

The 1950's

At The Diner



breakfast
lunch
dinner



I'll See You There!



The end of WWII led to an era of wealth & spending in the 1950s:

The war stimulated the economy & ended the Great Depression

High wages, service pay for soldiers, & war bond investments gave Americans money to spend

The economic boom allowed Americans to enjoy the highest standard of living in the world



1950

Consumerism returned in the 1950s because for the 1st time since the 1920s Americans had money and access to consumer goods

People rushed to buy new goods like cars, TVs & hi-fi record players

Advertisers used newspaper ads, radio, & new TV commercials to market goods to Americans

Franchises offered people across the country the same products



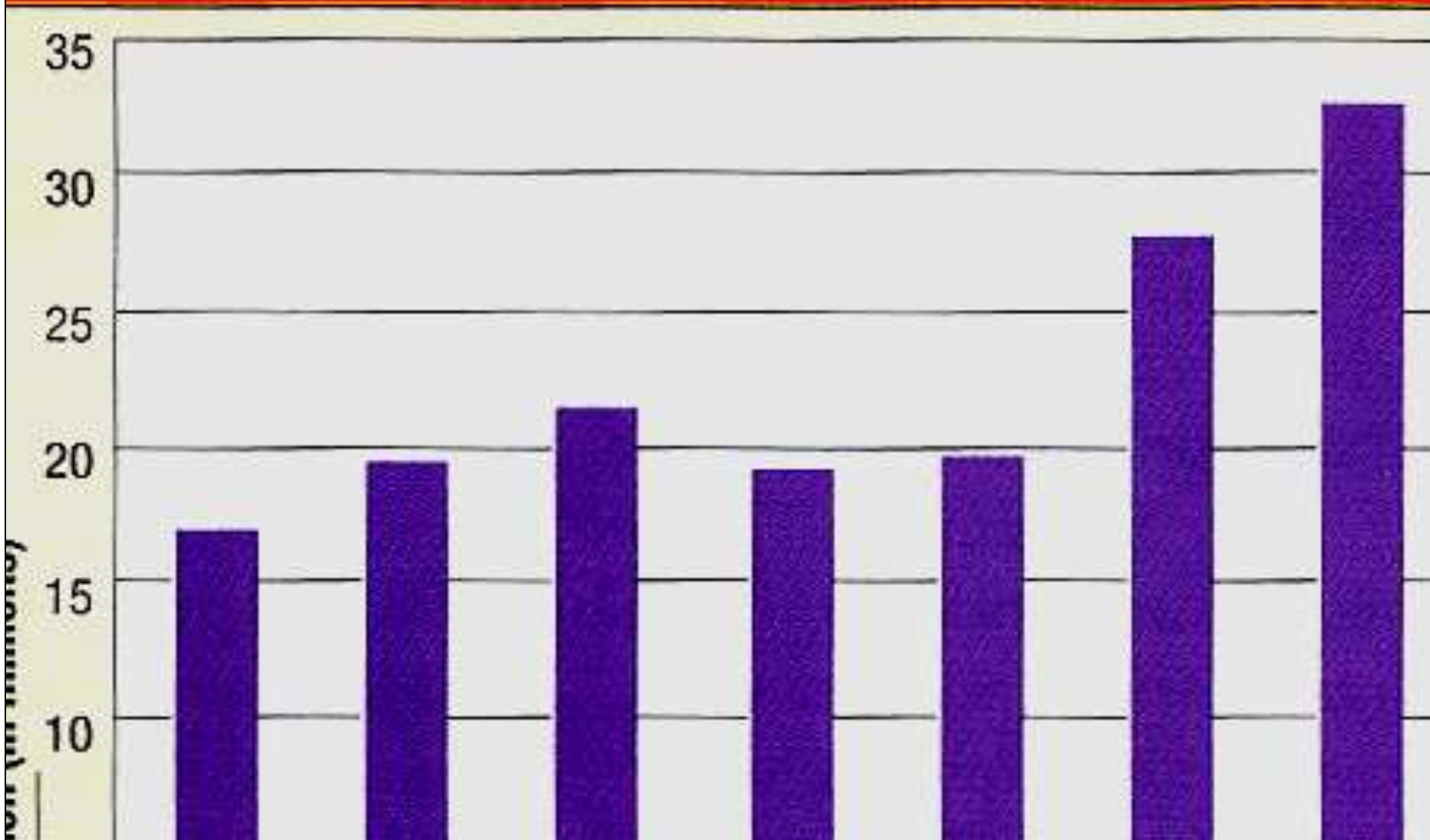
Americans produced a “baby boom” in the 1950s, leading to the largest generation in U.S. history

The return of soldiers from war led to an increase in marriages & a rise in the birthrate



The baby boom led to a demand for new baby products, schools, & homes for growing families

