

"Flapper Talk"

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"The *younger* generation!" "Kids now days!" And other harrumphs of disapproval or consternation are frequently voiced by "grownups." The grumpy focus usually is the clothes youngsters wear, how they communicate, hair lengths and styles they favor, and similar superficialities.

What these "mature" types don't seem to remember is they too—almost certainly—were targets of generational derision and, in fact, even their grandparents and great grandparents most likely were criticized by the adults of earlier eras.

Fathers and Mothers Must Learn Flapper Talk to Know What the Younger Generation Are Saying

The Milwaukee Evening Sentinel
April 22, 1922 page 13

Probably it's always been that way.

Young people need their own identities and elders, especially loved ones, often don't understand why what was good enough for them isn't good enough for their children, grandchildren, and others below 30, 20, even 10. (They seem to forget their generations had their own peculiarities.)

Researching a story several years ago, I happened upon an unrelated but revealing newspaper article from April 22, 1922, titled, "Fathers and Mothers Must Learn Flapper Talk to Know What the Younger Generation Are Saying." It was on page 13 of *The Evening Sentinel*, a late afternoon version of *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, which was absorbed by the city's evening paper to become *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* in 1995.¹ The piece was addressed to the parents of teenagers and young adults.

Flappers came from the ranks of girls and women in the late second, third, and maybe fourth decades of their lives during the Roaring Twenties. Most were born between 1890 and 1910. Where they went boys and young men followed *naturally*.



This cartoon appeared near
the "Flapper Talk" story.

Wikipedia analyzes the history of the term flapper and mentions several possible origins: "...a young bird flapping its wings..."; "...teenage girl..whose plaited pigtail 'flapped' on her back"; and even "...from an older word meaning 'prostitute.'"²

That the appellation stemmed from the era's young women wearing their galoshes unbuckled so they flapped, "showing they defied convention" was deemed a "false etymology"³ by Wikipedia. This was disappointing because I liked its similarity to kids today wearing their pants low or shoes untied or,

in my sixties era, boys wearing shirts with the tails out or long hair. Staff at junior and senior high schools I attended actually policed how long a boy's hair was and whether his shirt was tucked in. I suppose similar things go on today.

Mary Marshall, a reporter for the *San Antonio Express*, wrote in 1924: "Many of us can remember when 'flapper' was just a bit of English slang, like 'swank...' Flapper, of course, was used to indicate the awkward young girl of 15 or so, rather too young to wear women's.

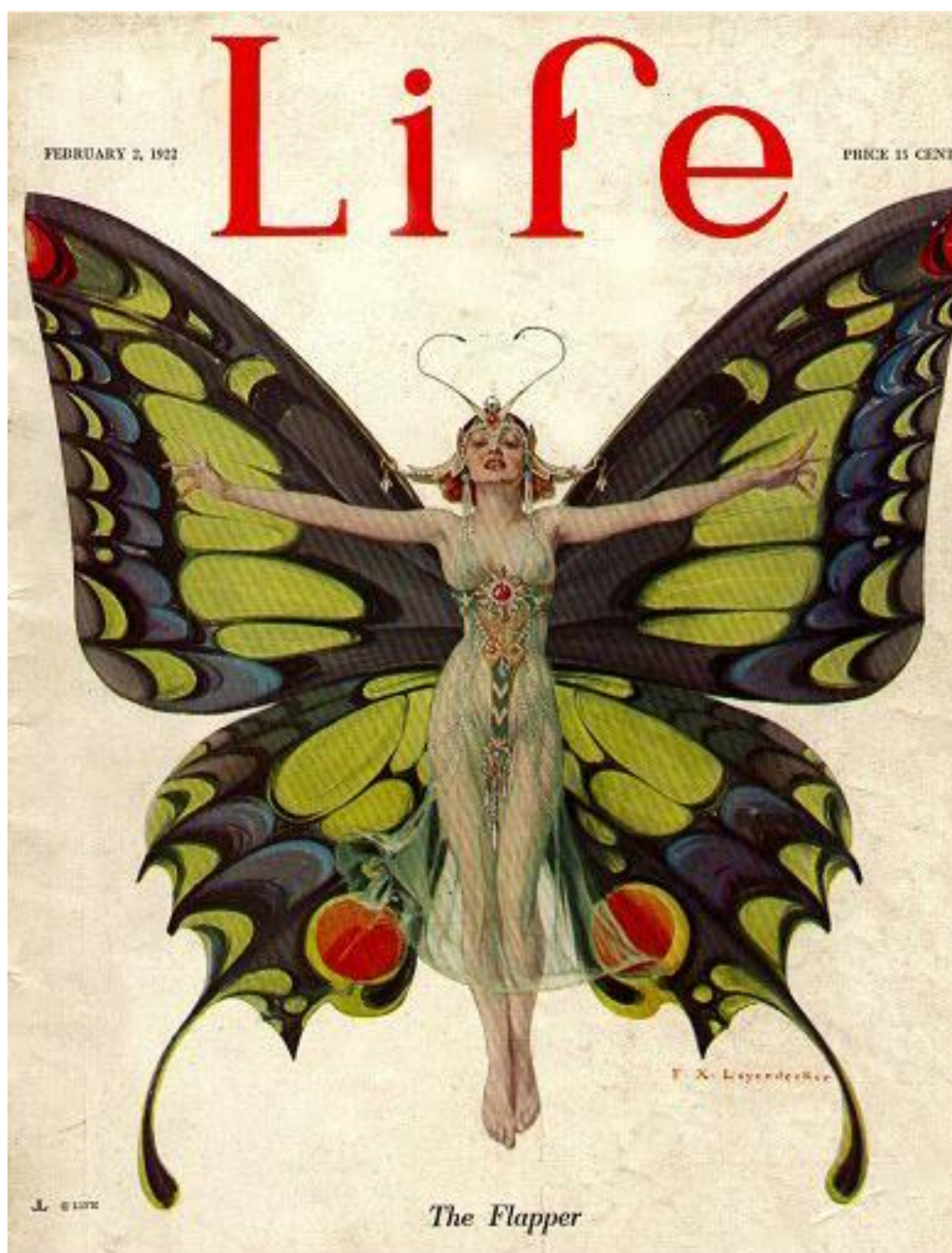
"She was very often the all arms and all legs variety, unused to wearing finery, rather self-conscious yet not unattractive. She was indeed a fledgling—a young wild duck unable to fly, flapping along on the water." ⁴

Artist Frank X. Leydendecker's appraisal was negative: "The flapper is engaging to a point, but her depth is soon sounded and she bores...You dare not talk to the flapper of the classics nor of other serious things for she simply will make no attempt to absorb them. She is idle, frivolous, and heedless of tomorrow." ⁵

This bleak assessment seems completely contrary to the stunning cover illustration titled "The Flapper" he created for *Life* magazine that was published on February 2, 1922.

Its flapper-as-just-emerged-butterfly imagery is superb. She seems to have traveled light years from the confined nineteenth-century parlor of her corseted mother and older sisters and is in touch with and proud of her mental and physical faculties. Maybe she broke out of a chrysalis suspended from a vine in ancient Greece.

