THE POSTWAR BOOM

THE AMERICAN DREAM IN THE 1950S



SECTION 1: POSTWAR AMERICA

- After WWII, returning vets faced a severe housing shortage
- In response to the crisis, developers used assembly-line methods to mass-produce houses
- Developer William Levitt bragged that his company could build a home in 16 minutes for \$7,000
- Suburbs were born

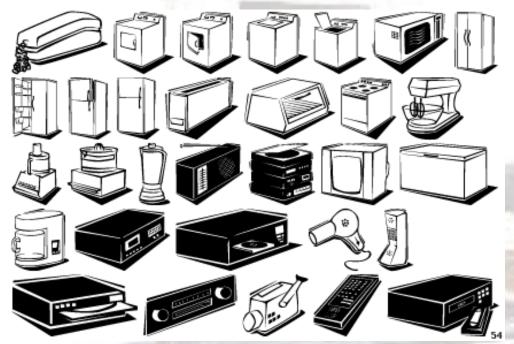


With the help of the GI Bill, many veterans moved into suburbs

REDEFINING THE FAMILY



- A return to traditional roles after the war was the norm
- Men were expected to work, while women were expected to stay home and care for the children
- Conflict emerged as many women wanted to stay in the workforce
- Divorce rates surged

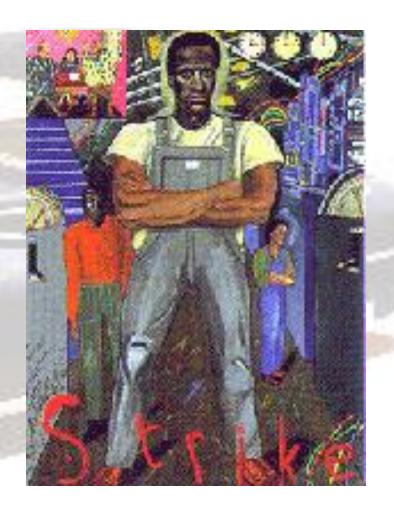


REMARKABLE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

- Experts who predicted a postwar depression were proved wrong as they failed to consider the \$135 billion in savings Americans had accumulated from defense work, service pay, and investments in war bonds
- Americans were ready to buy consumer goods

DESPITE GROWTH, ISSUES PERSIST

- One persistent postwar issue involved labor strikes
- In 1946 alone, 4.5 million discontented workers, including Steelworkers, coal miners and railroad workers went on strike



TRUMAN TOUGH ON STRIKERS



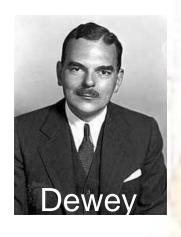
- Truman refused to let strikes cripple the nation
- He threatened to draft the striking workers and then order them as soldiers to return to work
- The strategy worked as strikers returned to their jobs

SOCIAL UNREST PERSISTS





- African Americans felt they deserved equal rights, especially after hundreds of thousands served in WWII
- Truman took action in 1948 by desegregating the armed forces
- Additionally, Truman ordered an end to discrimination in the hiring of governmental employees



THE 1948 ELECTION

- The Democrats nominated President Truman in 1948
- The Republicans nominated New York Governor Thomas Dewey
- Polls showed Dewey held a comfortable lead going into election day