School Enrollment, 1910–1970, Grades K–8

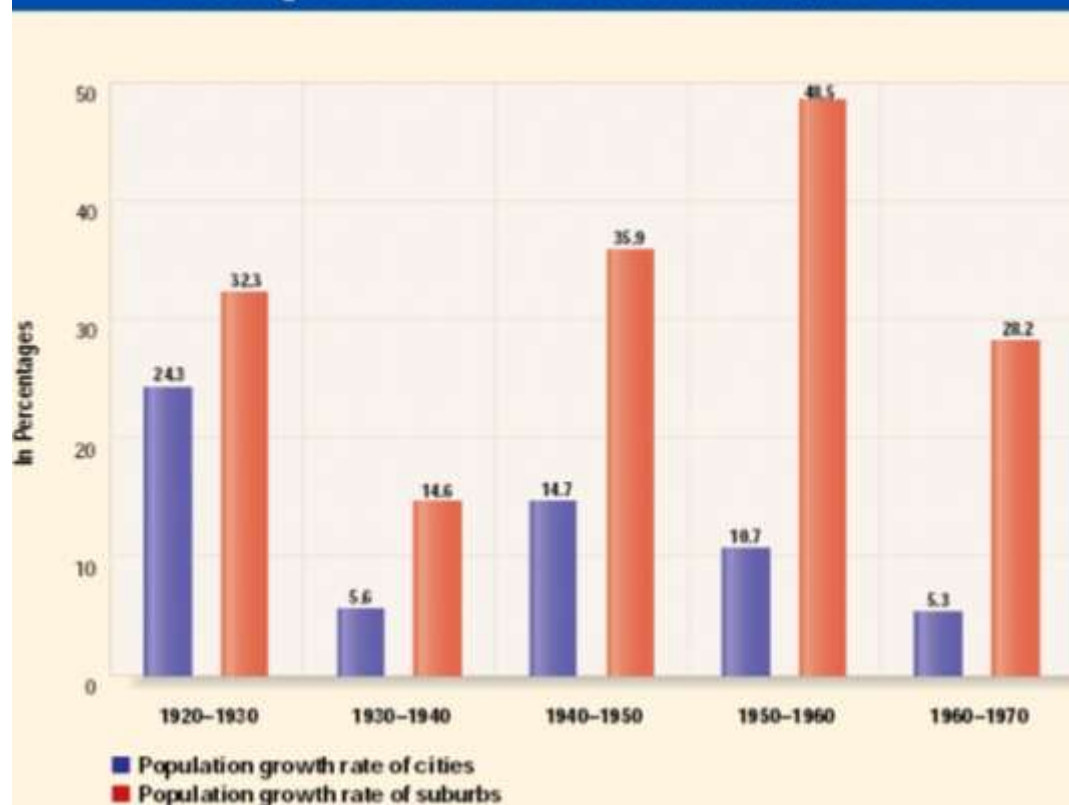


Suburbs boomed in the 1950s

The majority of Americans worked in cities but wanted the security of suburbs for their families

Suburbs offered peace of mind, affordable homes, & good schools

Percentages of Urban-Suburban Growth Rates, 1920-1970



The GI Bill of Rights offered returning soldiers cheap loans for new homes & tuition for college



Levitt's Homes A look at the two types of homes Levitt built

The 1947 Cape Cod

The Levitt Cape Cod offered 4½ rooms on a 25-by-30-foot slab, with an unfinished expandable attic, and a kitchen full of appliances that included a