During the flapper era, my mother (Marie Bertha Emily Westfahl) was a teen or in her twenties. She was born in 1906 on a farm in the Town of Grant, just outside Tigerton, in Shawano County, Wisconsin, about 60 miles west and a little north of Green Bay. Probably when she was in her seventies or eighties, I asked if she was a flapper, and she laughed and shook her head yes. This seemed far-fetched, but I knew she traveled to the Milwaukee area as a young woman and worked as a "hired girl" for a family in Shorewood, a well-to-do suburb just north of the city.



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
Public Domain Life February 2, 1922
Illustration Frank X. Leyendecker (1876—1924)

"Flapper" Has No Heart Nor Soul, Says Famous Artist; Working Girl Hope of Nation

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. — "The modern girl has no heart, soul or sentiment. If she has she refuses to admit it. It is my opinion, the only hope for the nation rests upon the working girl."

This was asserted here on Tuesday by Frank X. Leyden-decker, one of the best known artists and illustrators in the country.

"The flapper is engaging to a point, but her depth is soon sounded and she bores," the noted artist observed. "You do not dare talk to the flapper of the classics nor of other serious things for she simply will make no attempt to absorb them. She is idle, frivolous and heedless of tomorrow."

"However, I will admit that she is charming and often irresistible. She looks so young but knows so much, much that she could do well not to know. She assumes no responsibility, she seeks nothing but amusement."

"When a boy reaches the 'flapper' age, he usually has

some obligation to fill. He gets a job or else he is branded as a loafer. The girl, however, spends her time reading frothy literature and smoking."

"The working girl commands deepest respect. She is doing her share, and a large one it is, to help the world progress in the right direction. She thinks too much of her leisure, knowing how precious it is, to waste it as a flapper does. She uses it for the development of her brain or the health of her body. She has more originality and individuality than the flapper."

"Each working girl has her particular style in clothes and coiffure, but the flapper, how can you tell one from the other?"

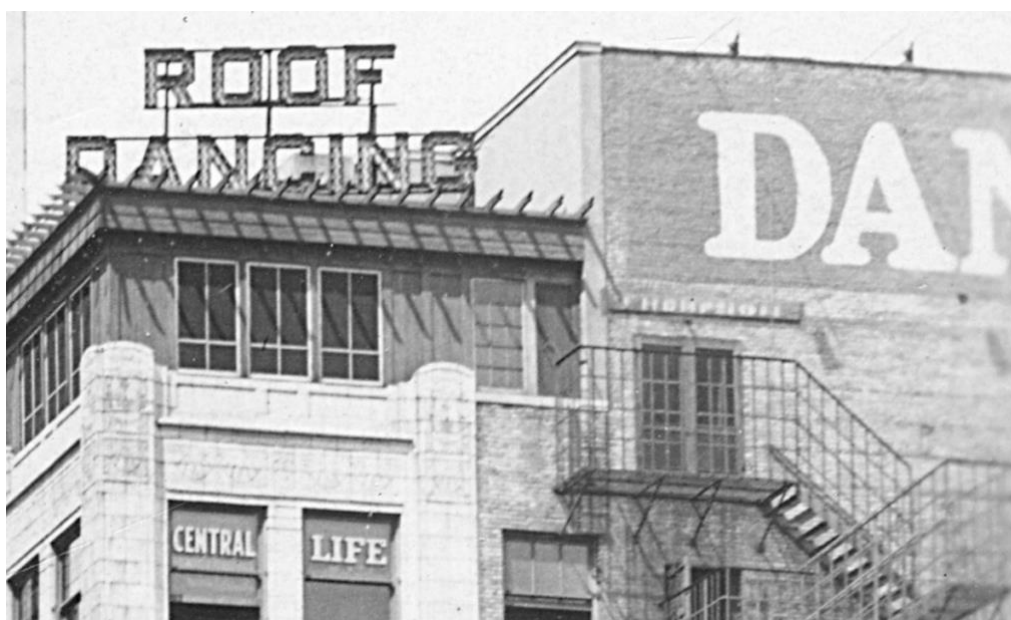
"The only danger with the working girl is that she is apt to become so self-reliant and so independent that she will scorn help of mere man, at that danger is not so probable that any flapper should be afraid to reform and become a working girl."

The Capital Times
May 31, 1922 front page



Courtesy of Milwaukee County
Historical Society

My mother loved music and dancing and during her time in the state's largest city frequented the Wisconsin Roof Ballroom, a seventh-floor hall at 536 Wisconsin Avenue—Milwaukee's main street—that opened in April, 1924.⁶ She recalled some of the musicians were African Americans, and she danced with a number of them when a different band was on stage. Decades later, when I worked at Sixth and Wisconsin, I noticed a faded, painted-on-the-bricks sign (above) for the Wisconsin Roof near the top of a building across the street and down the block from my office.





The movie showing at the Strand, *Lady of Scandal*, starring Ruth Chatterton, was released in 1930¹⁰ and gives an approximate year for the photograph. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.





My mother, Marie Bertha Emily Westfahl, age unknown, but possibly 17, her mother's age in the photograph below.



My grandmother, Marie Anna Friedericke Pesch (born, 1885), at 17. There is a major contrast between her look and attire and her oldest daughter's (my mother) who is in the photograph at the top of the page. For expert commentary on my grandmother and mother's clothing from two apparel experts, [click here](#).

Recently an early photograph turned up (page 8) that I thought might be of my mother. I wasn't sure because she was 44 when I was born and always looked completely different from the woman in the old black and white. My sister Charmayne thought it was but brother Bob wasn't sure, so I sent the picture to three cousins, Janie, Karen, and Suzy. Janie and Suzy thought it

was her but weren't positive, Karen was certain.

Charmayne suggested showing it to our cousin once removed Aletha Westfahl, the daughter of our mother's Uncle Charlie (1892—1977), her father Herman's (1882—1956) younger brother. (Aletha's unusual name is Greek and means, "Truthful. Mythological goddess of truth.")

Aletha was just a little girl, but she knew my mother when she was a young woman; I sent the photograph to her and she said it definitely is my mom which is all the confirmation I need.

My mother's hair is short in the shot and held in place by bobby pins; on her right temple is a small loop that hair stylist Lisa told me is a spit curl.

"They [flappers] cut, or bobbed, their hair just below the ears and curled it in dozens of tiny spit curls with a new invention called a bobby pin," according to the Encyclopedia of Fashion. "Some also used electric curling irons to create small waves called 'marcels,' named after Marcel Grateau (1852–1936), the French hair stylist who invented them." ⁷ My mother appears to be wearing marcels.

