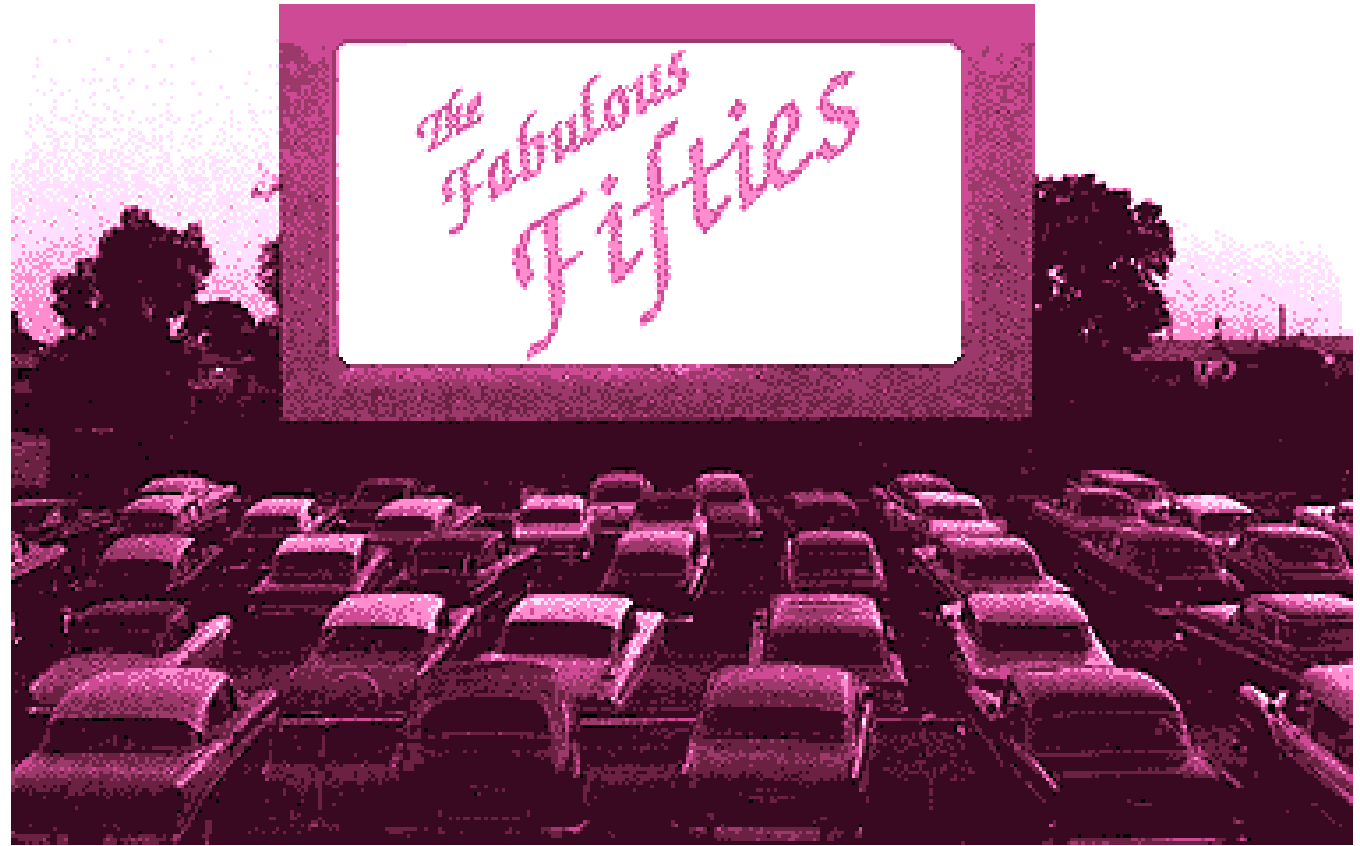




THE 1950's



America-Post WWII

- President Truman started the process of **demobilization**, or sending home members of the army. By July, 1946, only **3 million** of the original 12 million soldiers remained in the army.
- GI Bill of Rights-granted **veterans** a variety of **benefits**.
 - Provides a year of **unemployment payments** for those who are unable to find work.
 - Financial **aid** for those who went to **college**.
 - Each veteran was eligible for \$500/year for tuition. It also provided \$50/month for living expenses and \$75/month if married.
 - 8 million veterans took advantage of this portion of the GI Bill.
 - Gov't. loans for building homes or starting businesses.
 - Construction business boomed in suburbs.