- 1 story high

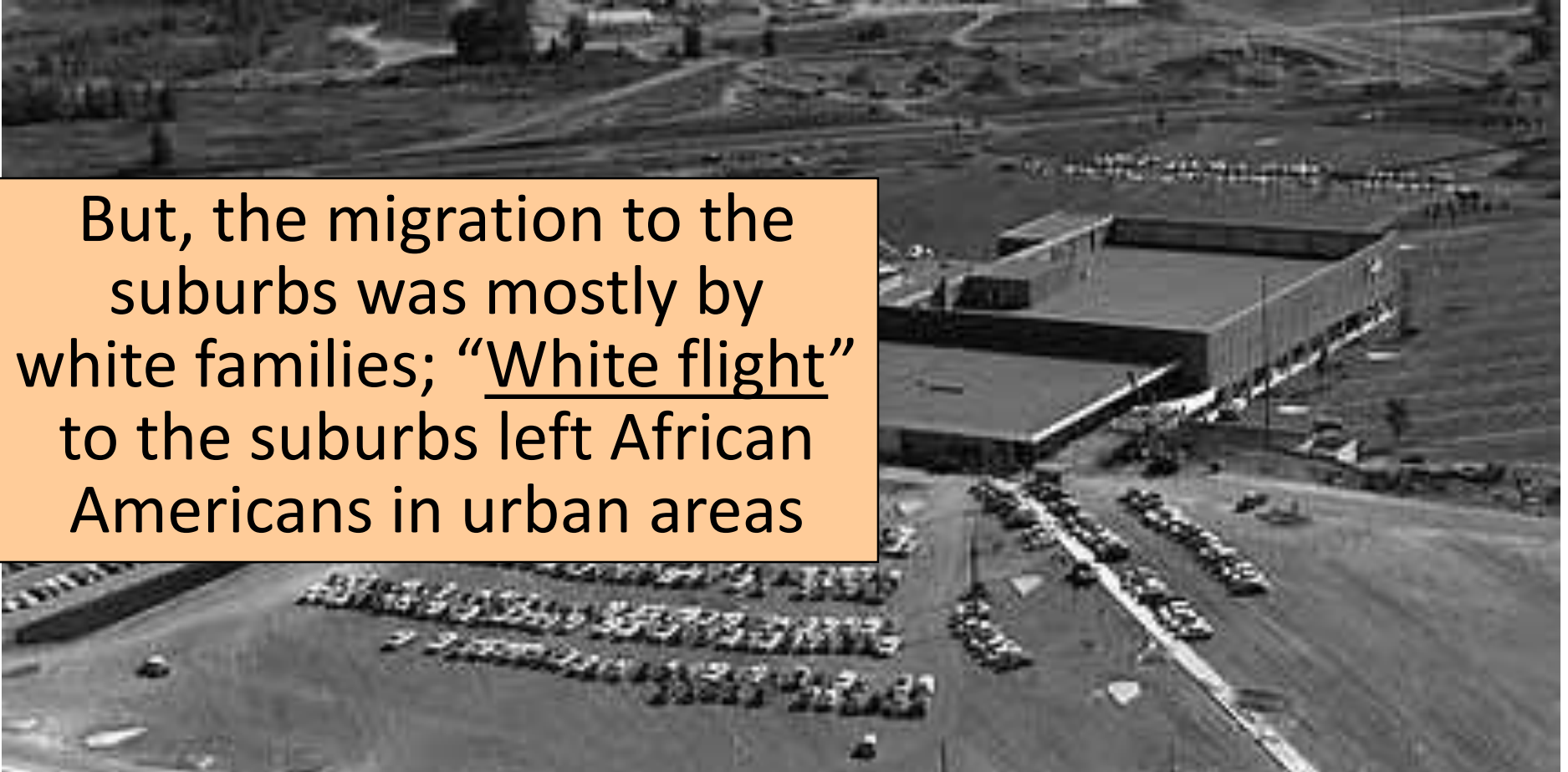


Suburbs changed American life

Suburbs increased America's need for cars & highways

Churches, schools, grocery stores, & shopping centers were build to service the suburbs

But, the migration to the suburbs was mostly by white families; "White flight" to the suburbs left African Americans in urban areas



Southdale Shopping Center (Minnesota) the 1st enclosed, air-conditioned mall

In the 1950s, Americans bought cars in record numbers

The growth of suburbs, creative advertising, easy credit, & cheap gasoline led to a car boom

Automobile companies made big, powerful, flashy cars



Eldorado BY CADILLAC



the
MIGHTY CHRYSLER
for 1957



These magnificent automobiles are the Eldorado Biarritz and the Eldorado Biarritz—the two distinguished members of Cadillac's latest and finest series of motor cars. From their basic design to their final construction, they have been deliberately created to establish a new level of motor car excellence. Among their distinguishing characteristics are their high-riding rear fender lines . . . their specially designed and specially appointed interiors . . . their great 363-h.p. engines . . . and their special body colors. In their beauty . . . in their history . . . in their performance . . . and in their unique appointments—they are, without question, the finest representation of the great Cadillac name. CADILLAC MOTOR CAR DIVISION • GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION.