Another website divulges spit curls, "...were also called kiss curls. The number of kiss curls a young woman wore was sometimes thought to be the same as the number of men she had been kissed by." ⁸

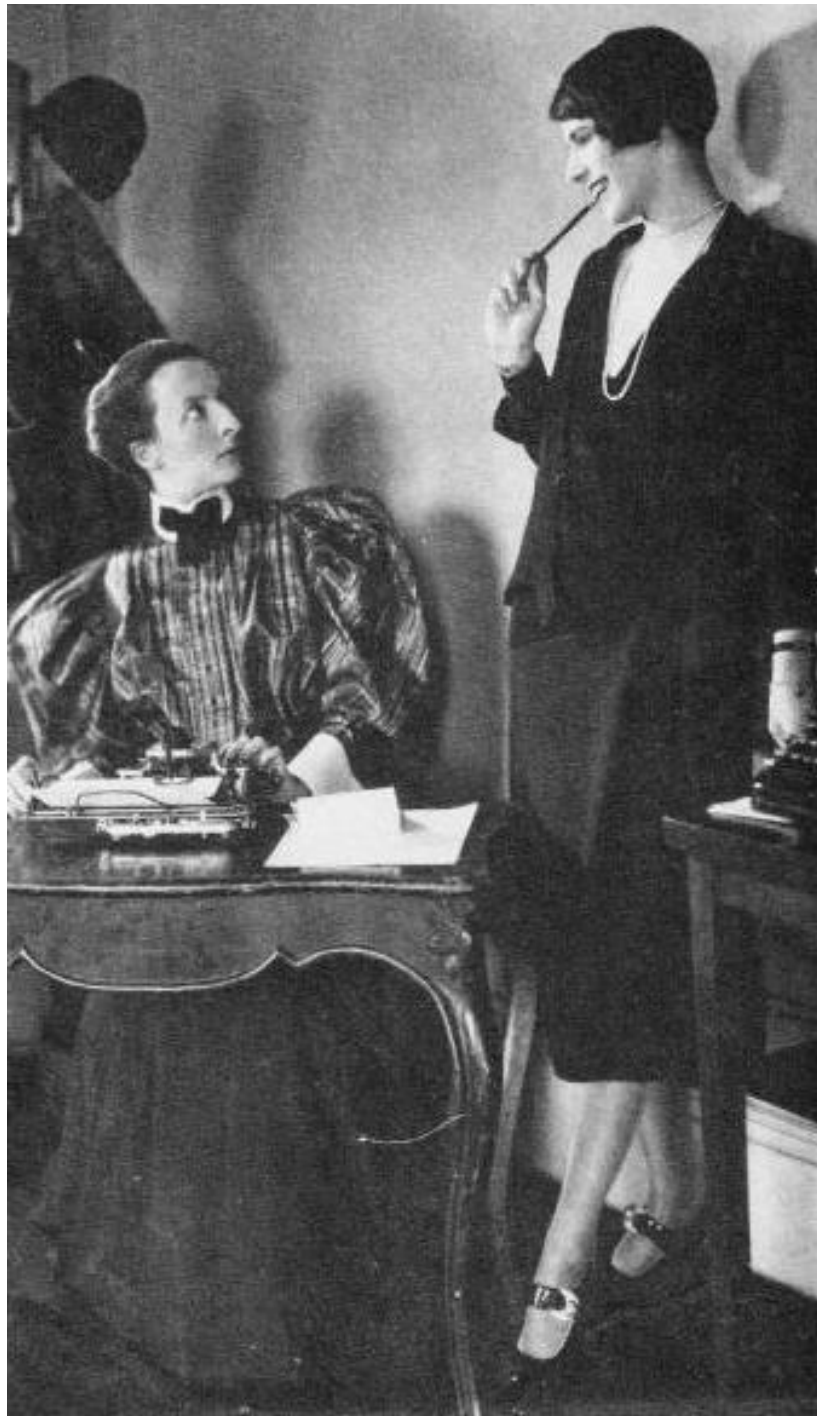
Probably while living in the Milwaukee area, my mother became friends with Hildegard Loretta Sell (later world-renowned as "The incomparable Hildegard"). Hildegard also was born in 1906; spent her early years in Adell, New Holdstein, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and attended Marquette University in the twenties.⁹

They stayed in touch through the years, and when Hildegard visited Northern Wisconsin about the time I was born, my mother said they met and Hildegard held me as a baby. I regret not asking my mother more about how she got to know Hildegard, but I believe she said they met at the Wisconsin Roof in the twenties when they were about the same age and liked music and dancing. My mother spoke fluent German and it's probable Hildegard—the daughter of German immigrants—did, too, another commonality.

In the image below, taken in April, 1925, when she was 19, Hildegard's appearance is traditional, even old country, except for her hair and headband which seem influenced by flapper styles.



Hildegard Loretta Sell in 1925, courtesy of Raynor Memorial Libraries, Marquette University, Milwaukee.



Wikimedia Commons image.

Description: "A staged and posed joke photo of a young lady in 1890s clothes...pretending to be startled by a flapper; early 1920s. It appears in *Flapper* by Joshua Zeitz, where it's said to be an Edward Steichen photo."

The image above delineates the clear differences between the modern attire worn by flappers and that of their predecessors.

Researching flappers I came upon a song about them that was published in 1921 titled "She's A Mean Job." Written by George Landis (lyrics) and Jimmy Selby (music), it contains at least one flapper slang term and some unexpected phrases, including one that casually mentions violence toward wives.

Nevertheless, "Mean" in the title means excellent¹¹ and "job," a specimen.¹² The lyrics vacillate between praise, even *wonderment*, and denigration—a woman is a "girlie," and the protagonist, "Telling pretty lies."

She's a Mean Job

Know a girlie
 Vampy girlie
 Knock-out
 Just a bubble
 Lots of trouble
 Blowout
 Although lazy
 Sets 'em crazy
 Helpless
 There are reasons I'll confess

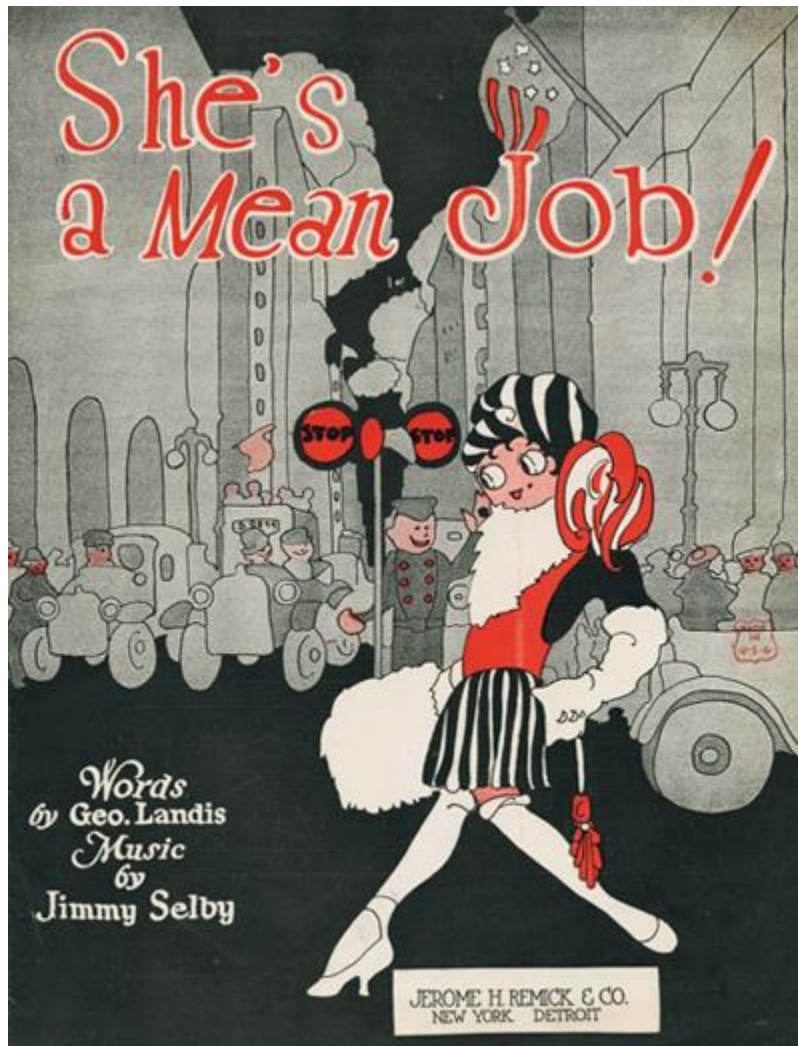
Indicative of another era and emphasizing how far women had to go to enjoy civilized treatment is the fourth line in the next verse which is thrown off as if the action described is ordinary.