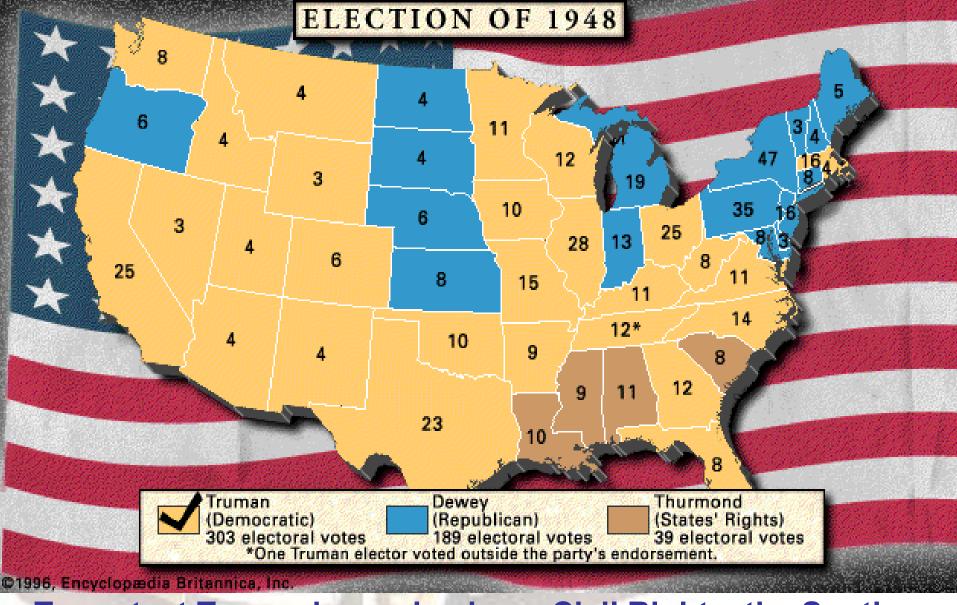
TRUMAN WINS IN A STUNNING UPSET



Truman holds a now infamous Chicago
Tribune announcing (incorrectly)
Dewey's victory



- Truman's "Give 'em hell, Harry" campaign worked
- Truman won a very close race against Dewey



To protest Truman's emphasis on Civil Rights, the South opted to run a third candidate, South Carolina Governor Strum Thurmond

REPUBLICANS PLAN FOR 1952 ELECTION

- By 1951 Truman's approval rating sank to an all-time low of just 23%
- Why? Korean War, rising tide of McCarthyism, and a general impression of ineffectiveness



The Republican (right) were chomping at the bit in the '52 election

STEVENSON VS. IKE 1952 ELECTION



The Democrats nominated intellectual Illinois **Governor Adlai** Stevenson while the Republicans nominated war hero Dwight David **Eisenhower**



"I LIKE IKE"

- Eisenhower used the slogan, "I Like Ike" for his presidential campaign
- Republicans used
 Ike's strong military
 background to
 emphasize his ability
 to combat
 Communism
 worldwide



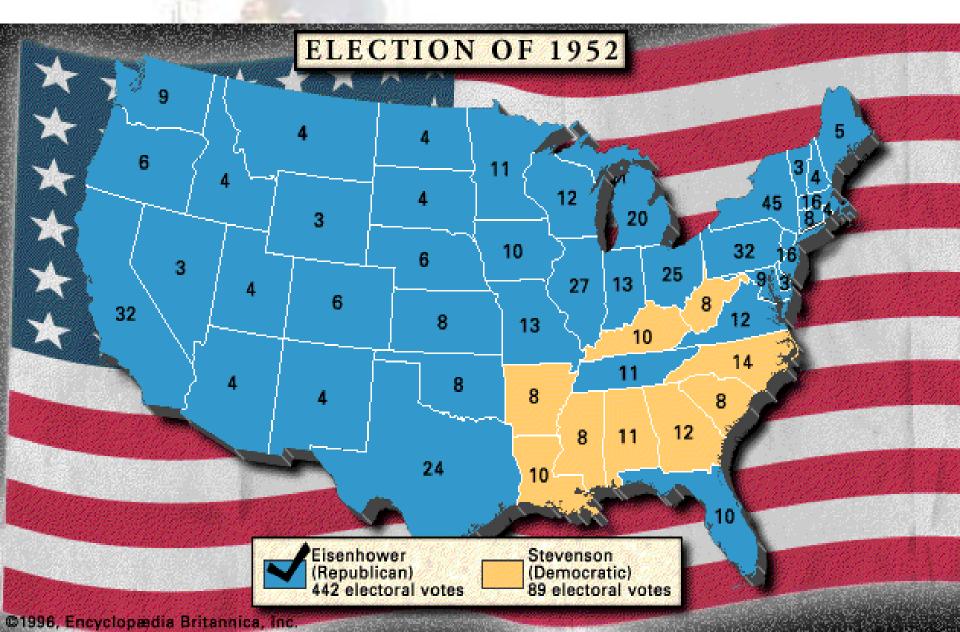
IKE'S VP SLIP-UP



Nixon and his dog Checkers

- One potential disaster for Ike was his running mate's alleged "slush fund"
- Richard Nixon
 responded by going on
 T.V. and delivering an
 emotional speech
 denying charges but
 admitting to accepting
 one gift for his children
 – a dog named Checkers
- The "Checkers speech" saved the ticket