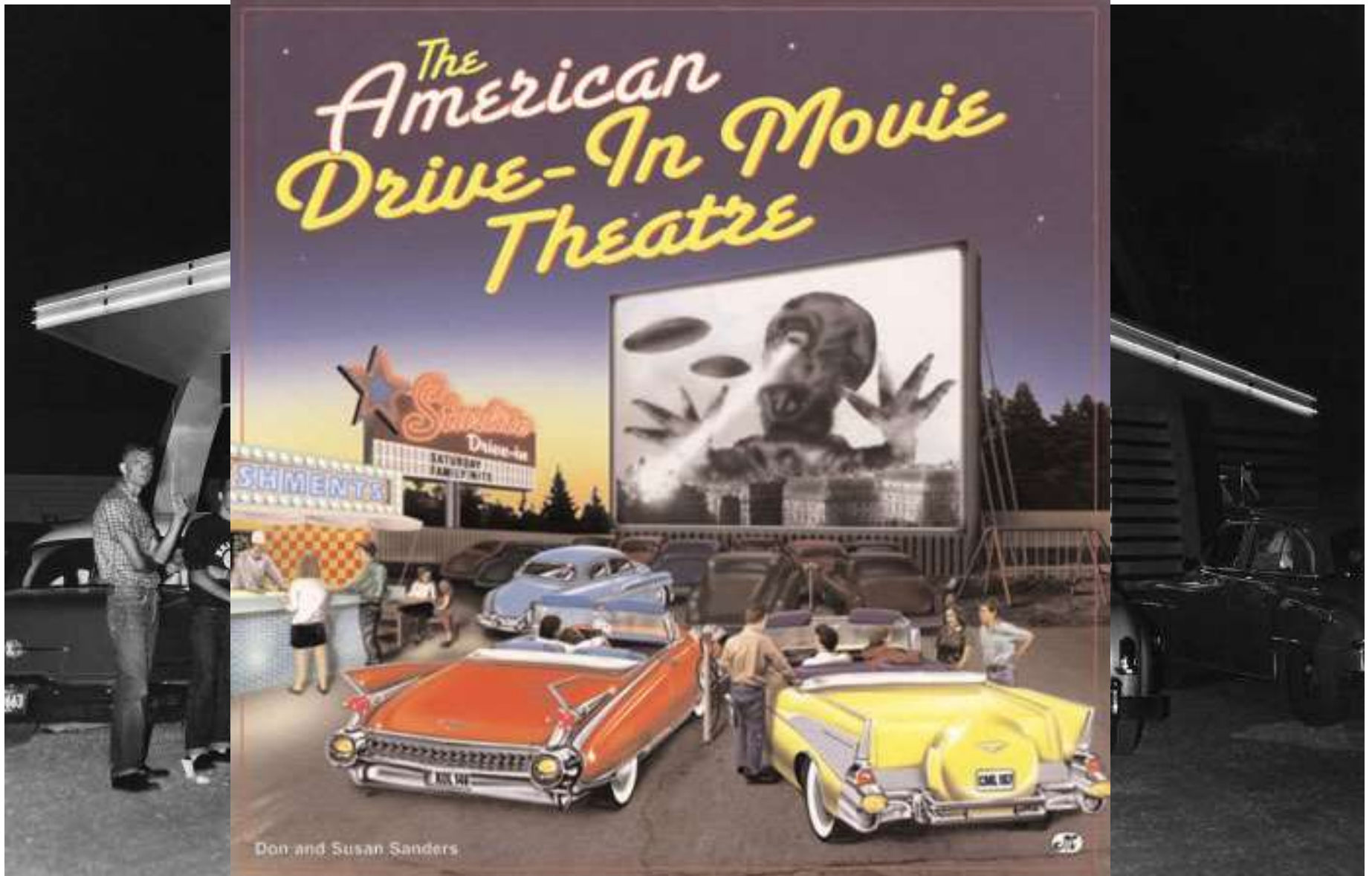


“Automania” transformed America



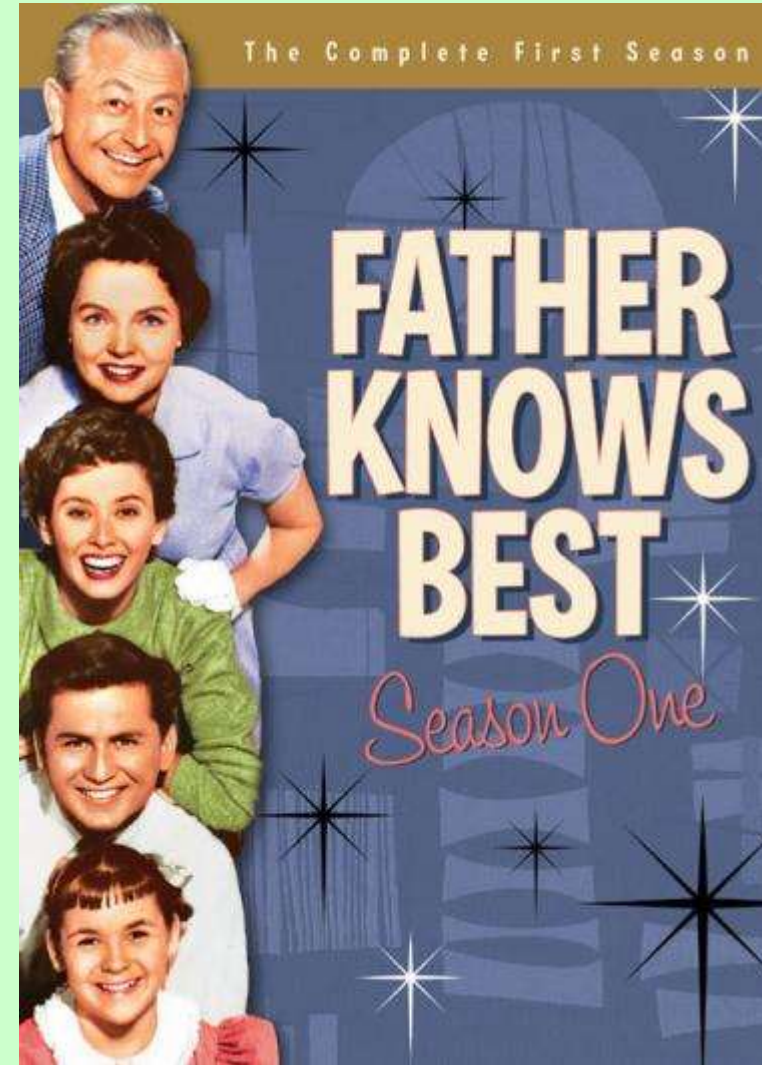
Americans were more mobile, took long-distance vacations, & lived further from their jobs

“Automania” transformed America



Cars led to drive-thru restaurants & drive-in movies

Watch [this video](#) and identify 3 characteristics of life in America in the 1950s



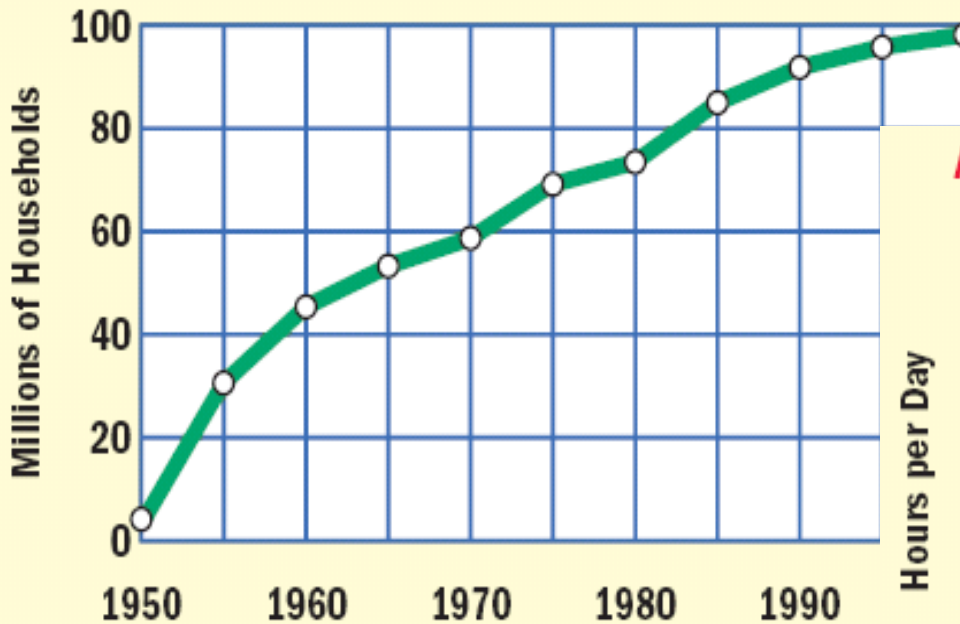
Americans enjoyed new forms of entertainment

Television boomed as Americans watched kids' shows, comedies, news reports, westerns, & variety shows

