

Hello Cast and Crew of The Speakeasy,

Very much looking forward to meeting all of you in rehearsals. I'm in the midst of preparing a full dramaturgy packet for you. In the meantime, please find below a list of resources to help as you begin to research and immerse yourself in the culture of San Francisco circa 1923. Everything below can be found through the San Francisco Public Library, as well as various web platforms. If you have questions about the resources below, or would like help finding other resources more specific to your character, please feel free to get in touch. That's what I'm here for! My email is zacharyjoelk@gmail.com.

EPHEMERA

Historical Maps- Explore the evolving geography of San Francisco, as well as a huge collection of other resources including timelines, photos, and memoirs.

<http://www.sfgenealogy.com/sf/history/hglinks.htm#mapsandviews>

Historical Photos- This interactive map allows you to see what specific locations around the city looked like at various times throughout its history.

<http://www.oldsf.org/#>

San Francisco Chronicle (1869-1984)- all you need is a SF Public Library card to read what was happening any day of any year in the spheres of politics, economics, and entertainment, as well as what people were advertising, and classifieds they used to find housing and employment.

<http://sfpl.org/index.php?pg=2000529001>

Once you've entered your library pin, select "San Francisco Chronicle 1869-1984". You can then browse by date using the calendar on the right, or search by subject and date using the search field at the top of the page. I found the exposé on a "Chorus Girl" from April 1, 1923 and all of the articles on "Hitler" from 1923 particularly interesting.

A Flapper Dictionary (1922)- a collection of some of the colorful slang and vernacular of the time.

<http://www.dieselpunks.org/profiles/blogs/a-flapper-to-english>

Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics and at Home (1922)- Emily Post's bestselling, definitive, and exhaustive guide to proper manners and social decorum.

http://www.bartleby.com/95/subject_frames.html

Use the Contents page to view illustrations and read by chapter, or use the Index on the left to browse by subject: "Bones, management of, at table" and "Elevator, removal of gentleman's hat in" are personal favorites, though I think we can all find "Walking down the aisle of a theater" useful.

Preslie Francey's Diary (1926-1930)- Preslie made a short entry every day for four years. A wonderful resource for the major and minute life events and language of a young, single person.

This can only be found in the SF History Center on the 6th floor of the SF Main Library. Ask for "Francey, P. Diary": call# SFH249, Box 16 / Folder 5, in the Small Manuscripts Collection.

RADIO

Clips- A small collection of radio clips from the 1920's.

http://www.soundboard.com/sb/1920_History_Soundboard_a#

Radio programs were live, not recorded, during the 20's, which makes finding examples of colloquial accents from the time difficult. The little bit that has survived is very formal and rehearsed. To help you imagine what everyday people from rural backgrounds might have sounded like, I have included links to two radio shows from the 1930's set in the West:

Old Valley Line (1934). <https://archive.org/details/GreenValleyLineOtr>

Death Valley Days (1936-1938). http://www.olderadioworld.com/shows/Death_Valley_Days.php

BOOKS (non-fiction)

Only Yesterday (1931)- by Allen Frederick Lewis, this "informal history" of the 1920's explores what other history books leave out: the vernacular, the scandals, and the tedium and exhilaration of everyday life. It was written only years after the 20's came to an end, making this an invaluable resource for what it was like to live in the roaring 20's.

The Barbary Coast (1933)- by Herbert Asbury (who also wrote *The Gangs of New York*), this "informal history of the San Francisco Underworld" goes into great detail about the personalities, brothels, saloons, and scandals that made San Francisco's vice district infamous the world over.

Good Life in Hard Times (1977)- by Jerry Flamm, uses first-hand recollections and historical research to detail what everyday life was like for everyday folks living in the Bay Area during the 1920's and 30's.

One Eye Closed, the Other Red (1999)- by Clifford Walker, this collection of personal stories, news clippings, and historical research gives a first person account of what it was like to be a rumrunner, bootlegger, speakeasy owner, prohibition agent, and consumer of illegal alcohol in California during Prohibition. The stories are often hilarious and always highly informative.

BOOKS (fiction)

Sister Carrie (1900)- by Theodore Dreiser, follows a young country girl as she moves to the big city looking for love and adventure. This book offers an idealized account of the increasing independence women experienced during the early industrial revolution, and inspired many women to begin their own journey off the family farm and toward the growing metropolises.

Age of Innocence (1920)- by Edith Wharton, explores contemporary anxieties of reconciling the old with the new by looking back at the end of the Gilded Age (late 1800's). Wharton became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction for this best-selling novel.

Main Street (1920)- by Sinclair Lewis, satirizes and criticizes conservative rural communities by following a young woman as she attempts to reform her small town, pushing them to embrace progressive values that would come to characterize the 20's.

Babbitt (1922)- by Sinclair Lewis, satirizes and criticizes the culture and behavior of middle class America living in industrialized urban centers. After the controversial release of this book, the term "Babbitt" was used to describe a "person and especially a business or professional man who conforms unthinkingly to prevailing middle-class standards."