IKE WINS 1952 ELECTION



SECTION 2: THE AMERICAN DREAM IN THE FIFTIES

- After WWII ended, Americans turned their attention to their families and jobs
- New businesses and technology created opportunities for many
- By the end of the 1950s, Americans were enjoying the highest standard of living in the world



Ozzie and Harriet reflected the perfect American family

THE ORGANIZATION AND THE ORGANIZATION MAN

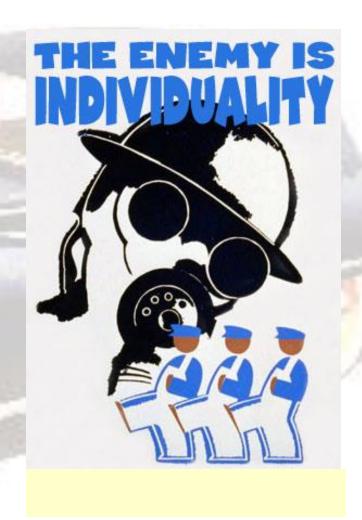


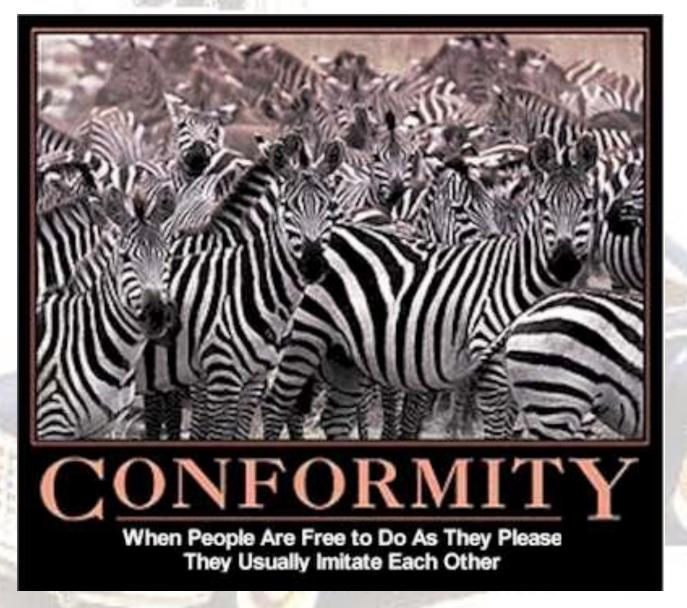
White Collar jobs expanded greatly in the 1950s

- During the 1950s, businesses expanded rapidly
- More and more people held "white-collar" jobs clerical, management, or professional jobs
- The fields of sales, advertising, insurance and communications exploded

SOCIAL CONFORMITY

- American workers found themselves becoming standardized
- Called the "Organization Man," the modern worker struggled with a loss of individualism
- Businesses did not want creative thinkers, rebels or anyone that would "rock the boat"





Despite their success, some workers questioned whether pursuing the American dream exacted too high a price, as conformity replaced individuality

CONGLOMERATES EMERGE

- Conglomerates, major corporations that include a number of smaller companies in unrelated fields, emerged in the 1950s
- One conglomerate, International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), bought rental car companies and hotel chains



FRANCHISES EMERGE

- Another strategy for business expansion was franchising
- A franchise is a company that offers similar services in many locations
- Fast food restaurants developed the first franchises in America



McDonald's is one of the leading franchises in the world

THE SUBURBAN LIFESTYLE



The American Dream complete with a white picket fence

- Most Americans worked in cities, but fewer and fewer of them lived there
- New highways and the affordability of cars and gasoline made commuting possible
- Of the 13 million homes built in the 1950s, 85% were built in suburbs
 - For many, the suburbs were the American Dream

THE BABY BOOM

- During the late 1940s and through the early 1960s the birthrate in the U.S. soared
- At its height in 1957, a baby was born in America every 7 seconds (over 4.3 million babies in '57 alone)
- Baby boomers represent the largest generation in the nation's history



What are the official years of the Baby Boom Generation?