1st Chorus

Folks turn 'round to stare at her, she's a mean job
 Traffic halts while motors whirr, she's a mean job
 With one look into her eyes
 Men go home and beat their wives
 She fools them
 And cools them
 Telling pretty lies
 Never smokes but rolls her own, she's a mean job
 And though I never heard that she was ill
 Still Doctors send prescriptions
 For ginger ale afflictions

She leads the mob 'cause she's a mean job

"Pip," the final word in the next verse, means "extraordinary person, sometimes used sarcastically." ¹³



Wikimedia Commons image.
Description: "Sheet music cover;
created December 31, 1920."

Rolled-down stockings were part of the flapper look
and are evident in the images above and below.

Never worries
Never hurries
Spiteful
Disconcerting
Always flirting
Frightful
Voguey dresses
Lots of guesses
Gossip
But the boys say she's a pip

I've labeled the choruses as they appear in the sheet music. Each shares
lines one and two but are different after that.



2nd Chorus

Folks turn 'round to stare at her, she's a mean job
Traffic halts while motors whirr, she's a mean job
When she trips her dainty feet
Men fall prostrate on the street
She fools them
And cools them
Practicing deceit
Never smokes but rolls her own, she's a mean job
And though I never heard that she would bet
Yet once she stopped the races
The horses hid their faces
She leads the mob 'cause she's a mean job

3rd Chorus

Folks turn 'round to stare at her, she's a mean job
Traffic halts while motors whirr, she's a mean job
Though she wasn't country-born
She's a darn good judge of corn
She fools them and cools them
Early night till morn
Never smokes but rolls her own, she's a mean job
And though far better dancers I have met
Yet to watch her dance and quiver
Why strong men shake and shiver
She makes them sob 'cause she's a mean job

4th Chorus

Folks turn 'round to stare at her, she's a mean job
Traffic halts while motors whirr, she's a mean job
Though she lives out in a flat
She's makes good Home Brew at that
It fools them and cools them
Tall or short and fat
Never smokes but rolls her own, she's a mean job
Though President Harding never heard her name—fame
Congress may get frisky
She'll make 'em vote for whiskey
She'll make 'em sob 'cause she's a mean job

Flappers were among our era's early liberated women and attracted criticism for their daring ways.

Wikipedia traces flapper attitudes to a triangle of causes: World War I's carnage, the 1918 flu pandemic, and American women winning the right to vote in 1920.¹⁴ (My mother's mom [called "mum," the same name we called our mother] was born in 1885 and prohibited from voting until she was 35.) The war and flu "inspired in young people a feeling that life is short and could end at any moment" concludes Wikipedia.¹⁵

THE CAPITAL TIMES
Only Newspaper in Madison Receiving Full Leased Wire Service of The Associated Press

City, 2 No. 302 PHONE BADGER 2206 MADISON, WIS., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1918 HOME EDITION PRICE TWO CENTS

ORDER PUBLIC PLACES CLOSED

TO THOSE NEEDING DOCTORS

The board of health urges that all persons who will need physicians during the day put in their calls early in the morning, before 9 o'clock if possible, as the physicians will be occupied with sick cases after that hour.

Places Closed By Health Order

Detroit's order of the state board of health affects nine locations in Madison, all public schools, 7 sectarian schools, all churches and a number of other places.

The locations are: Broadway, Fulton, Ohio, Grand, University, Washington, Fifth, Adams and West Street.

ORDER WHICH CLOSURES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following order was issued this morning by State Health Officer C. A. Harper:

"Owing to the prevalence of influenza throughout the State and in conformity with the request of the Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, the Wisconsin State Board of Health issues an advisory order to all the health officers, local health boards, and city councils to immediately close all schools, churches, Sunday schools, theaters, moving picture houses, other places of amusement and public gatherings for an indefinite period of time.

"Local boards of health should hold meetings immediately, incorporating the suggestions herein outlined, record their order in the minutes of the meeting, publish it in a local paper, or print it and post it in five or more conspicuous places, and attach Section 4506 of the statutes as the penalty provision for violation of their order. Signed

"C. A. HARPER,
State Health Officer.

"Madison, Wis., Oct. 16, 1918."

SCHOOLS THEATERS AND MOVIES ARE INDEFINITELY CLOSED BY STATE BOARD

Dr. C. A. Harper Makes Announcement At 10:30; Sends Out Notices

My mother was 11 when the flu pandemic began in January, 1918, and 14 when it ended in December, 1920. She never forgot the sickness and death it caused in her area and talked about it throughout her life.

C.A. Harper, Wisconsin health officer at the time, ordered "schools, churches, Sunday schools, theaters, moving picture houses, other places of amusement..." closed immediately as a way of preventing the flu from spreading.¹⁶

The *Wausau Daily Record-Herald* ran a front page article a few days later titled, "Officers Urge Use of Masks" with the subhead "Further Spread of Influenza in City Makes More Drastic Steps Necessary."¹⁷ My mother recalled homes in her area were quarantined to prevent the virus' spread.

A February 6, 1919 story summarized the death toll during the autumn of 1918 in Wisconsin alone: "The influenza epidemic took 7,236 Wisconsin lives in October, November, and December, as ascertained by the bureau of vital statistics from reports of local registrars."¹⁸

OFFICERS URGE USE OF MASKS

**Further Spread of Influenza in
City Makes More Drastic
Steps Necessary**

CROWDS NOT ALLOWED

**Children's Infirmary Offered
to the City For Care of
Influenza Patients**

Wausau Daily Record-Herald
October 14, 1918
front page

Prohibition of alcoholic beverages, in place from January 1920 through December 1933 was the power plant of the Roaring Twenties;¹⁹ it caused widespread lawlessness and moved everyday activities behind closed doors. A Stanford University website states: "According to novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, during Prohibition, 'The parties were bigger...the pace was faster...and the morals were looser.'" ²⁰ Mobility provided by mass public transit and automobiles gave the decade a new and exciting pace.