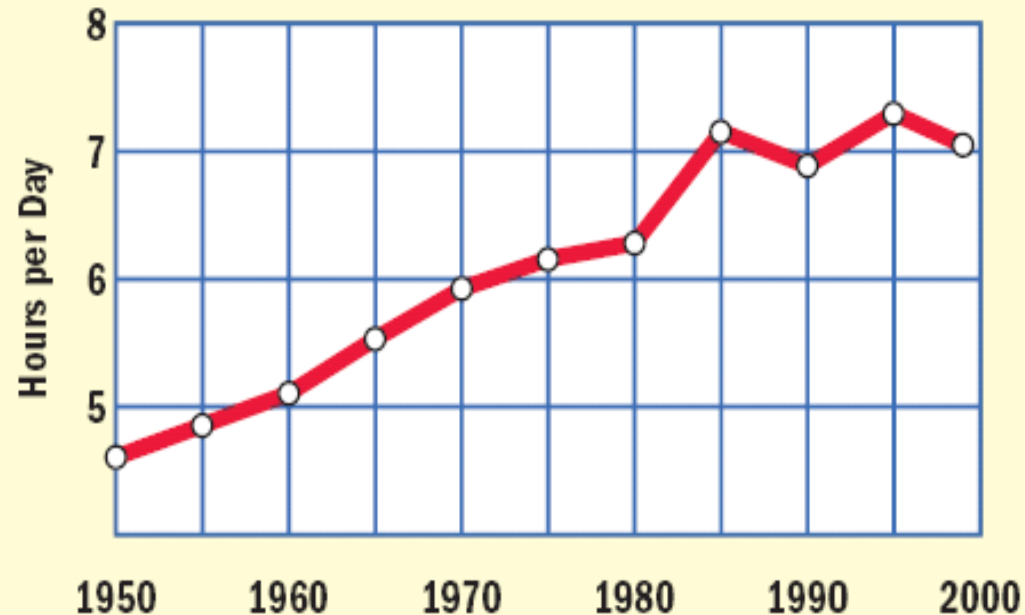
TV ownership jumped from 9% in 1950 to 90% by 1960 (45 million)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REjmlpAHsw>

Households with TV Sets, 1950-2000



Average Daily Hours of TV Viewing, 1950-1999



Businesses took advantage of TV to advertise goods to buyers

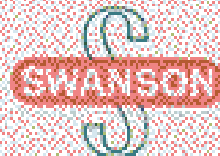
I'm late—
but dinner won't be!

Swanson TV Brand Dinners, the even-
quicker meals that taste home-cooked

Cooking tonight for a hurried tomorrow? There's
always time to get a hot, delicious meal on the table
when you bring home even-quicker Swanson TV Dinners.
Each hearty dinner comes complete in its own heating-
serving tray—is piping ready in 25 minutes or
less, with no work before, no dishes after.

This couldn't wait for an emergency, though, to
enjoy all the extra good eating that TV Brand
Dinners provide: Lean, tender slices of juicy
beef, tender, hot fish, vegetables, rice, potatoes in
butter, flavored green peas and tender, new potatoes in
creamy brown gravy. All with that old-fashioned,
homemade taste that only Swanson care and
knowing gives you. No wonder so many people
find it hard to believe to enjoy genuine Swanson
TV Brand Dinners (beef, chicken, turkey and fish
and lamb). Try them yourself.

QUICK FROZEN
BY SWANSON



TV Dinners
Fast, hot & **homemade** taste!

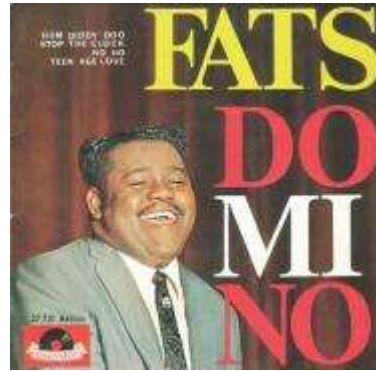
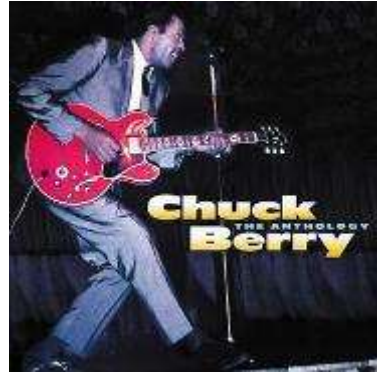
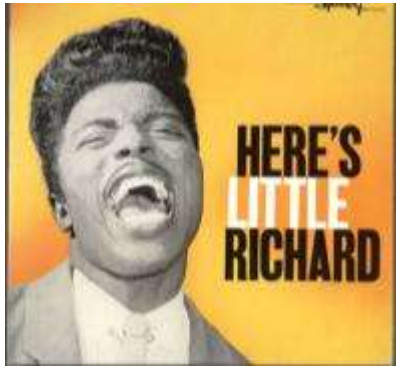


Music changed in the 1950s

“Doo-wop” music dominated the early 1950s...



Music changed in the 1950s



...but, was challenged in popularity by rock n' roll

Rock n' roll was inspired by black artists, but Elvis Presley made it popular among the youth



Rock scared parents who thought
the fast beats were immoral



This rock 'n' roll
music is a SIN!

Teenagers were an important force in the 1950s



Suburban teens had leisure time & money to spend

[What to do on a Date - 1950](#)

Teenagers were an important force in the 1950s

LEARN THE BOP BY RECORD

BY RECORD

\$1.99

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER

RECORD—BOOKLET WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND DIAGRAMS

This unique method of dance instruction by record and book will not be available in record or music stores until a later date, and then at a much higher price. So get yours now! Cut out coupon below and mail today. Be sure to get your record and book before this special introductory offer expires.