1946 - 1964 saw a marked increase in the number of births in North America.



How did the birthrate rise and fall during the baby boom years in the US?

1940	2,559,000 births per year
1946	3,311,000 births per year
1955	4,097,000 births per year
1957	4,300,000 births per year
1964	4,027,000 births per year
1974	3,160,000 births per year

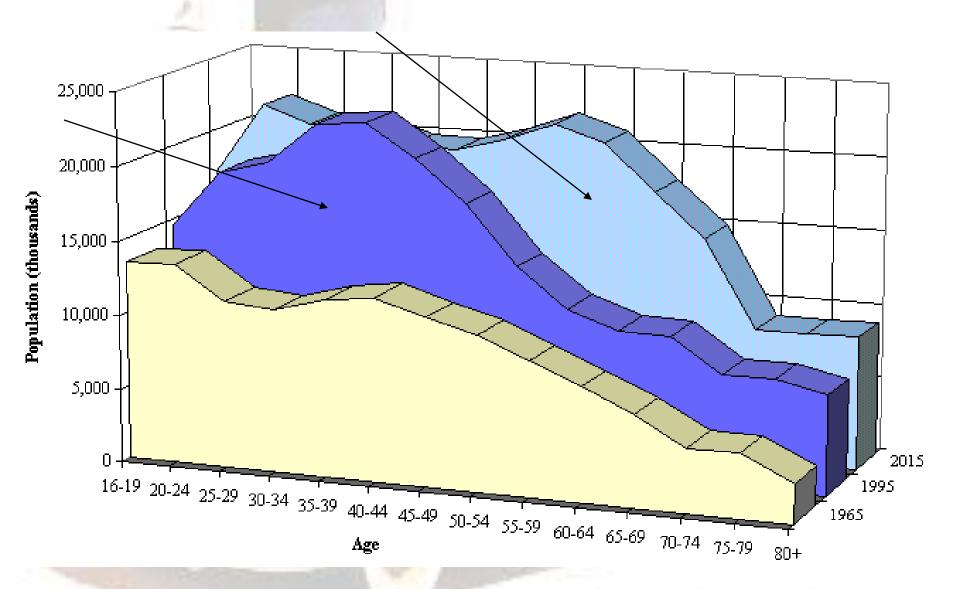
WHY SO MANY BABIES?



Why did the baby boom occur when it did?

- Husbands returning from war
- Decreasing marriage age
- Desirability of large families
- Confidence in economy
- Advances in medicine

WHAT IT WILL MEAN TO YOU



Your generation will be supporting an increasingly aging American population

ADVANCES IN MEDICINE AND CHILDCARE

 Advances in the treatment of childhood diseases included drugs to combat typhoid fever and polio (Jonas Salk)

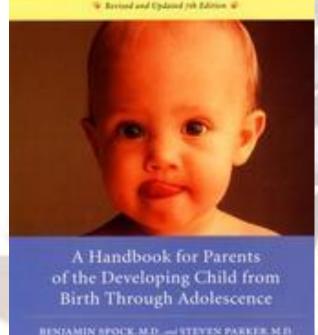


Dr. Salk was instrumental in the eradication of polio

DR. SPOCK ADVISES PARENTS







Dr. Spock's book sold 10 million copies in the 1950s

- Many parents raised their children according to the guidelines of pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock
- He thought children should be allowed to express themselves and parents should never physically punish their kids

IMPACT OF BABY BOOM

- As a result of the baby boom 10 million students entered elementary schools in the 1950s
- California built a new school every 7 days in the late '50s
- Toy sales reached an all-time high in 1958 when \$1.25 billion in toys were sold



Symbols of the Baby Boom in Suburbia	1950	1960
Hot Dog Production (millions of lbs)	750	1050
Potato Chip Production (millions of lbs)	320	532
Sales of lawn and porch furniture (millions of dollars)	53.6	145.2
Sales of power mowers (millions of dollars)	1.0	3.8
Sales of floor polishers (millions of dollars)	0.24	1.0
Sales of Encyclopaedia (millions of dollars)	72	300
Number of Children age 5-14	24.3	35.5
Number of baseball Little Leagues	776	5,700



Fads of the Baby Boomers

Hula Hoops

Frozen Foods

Poodle Skirts and Saddle Shoes

Panty Raids

Barbie and GI Joe Dolls

Bikinis

Frisbees

Yo-yos

Ouija Boards

Dune Buggies





What celebrity deaths have most affected the Baby Boomers?

