



### TERMS TO KNOW:

Before or after watching this episode, encourage students to define and review the terms below. Students may also want to make their own lists of new vocabulary words and identification terms as they watch.

- Apparatus
- Bedrock
- Derrick
- Detrimental
- Exorbitant
- Fusion
- Rotary
- Temperance



*America The Story of Us is useful for American History, Social Studies, and Media courses. It is appropriate for 7th grade students and above, and is an excellent resource for professional development.*

## EPISODE 8: BOOM

### INTRODUCTION

In 1901 in Beaumont, Texas, a column of oil nearly 200 feet high explodes out of a derrick and sets off a chain of events that accelerates American economic power exponentially. Quick to capitalize on this abundant cheap fuel is Henry Ford, a maverick entrepreneur who vows to bring the motor car to the masses. In 1900, there are 8,000 cars in the country; by 1930 there are over 20 million automobiles on American roads.

As the population becomes more mobile, the entire shape of the U.S. changes. Cities grow as centers of industry, creating new opportunities and new challenges. In one of the greatest engineering projects of the century, thousands of workers divert enough water hundreds of miles across a desert to quench sprawling Los Angeles' thirst. Mass production and job opportunities prompted by World War I draw African Americans to northern cities like Chicago in what became known as the Great Migration.

Many Americans see the burgeoning cities as havens of vice, and chief among them is drink. A popular campaign to ban alcohol succeeds, yet when it comes in 1920, Prohibition triggers a wave of organized crime. One man set to benefit is Al Capone. He makes the equivalent of \$1,500 a minute from bootleg alcohol. For a time he seems untouchable, but even he is not above the law as new methods of crime prevention are developed in America's bustling new cities.



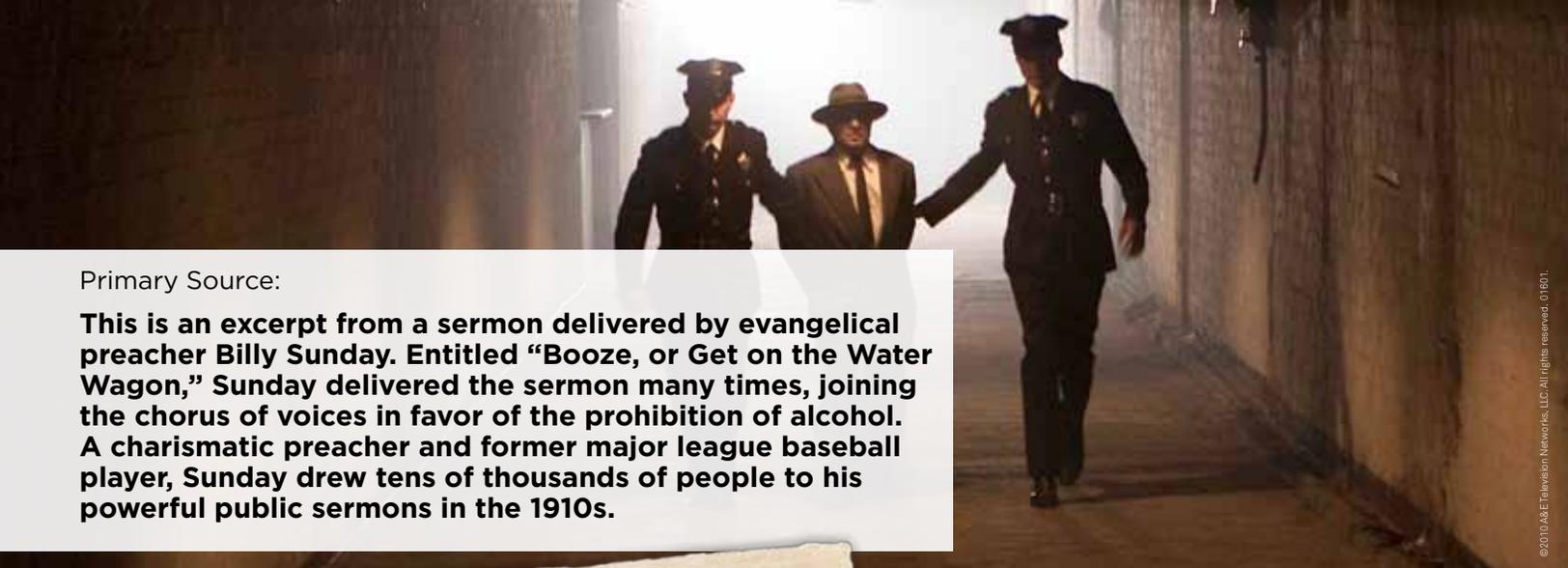


## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How did the U.S. change after huge amounts of oil were discovered in Texas in 1901? Do you think this event still shapes our lives today?
2. Why did Los Angeles city leaders need to seek water sources outside the city? What do you think were the risks of bringing in water from beyond the city limits?
3. What was the “Great Migration” and when did it take place?



4. Why do you think there was so much tension and violence against African Americans in urban areas in the 1910s and 1920s?
5. What were some of the reasons for and against Prohibition in the 1920s? Despite the ban on alcohol, why do you think sales of liquor continued, and what were some methods police used to stop it?



Primary Source:

This is an excerpt from a sermon delivered by evangelical preacher Billy Sunday. Entitled “Booze, or Get on the Water Wagon,” Sunday delivered the sermon many times, joining the chorus of voices in favor of the prohibition of alcohol. A charismatic preacher and former major league baseball player, Sunday drew tens of thousands of people to his powerful public sermons in the 1910s.

*The saloon is a coward, it's a thief; it robs you of manhood and leaves you in rags, and takes away your friends and robs your family, it will take the shirt off your back and it will steal the coffin from a dead child. It is the dirtiest most low-down, damnable business that ever crawled out of the pit of hell. It is a sneak and a thief and a coward.*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think Billy Sunday hoped to achieve with this speech?
2. Why do you think Sunday uses words like “coward” when talking about the dangers of drinking? Who do you think he hoped to reach and change through his sermons?

### FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

What else was going on during this time period? Explore the sites below to learn more about the era of U.S. history covered in this episode.

**Learn about Ida B. Wells, a brave journalist who fought against violence toward African Americans**

[www.biography.com/articles/Ida-B.-Wells-Barnett-9527635](http://www.biography.com/articles/Ida-B.-Wells-Barnett-9527635)

**Learn more about WWI**

[www.history.com/videos/wwi-firsts](http://www.history.com/videos/wwi-firsts)

**More info on The Great Migration from the Library of Congress**

[www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam011.html](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam011.html)

**Primary sources on the “Jazz Age”**

[www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/subtitles.cfm?TitleID=67](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/subtitles.cfm?TitleID=67)

### PLACES TO VISIT:

Interested in what you saw in this episode? Visiting historic sites is a great way for teachers, students, and families to learn more about the past. Explore these historic sites, or look for local historic sites in your town or city to visit.

**Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum**  
[www.spindletop.org](http://www.spindletop.org)

**The Autry National Center in Los Angeles**  
<http://theautry.org>

**The Henry Ford Museum**  
<http://thehenryford.org>