A December 2, 1924 essay in Wisconsin's *The Manitowoc Herald-News* titled, "Modern Flapper a Sturdy Oak, Not a Clinging Vine," comments: "We have freedom, but too much of it, perhaps. Prohibition is here, but so is the midnight supper club."²¹

Though many disparaged flappers and their male friends and pursuers—the younger generation—some were understanding, even enthusiastic. "A great many people have condemned the flapper," begins the second paragraph of the "Sturdy Oak" essay, "and it's hard to see just why they have. Her virtues are so many and her faults so few."²²

The seventh paragraph presages women of today: "The flapper knows what she wants and how to get it. She's not the clinging vine any longer, but the sturdy oak. She has danced in where Mid-Victoria feared to tread. She is opening tea shops and millinery shops. She is going to college and studying law."²³

Near the conclusion, the writer cautions: "And before you condemn her for

not wearing corsets you want to remember that the splendid women of the Greek Golden Age didn't wear them either and the wanton women of the French court did!"²⁴

2 THE CAPITAL TIMES
THURSDAY AFTERNOON
FEBRUARY 6, 1919

FLU TOLL IN
MADISON 196
IN 3 MONTHS

State Board of Health
Makes Report on Epi-
demic in State

Madison had a total of 270 deaths during October, November and December. Of this number 68 were caused by "flu" and 128 by pneumonia. These are companion diseases.

The influenza epidemic took 7,236 Wisconsin lives in October, November and December, as ascertained by the bureau of vital statistics from reports of local registrars.

The death rate for the quarter reached 21.8, the heaviest ever known in the state. The annual death rate has been about 9 per 1,000.

Total deaths from pneumonia and influenza, also deaths from all causes, for the final quarter of 1918 were as follows:

	Pneumonia and influenza	All causes
October	2,816	4,660
November	2,260	4,059
December	2,982	5,125
Total	7,858	13,844

During this period, according to reports, 3,737 deaths were caused by pneumonia and 4,121 by influenza. The average mortality from pneumonia in the corresponding quarter of each of the previous eight years was 600, and the previous eight years was 600, and for influenza only 22.

Page 6 THE MANITOWOC HERALD-NEWS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1924

Modern Flapper a Sturdy Oak Not a Clinging Vine

"A young bird first trying its wings."

That's the pathetic definition of a flapper that the Century dictionary gives us. And it sounds like anything but a description of the assured young girl we slangily call the flapper.

A great many people have condemned the flapper and it's hard to see just why they have. Her virtues are so many and her faults so few.

For one thing she's such a good pal. A girl who doesn't swim and dance and play tennis and hike these days is an exception and a very unpopular exception too.

The flapper is much more of a comrade than a "best girl" to her boy friends and that's a fine, wholesome attitude, isn't it?

And then there's the modern girl's honesty. She takes her jam openly from the cupboard of life where she used to sneak it.

The flapper knows what she wants and how to get it. She's not the clinging vine any longer, but the sturdy oak. She has danced in where Mid-Victoria feared to tread. She is opening tea-shops and millinery shops. She is going to college and studying law.

Mid-Victoria longed to do these things too, but she was afraid that if she did nobody would marry her. So she sat home and waited for someone to come along and propose marriage to her—the only career then open to women.

There's a novel by Amanda M. Douglas that was published in this free country in the year 1889. The heroine of it is forced to earn her own living poor thing and this is what she says about it:

"It is vulgar and commonplace and yet I don't see why it should be considered so derogatory."

That was the attitude of women toward working outside the home only 35 years ago. But now our books say: "We women want something we can call our own, just as men do. More."

And that's precisely the attitude of the flapper and the reason for her being what she is—greedy, but up and coming. She sees that her brother has a latchkey of his own and money of his own and that they do him no harm. So she acquires both herself—and assurance along with them.

However she surely needs that assurance and the right to think clearly for herself in this after-the-war world of jazz and confusion.

It was much easier and simpler to be a lady a few years ago when serenaders sang "To you beautiful lady, I raise my eyes," than now when we dance to the music of "Red Hot Mama." For chivalry has vanished along with high-tail hats and formal dinners and duty calls.

The flapper is only the by-product of her day and age. And this is a time of new standards. All the old guide posts are gone.

We have freedom, but too much of it, perhaps. Prohibition is here, but so is the midnight supper club. Sunday has become a gala day. Why should we think it unreasonable for the young woman of today to be free and easy, too?

And before you condemn her for not wearing corsets you want to remember that the splendid women of the Greek Golden Age didn't wear them either and that the wanton women of the French court did!

And if you disapprove (as you should) of her rouged cheek-bones and her painted lips, you ought to give her the benefit of a doubt. Perhaps she's much better than she's painted.

Newspaper masthead and date rearranged to fit space better using Photoshop Elements.

Another approving observer appeared in the April 11, 1922, *Waukesha Daily Freeman*.

Introduced as "Miss Annie Ryland Smith, general secretary of the

Connecticut Y.W.C.A., she is quoted extensively in an article titled, "Flapper is O.K. and Will Help Posterity." ("Posterity" clearly is a mistake that wasn't caught before the presses ran; "prosperity" was meant and is used by Smith in the partial paragraph at the top of the second column.)

WAUKESHA DAILY FREEMAN

Masthead April 11, 1922

FLAPPER IS O. K. AND WILL HELP POSTERITY

BRIDGEPORT, Conn.—"Today the public calls the active young American maid a flapper, but upon close observation we find that the flapper is not different from her older sister, her mother, grandmother or great grandmother."

Miss Annie Ryland Smith, general secretary of the Connecticut Y. W. C. A., made this statement to the United Press in upholding the modern girl. "Unfortunately, as is often the case

The Waukesha Daily Freeman
April 11, 1922 page 2

Smith opens the story: "Today, the public calls the active young American maid a flapper, but upon close observation we find that the flapper is not different from her older sister, her mother, grandmother, or great grandmother."²⁵

To put this in perspective, the grandmother my mother knew best, her father's mother, Bertha Raasch Westfahl, was born in 1856; her great grandmother Augustine Wilhelmine Wendt on her dad's side, in 1819. That's lineage one generation away from the 1700s. (Thanks to cousin Karen Glover who compiled these genealogical facts about our family.)

"For years the young wife has been held to the standard of 'What mother used to bake,' Smith continues. "If domestic science of today shows results, the young wife of coming generations will be questioned as to whether what she serves is a balanced diet or not."²⁶

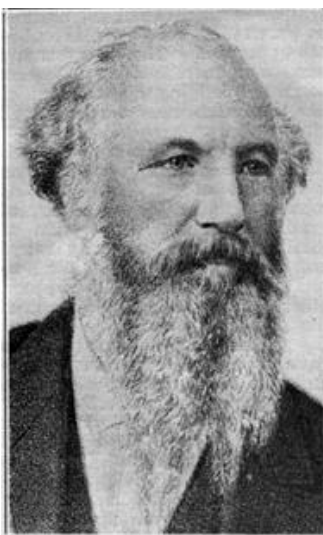
Modern thinking, based on learning and science not religion or tradition, is totally inconsistent with the fundamentalist-nationalist Waukesha

newspaper, *The Freeman*, that exists today. Among the paper's current columnists, for example, is a Milwaukee talk radio host who has filled in for Rush Limbaugh, a notorious far-right blabbermouth. I wondered how this right-wing publication could have published such a progressive article almost a century ago.