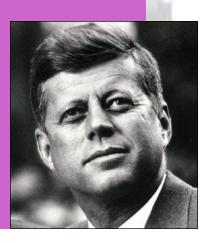
John F. Kennedy



Marilyn Monroe

Martin Luther King

John Lennon

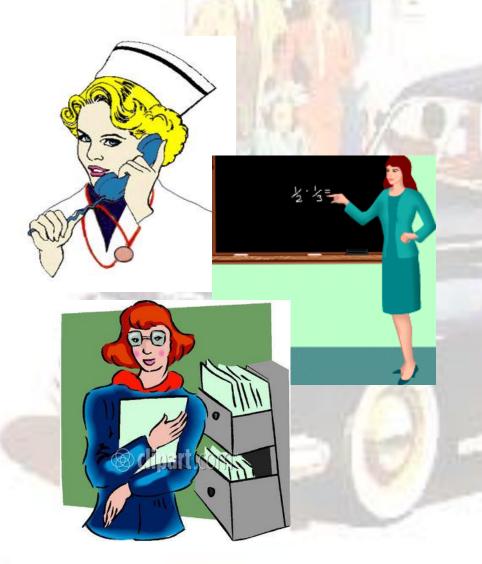


WOMEN'S ROLES IN THE 1950S

During the 1950s, the role of homemaker and mother was glorified in popular magazines, movies and television



WOMEN AT WORK



- Those women who did work were finding job opportunities limited to fields such as nursing, teaching and office support
- Women earned far less than man for comparable jobs

LEISURE IN THE 1950s

- Americans
 experienced shorter
 work weeks and
 more vacation time
 than ever before
- Leisure time activities became a multi-billion dollar industry
- Labor-saving devices added more spare time

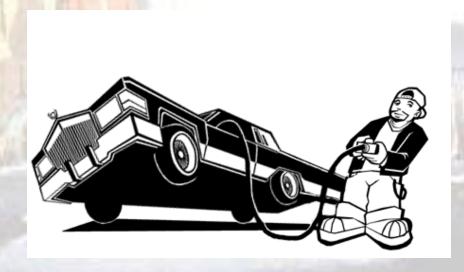


POPULAR LEISURE ACTIVITES



- In 1953 alone Americans spent \$30 billion on leisure
- Popular activities included fishing, bowling, hunting and golf
- Americans attended, or watched on T.V., football, baseball and basketball games

THE AUTOMOBILE CULTURE



- After the rationing of WWII, inexpensive and plentiful fuel and easy credit led many to buy cars
- By 1960, over 60 million Americans owned autos

INTERSTATE HIGHWAY ACT 1956

In 1956 Ike authorized nationwide highway network -41,000 miles of road linking **America**





THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

 "Automania" spurred the construction of roads linking major cities while connecting schools, shopping centers and workplaces to residential suburbs



IMPACT OF THE HIGHWAY



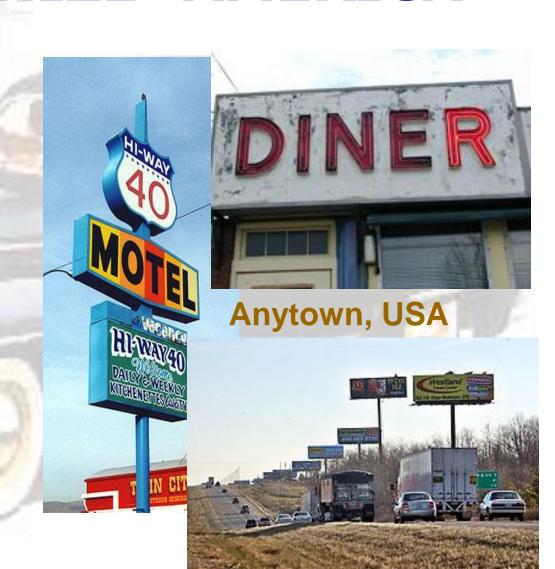
Trucking is the #1 means of moving cargo in the United States today

