was the Teapot Dome case, which astonished the people for a long period of time after Harding's demise.
B. Social ferment

Based on the description of Allen, the Red Scares pertain to the worries of Communism in America just prior to and in the midst of the 1920s. It is believed that there were 200,000 Communists in America in 1920, but they comprised only a small portion of the overall population. Allen cited the highly controversial Sacco and Vanzetti Case which signified what could occur to individuals who had radical perspectives. History experts most of the time state that American people had stopped having a provincialism mentality as proven by the reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan, strict immigration policies, and Prohibition.

Allen also cited the role of Amendment 18 to the Constitution (1919) that restricted the production, shipping and marketing of alcoholic drinks. Prohibitionists expected that Prohibition would remedy social dilemmas and improve the economy (Best, 2003). However, most individuals disagreed with the law and instead went to illegal nightclubs known as speakeasies. Gangsters took over the unlawful distribution of alcohol and ruthless lawlessness emerged. Because of the absence public approval, the federal government practically failed to implement Prohibition.

C. The arts and ideas

Allen discussed that the 1920s triggered a great decade of writing in the US, highlighted by the masterpieces of such writers as Sinclair Lewis, William Faulkner, Carl Sandburg and Ernest Hemingway.

A distinct type of US music, whose foundations are grounded in African expression, became famous as jazz. The Jazz Era generated such music legends as Louis Armstrong and Fletcher Henderson. George Gershwin and other giants in music would bring creative jazz outputs to Broadway and theaters.
D. Economy

At the start of the 1920s, Allen mentioned that America was shifting from a war torn economy to peaceful economy. When ammunitions for World War I were not anymore necessary, there was a momentary disruption in the economy. After some time, the nation progressed. In this period, Allen believed that America transformed as one of the wealthiest countries in the world and a trend of consumerism was established. It was the period of the $5 workday, a fair laborer compensation for those times. Individuals used funds for improved roads and holiday vacation spots. Real estate development, especially in Florida, increased the overall land prices.

E. Invention

Allen attested that technology had an important role in providing the economic and cultural great periods that majority of US experienced in the midst of the 1920s. Henry Ford established his legacy with his Model T; he had already become one of the richest people in American by 1927. Ford's assembly line was the major driver of success. The automobile's emergence and establishment of roads — giving new public finances into the economy generated huge economic progress (Weatherly, 2005).

The radio eventually became popular in all households in the US. After the establishment of the initial public station in Pennsylvania, many more started their broadcasts all over the nation. Radio turned into a local pastime; most people would stay together in their living rooms to listen in sports and other important information.

Charles A. Lindbergh's legendary flight over the Atlantic Ocean in his airplane in 1927 did a whole lot to influence the developing aviation industry. Canned goods, ready to wear clothing and home gadgets freed females from most household chores. The impact of Ford's
procedures of mass production and effectiveness allowed other industries to generate a big variety of client appliances.

F. Science and the public health

Science and health progressed significantly during the 1920s. Allen cited that Albert Einstein was given the Nobel Prize in physics in this decade. Diphtheria was able to be managed through the newly initiated immunization. A great interest emerged in nutrition and physical wellness. With the Flapper's concentration on dieting and her famous appearance followed a important development in the dietary attitudes of US citizens as a whole — reduced meat consumption and increased fibrous foods intake. The introduction of vitamins and their impacts also happened in the 1920s (Wukovits, 2000). Countervailing trends lied in cigarette smoking, which increased to approximately 45 billion yearly, and illegal alcohol became an annual $3.5 billion enterprise during that decade.

G. The stock market

It looked like as though Dow Jones Industrial Stock Index would never stop growing up. Stock anticipation increased in the bull market of 1928-1929. Allen stated that nobody anticipated that a sign of the conclusion would happen on October 1929, with the well known stock market downfall, and that more than ten years of depression and hopelessness would succeed such a period of joy and progress. Until that period, life in the US looked basically sound. The ordinary American was still persevering and logical. The succeeding challenges lay invisible beyond the horizon.

Criticism

The writing approach of Allen deserves to be praised. He discusses in a method that enables a variety of readership interest subjects: politics, social, religious and even recreational
matters. This is particularly observed in his sometimes-funny method in discussing specific ideas. Another excellent instance of his writing methods is his narrowing of a major idea at the end of his discussion.

In spite of his strengths in his writing and his discussion of topics, something must be mentioned concerning the absence of a bibliography in his work. Its absence weakens his book. When a reader discovers something attractive, he or she has no means of searching for references. Aside from this, Allen failed to tackle the population developments happening in the 1920s. Rural to urban population developments were not tackled, nor was the huge transfer of Black American going to northern states discussed either. At present, a person simply has to be knowledgeable of these happenings in the 1920s. Allen in the 1930s just failed to know the significance of these happenings.

Conclusion

A well written book, it demonstrates more than controversies and a remarkable transatlantic adventure, but the mentality of a country in a time of diverse, quick, and radical developments. One discovers lots of things to laugh about also, as it is very intellectual and informative. The deep and comprehensive discussion concerning economics was really challenging, it will truly make readers more curious.

Allen believes that disillusionment was the major theme of the 1920s, and surely disillusionment has been a significant trend in the US ever since, disrupted by perennial fights against over-patriotism. The beat upon which the author had his finger beat far more extensive than a decade. His extraordinary gift of vision, of being able to look 20 years ahead of his time, was clearly evident in this book.
REFERENCES