STEREO

PARKWAY

CHUBBY CHECKER

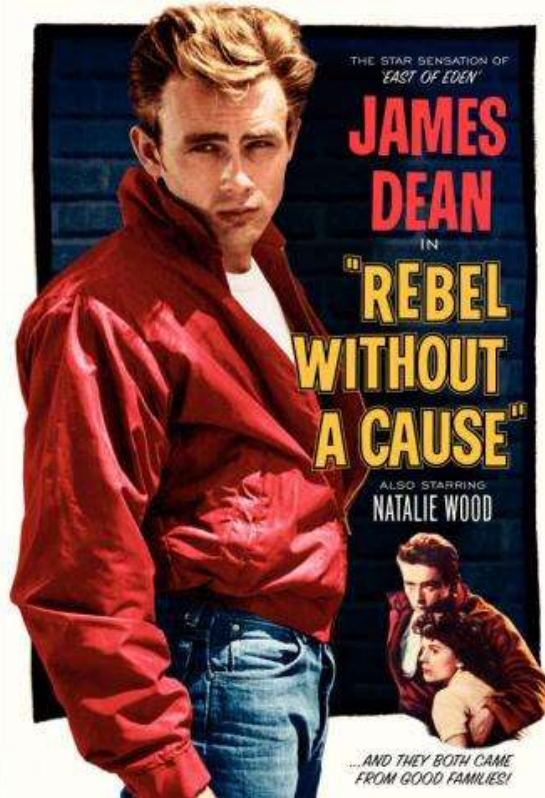
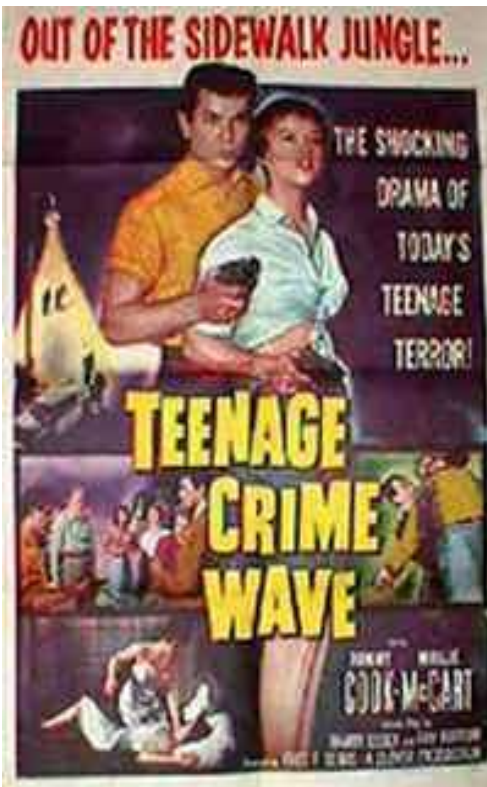
FOR 'TEEN TWISTERS ONLY*

***Adults Twist at Your own Risk!**

- THE LOSE YOUR INHIBITIONS TWIST
- THE FLY • YOUR LIPS AND MINE
- PEPPERMINT TWIST • SHOUT
- DEAR LADY TWIST • TWIST-A-LONG
- RUNAROUND SUE • AND OTHERS

Businesses targeted teenagers, selling billions of dollars of “cool” consumer goods

Hollywood movies targeted teens & made films about “juvenile delinquency”



TV, movies, & advertising in the 1950s promoted conformity & stereotypes

The “ideal man” was provider & boss of the house



TV, movies, & advertising in the 1950s promoted conformity & stereotypes

The “ideal woman” was a housewife & mother





SO THE HARDER A WIFE WORKS, THE CUTER SHE LOOKS!

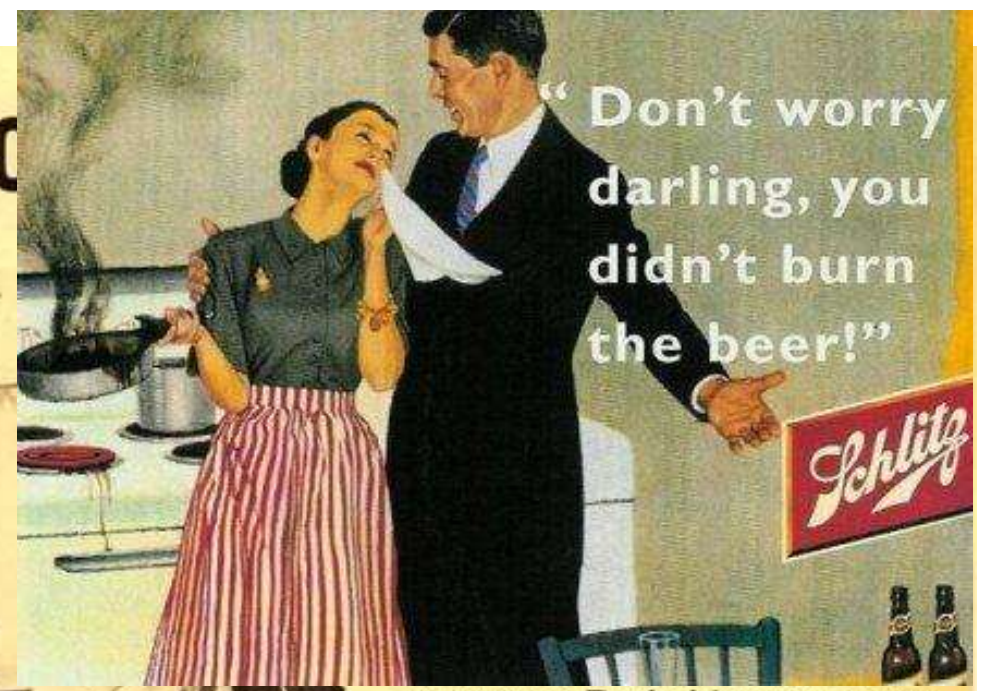


1. GOSH, HONEY, YOU SEEM TO THRIVE ON COOKING, CLEANING AND DUSTING- AND I'M ALL TUCKERED OUT BY CLOSING TIME. WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

VITAMINS, DARLING! I ALWAYS GET MY VITAMINS



Vitamins for pep! PEP for vitamins!*



“Don't worry darling, you didn't burn the beer!”