The Interstate
Highway system
resulted in:

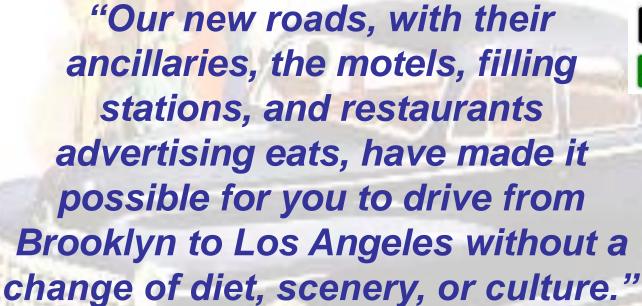
- More trucking
- Less railroad
- More suburbs, further away

HIGHWAYS "HOMOGENIZE" AMERICA

- Another effect of the highway system was that the scenery of America began to look the same
- Restaurants, motels, highway billboards, gas stations, etc. all began to look similar
- The nation had become "homogenized"







John Keats, <u>The Insolent Chariots</u> 1958















DOWNSIDE TO MOBILITY

- While the car industry boom stimulated production, jobs, shopping centers, and the restaurant industry, it also had negative effects
- Noise
- Pollution
- Accidents
- Traffic Jams
- Stress
- Decline of public transportation



RISE OF CONSUMERISM

- By the mid-1950s, nearly 60% of Americans were members of the middle class
- Consumerism (buying material goods) came to be equated with success and status



NEW PRODUCTS



- One new product after another appeared in the marketplace
- Appliances, electronics, and other household goods were especially popular
- The first credit card (Diner's Club) appeared in 1950 and American Express was introduced in 1958
- Personal debt increased nearly 3x in the 1950s

THE ADVERTISING AGE

- The advertising industry capitalized on runaway consumerism by encouraging more spending
- Ads were everywhere
- Ad agencies increased their spending 50% during the 1950s



Advertising is everywhere today in America

SECTION 3: POPULAR CULTURE



- A new era of mass media led by television emerged in the 1950s
- In 1948, only 9% of homes had T.V
- In 1950, 55% of homes had T.V.
- By 1960, 90% of American homes had T.V.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION

- The 1950s was known as the "Golden Age of Television"
- Comedies were the main attraction as Milton Berle, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz were very popular



Uncle Miltie
The Milton Berle Show



Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball starred in I Love Lucy

TELEVISION EXPERIMENTS WITH VARIOUS FORMATS

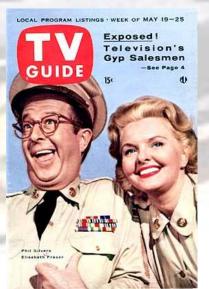


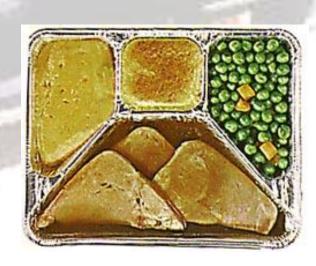
- Television innovations like on-the-scenenews reporting, interviews, westerns and sporting events offered the viewer a variety of shows
- Kids' shows like The Howdy Doody Show and The Mickey Mouse Club were extremely popular

TV ADS, TV GUIDES AND TV DINNERS EXPAND

- TV advertising soared from \$170 million in 1950 to nearly \$2 billion in 1960
- TV Guide magazine quickly became the best selling magazine
- Frozen TV dinners were introduced in 1954 these complete ready-to-heat meals on disposable aluminum trays made it easy for people to eat without missing their favorite shows