Manhattan Transfer (1925)- by Jon Dos Passos, chronicles the lives of several characters of very different socio-economic backgrounds as they struggle with modernity and the American Dream.

The Sun Also Rises (1926)- by Ernest Hemingway, "a poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation," this novel, which follows two young men as they drift across Europe, helped solidify Hemingway's position as an American literary master.

The Dain Curse (1929)- by Dashiell Hammet, is a quintessential "hard-boiled" detective novel. Set in San Francisco, it follows a detective investigating a diamond heist who is forced to grapple with scandalous contemporary issues like addiction and criminal cults.

Carter Beats the Devil (2001)- by Glen David Gold, is a work of historical fiction, exploring the underbelly of show business in San Francisco during the 1920's. Many of the characters, like infamous brothel owner Tessie Hall, and events, like the death of President Harding, are real.

Most of the books being read during this time are not books we are no longer familiar with. For a full list of bestselling fiction and nonfiction from 1895-1923, visit: [http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Bestsellers_American_1895-1923_\(Bookshelf\)](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Bestsellers_American_1895-1923_(Bookshelf))

FILMS (of the 1920's) *(the following are all silent films, the first "talkie" did not premier until 1928)*

The Flapper (1920)- the story of a young woman yearning for (and finding) adventure, romance, and intrigue. One of the first times the term "flapper," which would become synonymous with the fashionable and independent woman of the 20's, enters the public vocabulary.

<https://archive.org/details/TheFlapper1920>

The Kid (1921)- Charlie Chaplin's first feature length film. It is also considered by many to be Chaplin's most personal work, and the one which best marries Chaplin's creative impulses toward base comedy and emotional introspection.

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x298lhz_the-kid-1921-hd-charlie-chaplin-classic-movie_shortfilms

The Jazz Singer (1927)- though not fully a "talkie" or the first film to use synchronized sound, this is the first feature length film to use synchronized sound for some (~25%) of the dialogue. The story follows a Jewish Cantor who yearns to be a jazz singer, despite the wishes of his religious family.

<http://ffilms.org/the-jazz-singer-1927/>

For more, check out this free online archive of silent films: <https://archive.org/details/silenthalloffame>

List of the top grossing films of the 1920's: <http://www.filmsite.org/boxoffice2.html>

Most of these movies can be found through the SFPL or rented via services like Youtube or Amazon.

The Ten Commandments (1923) and Greed (1924) both take place in San Francisco!

FILMS (about the 1920's)

All Quiet on the Western Front (1930)- not about the 20's, but about the Great War (WWI). Widely considered a technical and artistic masterpiece, it explores the violence and tedium of trench warfare in great detail.

The Roaring 20's (1939)- follows three men from their time together in the trenches of France during WWI through their struggles to make a life for themselves in the 20's and later the beginning of the Great Depression. Starring James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart, it is a classic of the gangster genre, and is based on real stories and experiences journalist Mark Hellinger encountered while reporting in New York City during the 20's.

Some Like it Hot (1959)- a rom-com spoof on early gangster films, it is also often cited as one of the greatest comedies of all time. Starring Marilyn Monroe, this film is also notable for being filmed in black and white, despite the popularity of color at the time of production.

Funny Girl (1968)- taking place before and after WW1 (~1914-18), this film made the list because it follows one of the greatest commediennes of the early 1900's, Fanny Brice, during her rise to fame with the Ziegfeld Follies. Ziegfeld was a Broadway impresario whose flashy shows (and the chorus girls who performed them) were famous around the world through the 10's, 20's, and 30's.

Bugsy Malone (1976)- another spoof on the classic 20's gangster movie. This time, the twist is that all the actors are children, including a young Jodi Foster and Scott Baio.

Once Upon a Time in America (1984)- though it spans 40-50 years, the portion of the film that takes place in the 20's deals with subjects not often explored in other movies about the time period. Namely, the lives of young and poor minorities, in this case Jewish, growing up in fast changing New York City slums.

Miller's Crossing (1990)- the Coen Brothers' take on the Prohibition-era gangster film. Need I say more?

A River Runs Through It (1992)- starring Brad Pitt, this film explores everyday life in a small town in rural Montana during the Prohibition era.

Their Eyes Were Watching God (2005)- this film is the only drama set in the 20's I could find with a female protagonist. In addition to exploring issues of gender and misogyny, this film, adapted from Zora Neal Hurston's classic novel, also deals with race, racism, and rural life during the Prohibition era. Starring Halle Berry and produced by Oprah.

Lawless (2012)- an unconventional gangster movie in that it follows bootleggers in rural Appalachia, rather than the usual urban crime-lords. With an all-star cast including Tom Hardy and Jessica Chastain, this film is based on a true story and has a high degree of historical accuracy.

TV

Prohibition (2011)- this documentary miniseries, directed by Ken Burns, is a thorough account of the rise and fall of the 18th Amendment. Burns is known for using archival footage and photographs to bring his historical subjects to life.

Boardwalk Empire (2012-2015)- although many of the characters are fictional, the world they live in has been exhaustively researched, and the show's creators strived for a high level of historical accuracy.