If your husband ever finds out you're not "store-testing" for fresher coffee...



...if he discovers you're still taking chances on getting flat, stale coffee ... we'll be onto you! For today there's a sure and certain way to test for freshness before you buy



The media promoted women as mothers & homemakers, but almost 40% of mothers had jobs



Well-Defined Gender Roles



The **ideal modern woman** married, cooked and cared for her family, and kept herself busy by joining the local PTA and leading a troop of Campfire Girls. She entertained guests in her family's suburban house and worked out on the trampoline to keep her size 12 figure.

-- Life magazine, 1956



Marilyn
Monroe

The **ideal 1950s man** was the provider, protector, and the boss of the house. -- Life magazine, 1955





HOW TO BE A GOOD WIFE

Home Economics High School Text Book, 1954



- **Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal, on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.**
- **Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so that you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your makeup, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.**
- **Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the home just before your husband arrives, gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift, too.**
- **Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair, and if necessary change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.**



- **Minimize all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer, dishwasher, or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet. Be happy to see him. Greet him with a warm smile and be glad he is home.**
- **Some don'ts: Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he is late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day. Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or suggest he lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soft, soothing and pleasant voice. Allow him to relax and unwind.**
- **Listen to him. You may have a dozen things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.**
- **Make the evening his. Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or to other places of entertainment. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure, his need to be home and relax.**
- **The Goal: Try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit**

1950s Theme Was Conformity

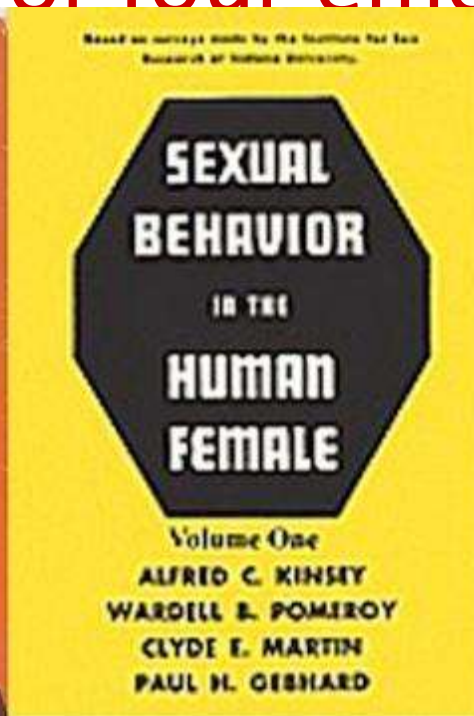
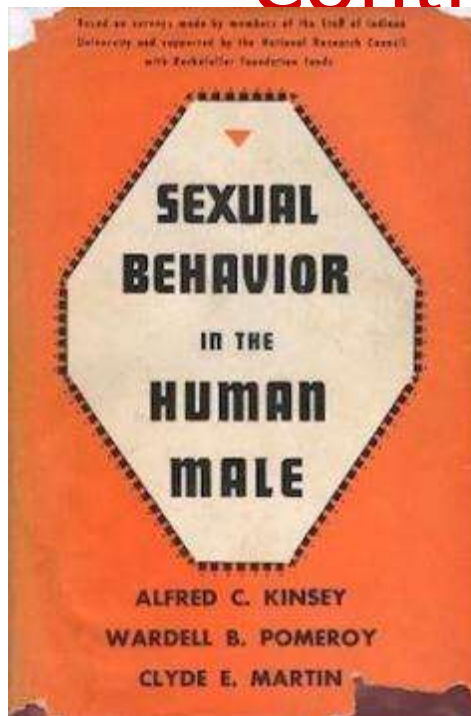
- Obey Authority.
- Control Your Emotions.
- Don't Make Waves. Fit in with the Group.
- Don't Even Think About Sex!!!



But, 1950s stereotypes were not accurate of most Americans

Changing Sexual Behavior:

Sexologist Alfred Kinsey revealed that premarital sex & extramarital affairs were common in the 1950s