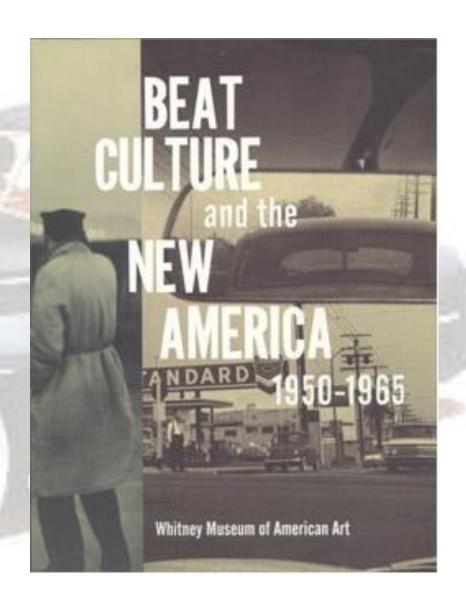






A SUBCULTURE EMERGES

- Although mass media and television were wildly popular in the 1950s, dissenting voices emerged
- The "Beat Movement" in literature and rock n' roll clashed with tidy suburban views of life



BEATNIKS FOLLOW OWN PATH

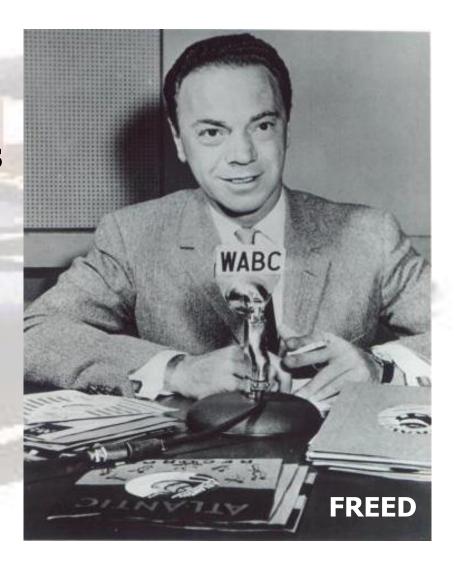


Beatniks often performed poetry or music in coffeehouses or bars

- Followers, called "beatniks", tended to shun work and sought understanding through Zen Buddhism, music, and sometimes drugs

MUSIC IN THE 1950s

- Musicians in the 1950s added electronic instruments to traditional blues music, creating rhythm and blues
- Cleveland DJ Alan
 Freed was the first to play this music in 1951— he called it "rock and roll"





ROCK N' ROLL

In the early and mid-fifties, Richard Penniman, Chuck Berry, Bill Haley and the Comets, and especially Elvis Presley brought rock and roll to the forefront

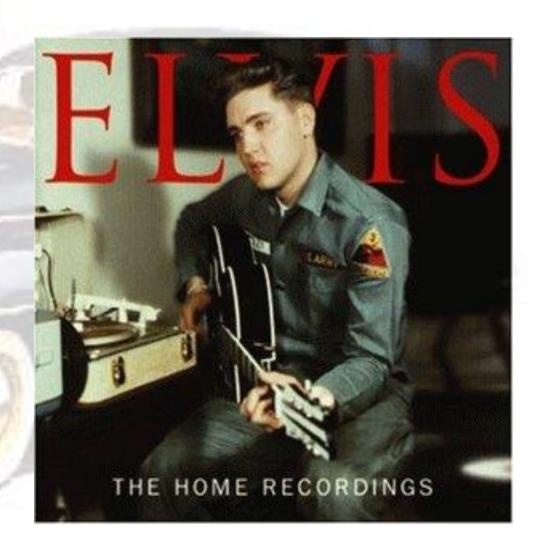
The driving rhythm and lyrics featuring

love, cars, and problems of being young --- captivated teenagers across the country



THE KING OF ROCK AND ROLL

- Presley's rebellious style captured young audiences
- Girls screamed and fainted, and boys tried to imitate him



SECTION 4: THE OTHER AMERICA

- In 1962, nearly one out of every four Americans was living below the poverty level
- Most of these poor were the elderly, single women and their children, and/or minorities



WHITE FLIGHT



- In the 1950s, millions of middle-class white Americans left the cities for the suburbs
- At the same time millions of African American rural poor migrated to the cities
- The so-called "White Flight" drained cities of valuable resources, money and taxes