Poking on Google I discovered that a predecessor paper in Waukesha, called the *The Waukesha Freeman*, was prominently abolitionist in the 1800s, hence *Freeman*.²⁷

Bonnie Byrd, curator of the Waukesha County Historical Society & Museum, sent information that indicates the paper was purchased sometime around 1870 by Dr. Henry A. Youmans of Mukwonago for his son-in-law, T.W. Haight. An excerpt from one of the articles Bird supplied states Dr. Youmans' son Henry M. "...worked for Haight four years and then bought the business for himself becoming editor. For sixty years, until his retirement in 1930, Henry M. Youmans dominated the *Freeman*; writing its editorials, determining its policies in line with his own Republican [it was quite a different party then] philosophies, and managing it so well that it successively absorbed each of its competitors. After a three-way merger in 1920 it became a daily paper."²⁸

Editor Youmans married a suffragette named Theodora Winton who, upon receiving a degree from Waukesha's Carroll College, began writing for the *Freeman* according to a second article provided by Byrd. "Always committed to the women's suffrage movement, [she] supported the successful campaign to have the state pass a suffrage bill in June 1911...Wisconsin was the first state to ratify the [19th] amendment and to notify federal officials in Washington of its passage."



Henry A. Youmans M.D.
Courtesy of the
Waukesha County
Historical Society



Henry M. Youmans Courtesy of the
Waukesha County Historical Society



Theodora (Winton) Youmans
Courtesy of the Waukesha County
Historical Society & Museum

WAUKESHA FREEMAN.

A Weekly Newspaper—Devoted to Republican Politics, Literature, and the News of the day.

VOL. 1.

WAUKESHA, WIS., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1859.

NO. 34.

The Southward March of Slavery

The present extraordinary demand for slaves and their consequent high price—higher very much than ever before in this country—is having one very important effect. It is accelerating the drain of this anomalous species of property from the border States, and so hastening the approach of the day when Missouri, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland and Tennessee shall successfully throw off the last remains of the old incubus, and take their appropriate places in the ranks of the free states. If we could take in at one view the daily movement of slaves from these northern states southward—in spite of the sad personal calamities involved for the individuals going to make up the melancholy processions—we should obtain new confidence in the extension of the area of true freedom in this country, and in the gradual limitation of the crime and curse of human slavery. If the next census is honestly made up its figures will give decided, and to many, surprising evidence of the progress made in this grand march of slavery southward.

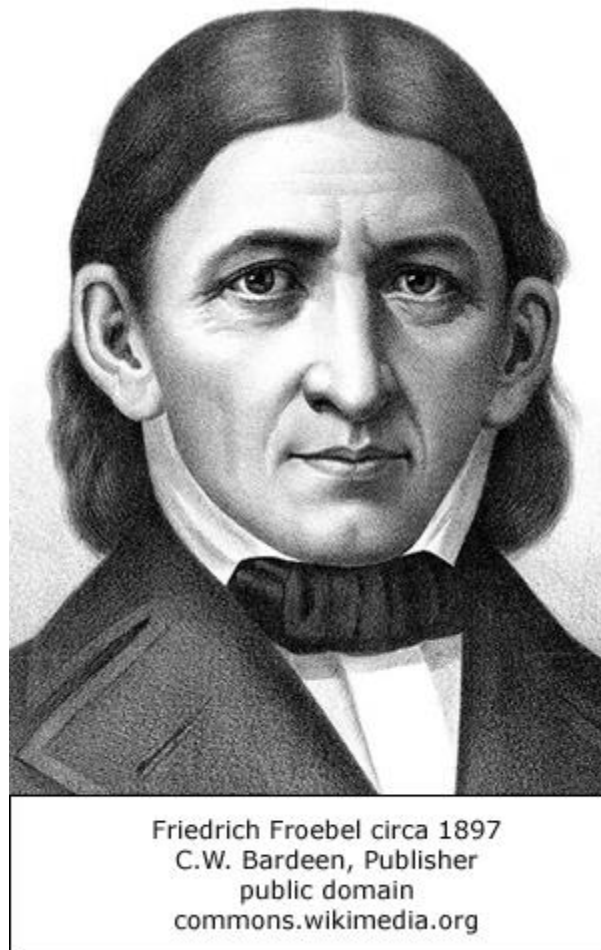
Let slavery be excluded from the existing territories, let the importation of new victims from Africa be prevented, and a national administration be inaugurated in 1860 favorable to free labor and free soil, or even not positively hostile in its policy to both, and this great social and political renovation of the country will go forward with increased power and speed. The time cannot now be distant when Missouri will fulfil her destiny and enlarge her social and political power by declaring herself free, and the influence of her example will tell wonderfully on the other border slave states. The experiments now making with free labor alongside of slave labor will soon convince the most obstinate in these states, that the general wealth and welfare requires the extinction of slavery, and that the profits of the present slave-breeding, great as they are, are not worthy to be mentioned in connection with the rapid development of enterprise and wealth that follows the triumphant progress of free labor.

The sagacious statesmen of the extreme South, whose politics are entirely bound up in the interests of the slave institution, are not blind to this great southward movement of slavery, or indifferent to its results. We find evidence of this fact in the late speech of Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, prepared by him with great care for publication, and treating the questions of slavery with the calmness of a scientific essay or a state paper. Without once alluding to this gradual retreat of slavery from the North to the South, his suggestions all pre-suppose the fact, and have reference to averting from the institution the natural effects of this process. It is easy to see that this furnishes one of the great motives for the desire to possess Cuba and to annex more territory at the south west. For this he declares it the duty of Congress to legislate for the protection of slavery in the territories, if the territories refuse to cherish the institution, and of the national, executive and judiciary to co-operate in protecting slavery therein, so that, if possible, slavery may retain its hold of some of the existing territories and make new conquests in those yet to be added.—For this reason he denounces the laws against the slave trade, and although he considers it unwise, just now, to make this a distinct issue in national politics, he yet insists that the importation of slaves from Africa must be allowed, in order to the proper development of Texas, New Mexico and the states yet to be created south of the Rio Grande. And it is for this reason that he suggests that the South shall, at a proper time, demand that the laws against the slave trade shall be repealed, and the regulation of this traffic be left wholly with the states.—These are some of the signs and the results of the southward progress of slavery. They indicate sources of hope and motives and objects of effort to the friends of freedom, and they point to the future battle fields on which the "irrepressible conflict" is to be waged—with what result it remains for the free laborers of the North and West to determine.—*Springfield Republican*.

When and under what circumstances the paper veered far right is something I haven't determined although I didn't dig deeply into it. Probably many current readers would be surprised by its radical beginnings just as the Youmans would be shocked to see how their baby mutated.

In line with what hooked me into this story, Smith laments change: "Movies

and automobiles have taken the place of fireside stories before bedtime or a walk around the block after supper, and after the movies, it is too late for mother to explain why, where, and what it all meant.³⁰



Among grownups, concerns, frets, even outright condemnations of new technologies that alter societal traditions seem almost as certain as death and taxes.

Developments in education are praised by Smith, including the introduction of the "Froebelian method."³¹ Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782—1852), according to Wikipedia was, "...a German pedagogue, a student of Pestalozzi who laid the foundation for modern education based on the recognition that children have unique needs and capabilities. He created the concept of the 'kindergarten' and also coined the word now used in German and English."³²

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867—1959) credited one of the educator's inventions, Froebel blocks, with influencing his approach to architecture. According to Froebel Web: "Wright's mother introduced him to Froebel's ideas and to Froebelian toys. They consisted of geometric blocks to assemble in different ways, encouraging the child's sense of three-dimensional composition, and paper to fold in various shapes, aiding the child's perception of planar

elements. Early in his career, Wright began to construct buildings with a definite geometric clarity, such as the Winslow house in River Forest, Illinois of 1893. The Froebel toys undoubtedly led the way to this type of design, so advanced for its time." ³³ "Led the way" might be an overstatement because Wright's sense of architecture resulted from many factors; various influences pulled him along not the least of which was his taliesin.



