**Standard 8-6:** The student will understand the impact of Reconstruction, industrialization, and Progressivism on society and politics in South Carolina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Enduring Understanding:**

South Carolina’s response to national crises during the first half of the twentieth century brought it back into full participation in the national experience. To understand the state’s changed status, the student will…

**8-6.2 Explain the causes and effects of changes in South Carolina and the nation as a whole in the 1920s, including Prohibition, the destruction caused by the boll weevil, the rise of mass media, improvements in daily life, increases in tourism and recreation, the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, and the contributions of South Carolinians to the Harlem Renaissance and the Southern Literary Renaissance.**

**It is essential for students to know:**

In the United States and in South Carolina, the 1920s seemed to be a prosperous time. Economic change resulted from the prosperity brought by the war years. During the war, farmers’ economic conditions improved because of increased demand for their products. This had a ripple effect on the rest of the agriculturally based South Carolina economy. Bankers and merchants as well as landowners, sharecroppers and tenant farmers shared in the good times and went on a spending spree. Prosperity did not last and soon cotton and tobacco prices fell as a result of overproduction and the loss of overseas markets (8-6.3).

In the 1920s, some social change came as the result of improvements in urban life because of new technologies. However, there was little change for South Carolina’s farmers. Water and sanitation systems were built in towns and cities of South Carolina. Because of trolley systems and the automobile, some people moved to suburbs on the outskirts of cities such as Columbia.

Electricity became more available to people in towns and cities as the result of the harnessing of water power through the building of dams along South Carolina’s rivers, including the dam that

formed Lake Murray, but electricity did not reach rural areas. Improvements in daily life were the result of greater availability of electricity and the new appliances that used it. Some South Carolinians bought automobiles, vacuum cleaners and washing machines on the installment plan, just as people did throughout the United States. Although, appliances eased the workload of housewives, few South Carolina women joined the ranks of the flappers. South Carolina society continued to be stratified, sexist and segregated.

In response to the decline of the agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy (8-6.3), South Carolinians attempted to boost tourism by opening hotels in Charleston, promoting development along the coast and beginning the national historic preservation movement in Charleston. The increased number of automobiles made travel possible and visitors from the North were attracted to the climate and culture of the Old South, preserved in the stately homes and buildings of a bygone era.

Prohibition was a failure in South Carolina, just as it was in the rest of the country, but it created a social phenomenon. It led to an increase in crime and corruption as ‘bootleggers’ and ‘moonshiners’ violated the law. This prompted a backlash of conservatives who abhorred the moral decline that such flagrant violation of the law exemplified. Blue laws were strictly enforced and the Ku Klux Klan found a new target in the immoral bootleggers and immigrant groups who continued to drink.

The mass media had a significant impact on South Carolina, just as it did on the rest of the country. In 1930, the first radio station in South Carolina went on the air in Charleston and provided entertainment and news to those who could afford it. South Carolinians listened to their radios and went to the movies with a resulting nationalization of culture. South Carolinians learned about flappers and the latest music and dance crazes and even started some, like the Big Apple, named after the African-American nightclub where the steps originated.

Responding to criticisms of South Carolina as a cultural wasteland, the Southern Literary Renaissance furthered the celebration of South Carolina’s heritage. The Poetry Society of South Carolina led this revival and contributors included Julia Peterkin, who won a Pulitzer Prize for Literature, and DuBose Heyward, who wrote Porgy, which later became the opera Porgy and Bess.

South Carolinians also contributed to the arts through the Harlem Renaissance. This cultural renaissance was the result of the Great Migration that brought African Americans to the cities of the Northeast and the Midwest and furthered the development of a growing black middle class. African Americans left the South in response to push factors such as Jim Crow discrimination, violence and poverty and pull factors such as job opportunities in the Northern cites. The Harlem Renaissance exalted the unique culture of African Americans and brought recognition and pride to black artists in a variety of genres, particularly musicians. The radio helped to spread appreciation for new trends in music such as jazz to white audiences and promoted a shared national culture. Writers of the Harlem Renaissance [such as James Weldon Johnson and Langston Hughes], celebrated ties to African cultural traditions and black pride and questioned the position of African Americans in American life. Visual artists, such as William H. Johnson of Florence, South Carolina, splashed their canvases with vibrant color that captured the dance halls, jazz bands and the emotion of the era. Students should be shown some of the work of William H. Johnson. Johnson traveled to Paris in 1926, where he settled, painted, and studied the works of modern European masters. The Harlem Renaissance further pointed out the second class citizenship of African Americans.

Despite the growing popularity of African American music and art, the 1920s also saw a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan. In 1915, the movie The Birth of a Nation depicted the origins of the Klan positively as the Redeemers of the Reconstruction era and the saviors of white womanhood, employing traditional racist stereotypes. The movie aroused racist sentiments against African Americans throughout the country. Anti-immigrant sentiments fueled by the Great War and by anti-immigrant legislation in the 1920s, added radicals, immigrants and Catholics to the list of groups targeted by the new Klan. The business climate of the 1920s also contributed to the Klan’s resurgence as they used advertising and business organizations to promote membership and gain political power. In the 1920s, the Klan was a national organization with a strong following in the small towns and cities of the Midwest as well as in the South. Seeing themselves as moral regulators, Klansmen targeted bootleggers and gamblers with cross burnings, public beatings and lynching.