

## Forgotten American Lives

*by Hap Hansen*

I gave some thought to writing about some famous American, or an outstanding teacher or relative, or some other distinguished American. As writers, we sometimes become too serious. The novels that I work on, are serious. Today I decided just to have some fun. So, I write about some unknown and mostly forgotten American lives. I have picked the decade of the 1920's, a simpler time in America, where we used simple but effective language and used terms that no longer exist.

Several years ago, there were a whole bunch of slang words that all Americans used with regularity. I miss them. When amateur automobile mechanics picked up a whatchamacallit, screwed it on to the doohickey, then attached it to the thingamajig, every bystander seemed to know what they were doing. I'm not sure what a doozy or lollapalooza was, but they were usually used as words of awe and everyone within earshot would shake their heads in solemn agreement. All of those words are out of vogue now, having been replaced by an evolving teen language that many of us do not understand. Computer knowledge has also changed the language. Bits, bytes, modems, Twitter, Google, hashtag, cyberspace and dozens of other computer generated words are now in use.

I also miss hearing about the old dances our unknown Americans performed from the Roaring Twenties, such as 'The Charleston'. That was where 'Ladies' Men' and 'Flappers' did lots of hands-on pitty-pattying of the knees, with high backward heel kicks. Must have hurt! The Flappers' skirts were hiked above the knees and their necklaces dangled below. The ladies' men in 'Zoot' suits with lapels clear to their shoulders, also kicked and pittie-pattied.

I'm not sure, but I think the 'Dipsy-Doodle' was also some sort of dance. Although I've never seen it performed. Probably it was done in a 'Speak-easy' with Gigolos and Romeos dancing with 'hussies', 'floozies' and ... 'tarts'.

Then there was the 'Shimmy-shake'. That's where some fancy-pants, ladies' man, Casanova with pomaded, slicked-back hair danced with strumpets, trollops and ... chippies. Our unknown and forgotten Americans sure knew how to have fun.

In the movies, filmed then in black and white, sometimes at the height of the dance action, the American owner of the Speak-Easy might turn to the bouncer and say, "Butch, there's trouble a'brewin' tonight. All those Flappers and fancy-pants ladies' men are all a'drinkin' bathtub gin and if they're not in cahoots with the long arm of the law, they'll end up in the hoosegow. You can bet your sweet patootie on that!

I'll close this silliness with an almost forgotten American song from the World War II era; Chicory-chick, cha la cha la, check la roma, inebanica, bollica-wollica, can't you see ... Chicory-chick is me! Holy Moly, what a song!