Froebel blocks similar to the ones Frank Lloyd Wright played with as a child.
Courtesy of Norman Brosterman (see historyofkindergarten.com).

Ending the *Freeman* article are timeless words of wisdom from Smith: "It is suggested that some mothers and fathers of today hurry and catch up to their daughters and sons. If the parents don't wake up they will soon be left far behind for youth today travels at a fast pace. The bobbed hair, the free body, the forgetfulness of parents in teaching restraint have created a maiden that makes one feel as if the northwest wind were passing by. Have you ever known the northwest wind to do aught but blow about a bit?"

Smith is an impressive commentator, but I wasn't able to learn anything about her beyond what was mentioned in the article, even though I contacted local Y.W.C.A. associations in Connecticut, the Bridgeport (Connecticut) Public library, and the national Y.W.C.A. office in Washington, D.C.



Frank Lloyd Wright circa 1874 at six or seven—
he was born June 8, 1867, in Richland Center,
Wisconsin. Courtesy of the Wisconsin
Historical Society.

Substantial setup I know, but only now do I feel ready to write about the "Flapper Talk" article itself, which begins with a young woman telling her mother about her activities the previous evening, using expressions such as "wally"—"A goof with patent leather hair," according to the accompanying glossary; "tomato"—"A pretty girl who can dance like a streak but is otherwise a dumb-dora [stupid girl]"; and "boffos"—"Dollars otherwise known as rocks, chips, seeds, berries, and jack."³⁴

MOTHEER: "Well, dear, did you have a good time last night?"
 Daughter: "O, Mom, it was perfectly blaah nobody there but a lot of cake-eaters and greaso balls. There was one wally I was goofy about, but while I was necking with him, Harry caught a tomato, so he says 'lets blouse,' and we left and crashed in at the Plaza. A friend of Harry's we met there was the darba, and after that we drifted to a couple of the clubs, and both the boys got beautifully shellacked."
 Mother: "Shellacked! I don't understand."
 Daughter: "Jammed, both of them, and at one place we were in I got my glimmers on Tommie Smith. He had a dumb-otis with him that looked like a scandal-walker, but somebody said he was a Pittsburger out on parole. Anyhow he was making the boffos fairly fly."
 The Milwaukee Evening Sentinel
 April 22, 1922 page 13

First paragraph of "Fathers and Mothers Must Learn Flapper Talk to Know What the Younger Generation are Saying."

The 19th-century-born mom takes it in until the daughter says, "both boys got beautifully shellacked." Mom interrupts, "I don't understand," and the daughter elaborates, "*jammed*," flapper slang for inebriated, along with "balonied, pie-eyed, piffled, shot, canned, out like a light, stewed to the hat, potted, jigged, and tanked."³⁵

Alcohol prohibition was as much a failure during the flapper era as modern efforts to eliminate drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and marijuana are today, and the abundance of slang words people had for booze and its impacts testify to how stupid laws were ignored then as now.

Not surprisingly, flapper terms involving relationships and sex are even more numerous: "Holaholy"—"A girl or boy who objects to necking"; "Jane"—"A girl who meets you on the stoop"; "nice girl"—"A girl who takes you in and

introduces you to her family"; and "Given the air"—"Where a girl or boy is thrown down on a date," which seems unduly aggressive!³⁶



Wikimedia Commons image.
Description: "Photo of a girl in 'flapper'
garb...Moscow, Idaho...1922.
Donated by Dave Bumgardne."

"Lollygagger" referred to a, "Young man addicted to attempts at hallway spooning,"³⁷ similar to but more specific than today's understanding. "Spoonings" isn't defined in the article, but an online flapper dictionary explains it is "to neck or at least talk of love."³⁸

"Smudge" was, "One who does all the close-fitting dance steps"; "Necker"—"A person of either sex given to cheek-to-cheek dancing"; and "Twist"—"A girl one takes out to dances, 'to twist and twirl'"³⁹ ("Twist and Shout" Jazz Age style?).

"Storm and strife," was "A married cake-eater's way of referring to his wife," and a cake-eater, "A small, salaried male person who frequents teas and other entertainments and never makes any effort to repay his social obligations."⁴⁰

"Goofy" was, "To be in love with or attracted to"; and "Monog"—A young person of either sex who is 'goofy' about only one person at a time."⁴¹



Courtesy of Stanford University Libraries.
Photo in public domain.

Frederick Jennings Haskin (1872—1944), described as a writer who was "syndicated in over a hundred American newspapers during the twenties," in an article titled, "Flappers and Their Metaphors," published in 1922, wrote: "Petting, which is itself slang, is now too tame and too much of a glittering generality for the flapper language. Puppy cuddling has partly replaced the word petting and a whole assortment of terms refer to this activity in its various aspects. Thus, a moving picture auditorium becomes a petting pantry; the affectionate type of flapper a biscuit or a cuddler; a petter who likes to hang on a boy's neck is a necker, and a necker of the male species is a snugglepup."⁴²

Several flapper slang terms offer commentary on types, peculiarities, and characteristics. A standout is "low-lid," defined as "The opposite of highbrow."⁴³



Wikimedia Commons image.
Description: "Woman putting flask
in her Russian boot, Washington, D.C.
January 21, 1922."

When there's a will (and *will* seems to be in abundance where intoxicants are concerned)... Although some might reasonably connect the swastika worked into the floor tile (above) with the Nazis, it actually is an ancient Buddhist-Hindu symbol defined in Sanskrit as meaning "any lucky or auspicious object."⁴⁸ This is among the reasons it was appropriated by Hitler.

"Dudd" in flapper slang meant "A boy or girl given to reading or study." Probably it comes from fuddy-duddy which dictionary.com defines as a "person who is stuffy, old-fashioned, and conservative."⁴⁴ It's sad that "reading and study" were and probably still are viewed by some as negatives.

Other flapper slang terms, *amazingly*, remain with us today, including, "The cat's pajamas," "hot-dog," and "pipe-down," which still means to "hush up."⁴⁵