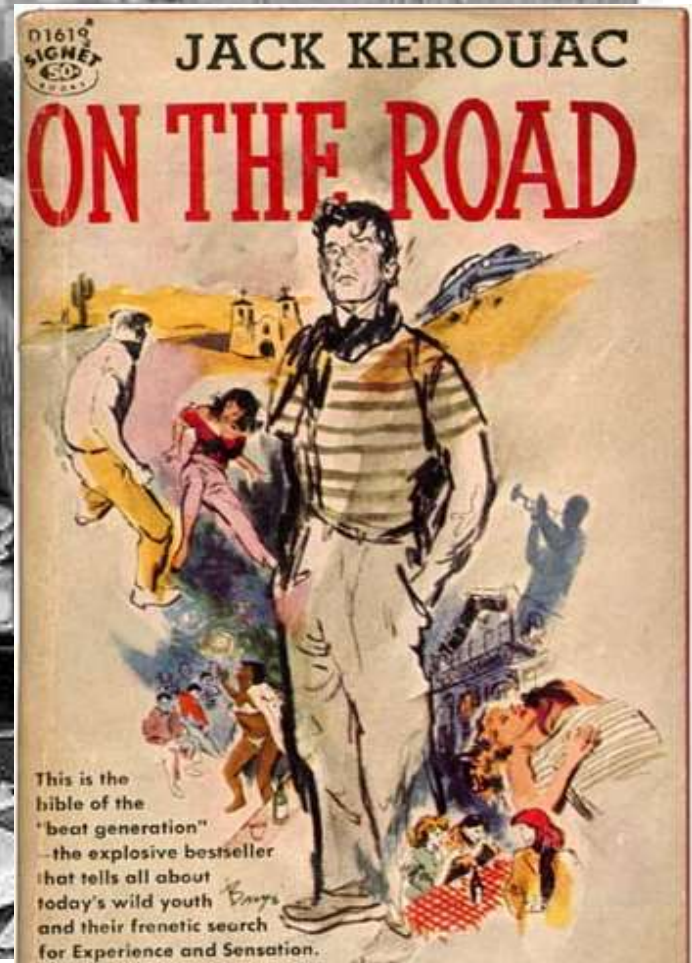
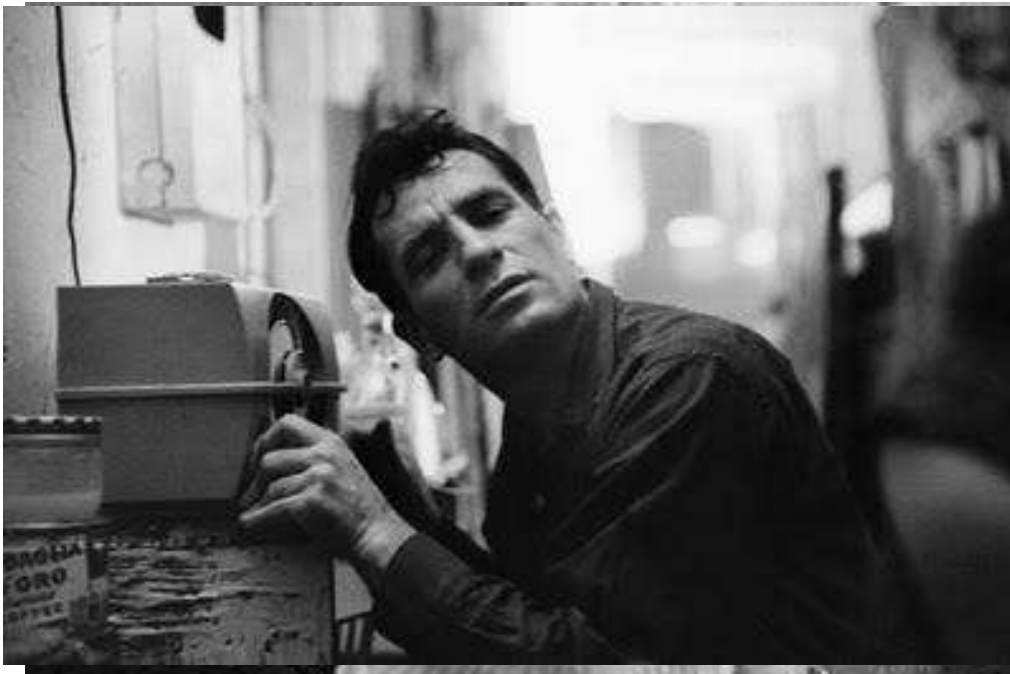


Playboy's first publication, 1953

The “beat movement” rejected conformity

“Beatniks” were artists & writers who lived non-conformist lives

They rejected the suburbs, consumerism, & “regular jobs”



Led by Jack Kerouac, the beats inspired the “hippies” of the 1960s
"They were like the man with the dungeon stone and gloom, rising from the underground, the sordid hipsters of America, a new beat generation that I was slowly joining."

African American civil rights leaders began to challenge segregation laws

In 1947, Jackie Robinson integrated professional baseball

In 1954, in *Brown v Board of Education*, the Supreme Court integrated public schools

In 1955, Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as the leader of the civil rights movement



On the surface, the 1950s were about calm and conformity, but there were social tensions beneath the surface. Hollywood produced sci-fi movies as metaphors. Aliens and monster are metaphors for whom????



SUBURBAN GROWTH

- Baby boom causes population growth.
- Demand for goods exceeds supply.
- Highways and affordable homes make suburban living desirable.

POLITICS

- Eisenhower's presidency brings prosperity and political conservatism.
- Equal rights remains a problem.
- The Cold War creates fear and anxiety.

LIFE IN POSTWAR AMERICA 1945-1960

- Rock 'n' roll and jazz pave the way for minority representation.
- The beat movement rejects conformity.
- Recreation and consumerism flourish.
- Television portrays an idealized white America.

POPULAR CULTURE

- Urban areas fall into decay.
- Minorities experience prejudice and discrimination.
- Minorities establish organizations to improve civil rights.

UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Closure Activity

- Create a chart in your notes that compares America in the 1950s to today

1950s	Today
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••

- What are the biggest similarities between the 1950s & today?
- What are the biggest differences?

Closure Activity

- 1950s sensory figures:
 - Create a sketch a person in the 1950s
 - In the space surrounding your figure, describe the things that your character sees, hears, smells, feels, & thinks
 - Your sensory figures should include information about as many aspects of life in America during the 1950s (include both domestic & foreign affairs)