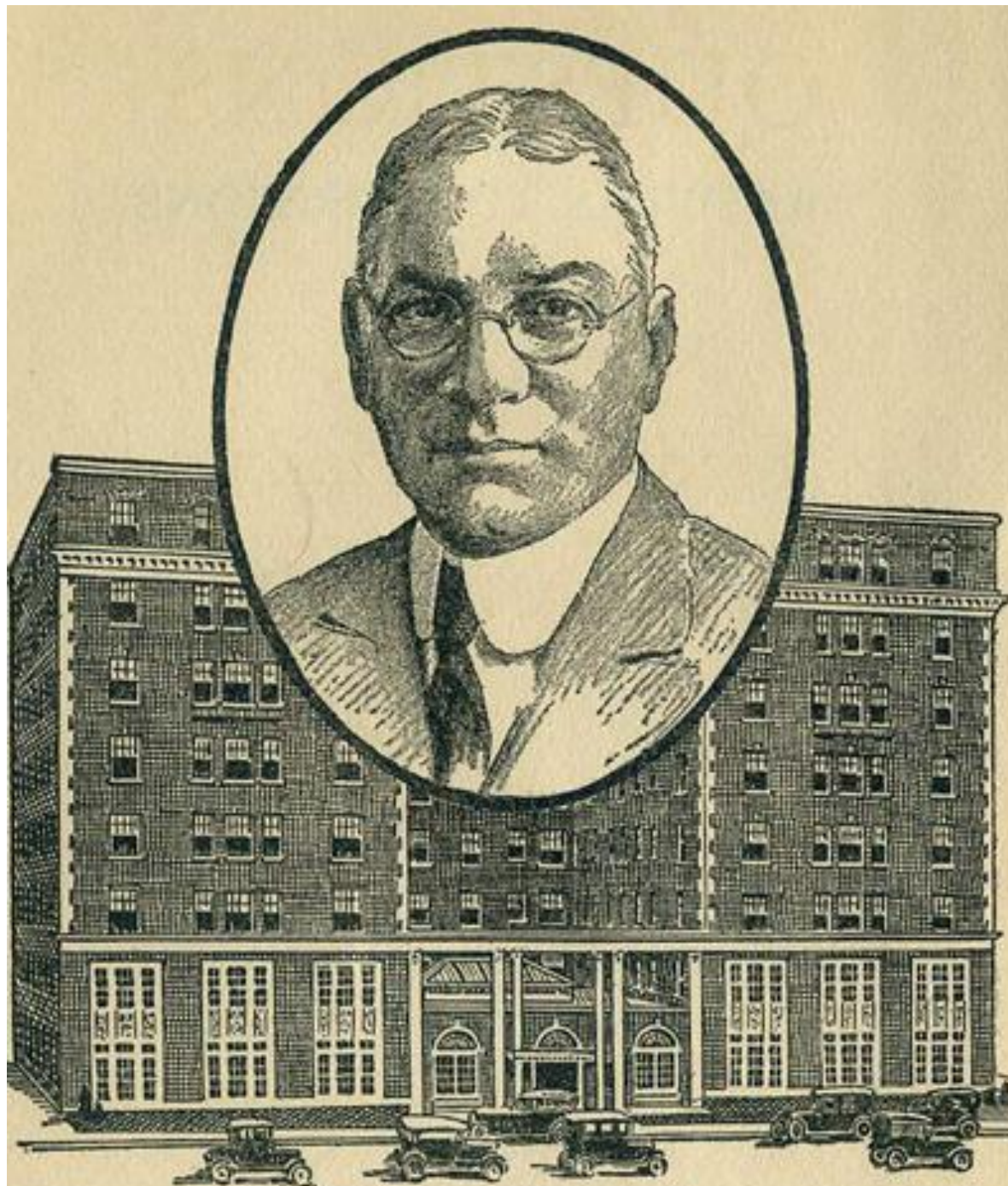
"Punk," too, survives. It was a disparaging word in the flapper glossary and though it gained some respectability when a genre of Rock music was so-named in the middle seventies, it's a pejorative even now.

Haskin also includes "blah" in his "Metaphors" article; it meant "anything unpleasant" in flapper slang and now means more specifically something mundane and boring.⁴⁶



Wikimedia Commons image.
Description: "Mlle. Rhea seated with flask
in garter on leg. January 26 1926."

"Mlle." is mademoiselle abbreviated, but otherwise I didn't discover much about Rhea, including her full name. According to a website, she was, "...an actress and dancer."⁴⁹



Frederic J. Haskin

Director of the world's largest information bureau which occupies 25,000 square feet of space in this modern building.

Opposite title page of Copyright 1926 book, *Answers To Questions*, by Frederic J. Haskin, Grosset & Dunlapp, Publishers, New York.



Wikimedia Commons image.
Description: "Alice Joyce,
February 1, 1926."

Actress Joyce was born in 1890 and appeared in dozens of Hollywood films before retiring from movie-making in 1930.⁴⁷

I recall my mother using three words that are in the flapper glossary: cluck, goofy, and pie-eyed. Cluck is defined as "a girl who dances clumsily," however, my mother used it in its traditional meaning of "a dull-witted, stupid person..." She also talked about people being "goofy" in love and sometimes referred to those under the influence as "pie-eyed."⁵⁰ Whether these hung with her from the Roaring Twenties or appeared in her

vocabulary decades later is impossible to know.

My dad was born in 1909, at the end of the score of years that produced flappers. He wasn't a "dew dropper" (see glossary) but reputedly, he did show up at barn dances with moonshine in the trunk to make a few bucks on the side. At least this is what someone who knew him at the time told me.

Careless, youthful passion during the fiery flapper era affected my parents forever. My mother wound up pregnant and unmarried at 20, and my dad, at 19, was forced to wed a pregnant woman though, I'm told, he always denied being the baby's father.

His shotgun marriage ended in divorce within two years, but he paid child support for 16 more. The daughter always regarded him as her father, but he didn't acknowledge or have anything to do with her. In the months following his divorce, he met, romanced, and married my mother.

He never spoke to me of his first marriage or the daughter, but I was just a few months past 15 when he died. My mother told brother Bob and me about my dad's past and that he was not my oldest brother Forry's biological father just prior to his funeral in January, 1966. She thought the daughter might attend and wanted us to be prepared. The daughter did attend and sent a floral arrangement labeled "Dad." She stood looking into the open casket, cried as hard as anyone, and probably had more to cry about.

Like everyone, my dad was far from perfect, but he was good to me and certainly inspired a love of reading, thinking, and the stars. He was charismatic, the type people warmed to quickly and wanted to be around. It was hard to recover from his death at just 56, and I tended to idealize him. One day I was telling my daughter what a great guy he was, when she interrupted and said, "What kind of guy would ignore a little girl who thought he was her dad?" This gave me pause.

From what I've heard, he always blamed the pregnancy on others, but his first wife expressed certainty it was him *because she liked him best*. His father was persuaded and pretty soon my dad was married to his first wife—at least that's the way I've heard the tale. There are two sides to every story, and I haven't heard the woman's and she, like my dad, is long gone.

I don't excuse or condone his behavior but have a feeling his anger at the woman and looming years of child support payments clouded his judgment and once he began rolling down that road it was hard to take a different route. Probably it caused him a great deal of anguish and pain and he very well might have wished he had decided differently.



Alfred August Schaar. Little could he have suspected that his his final son, born 18 years after the photograph was taken, would be captioning a blow-up from the team photo 85 years later. He was a long-time nicotine addict and might be holding a cigarette in his left hand.

It's hard to be certain.

My oldest brother, Forrest, was born in 1927 and had many talents. Our mother said his father was a prominent man in her home area who was killed in a train wreck after she became pregnant but before they could

marry. She didn't like talking about it, but I wish I had questioned her more intently. She's been dead more than 20 years now and we'll never know.

Oddly, Forry, as we called him, did not have a middle name. My father married my mother in 1933 and later my dad legally adopted Forry. A new birth certificate was issued and both are listed as his parents; "Yes" is typed after "Legitimate?" in Box 7.



Wittenberg, Wisconsin Grays circa 1932.
Alfred August Schaar kneeling row,
second from the left. Probably
he was 22 or 23 at the time.

* * *