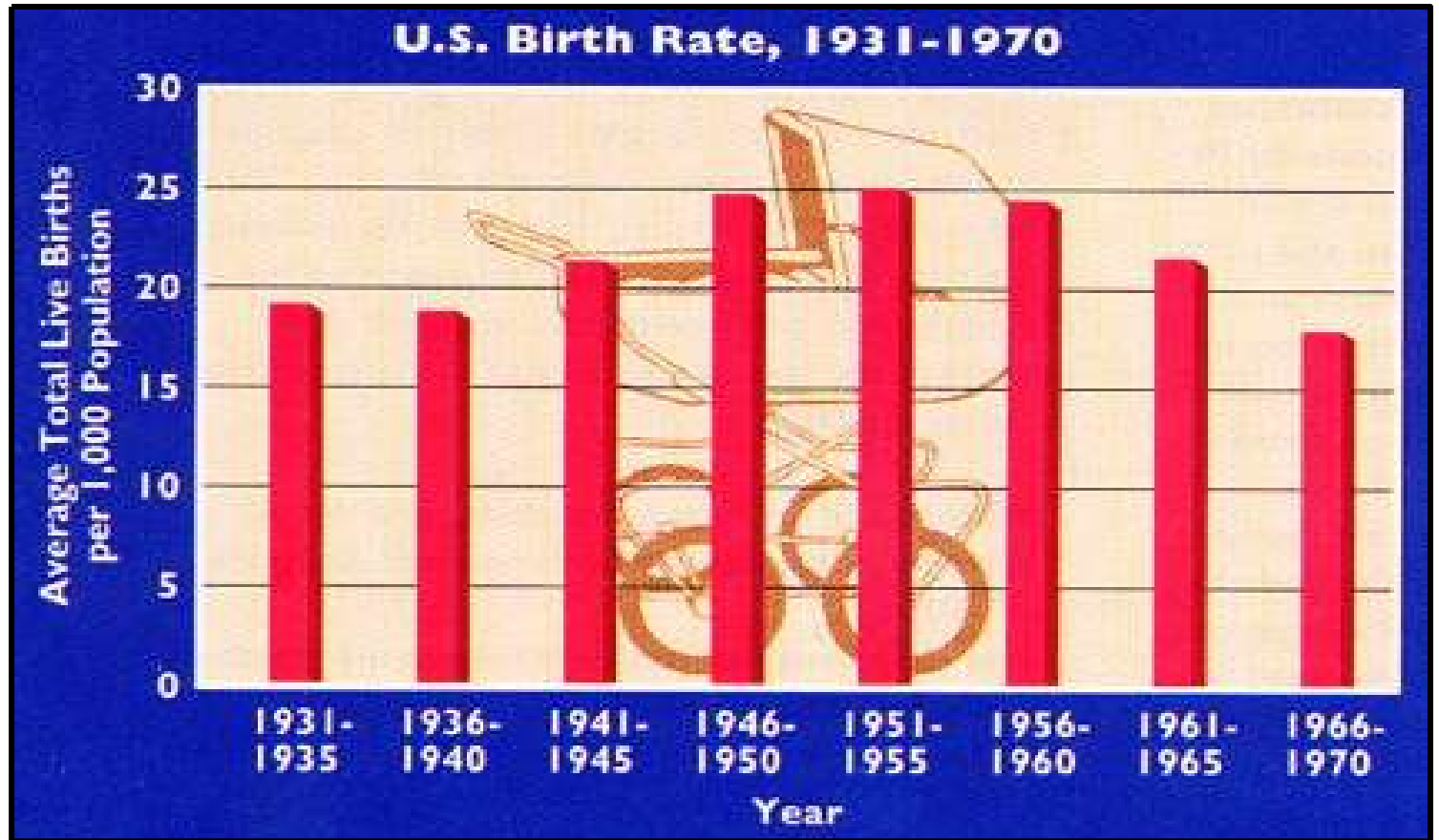


Baby Boom

- Soldiers returning quickly made up for lost time by marrying and having children.
 - A lot of Americans had put off having children because of the depression and war.
- In 1957, 1 American baby was born every 7 seconds.
 - Total= 4.3 million in 1 year.
- Between 1940-1955, the U.S. population grew 27% from 130 million to 165 million.



Baby Boom



Suburban Living

- Between 1940-1960, more than **60** million moved to the **suburbs**.
 - This caused many older, **industrial** cities to decrease in population.
- **Levittown-** built **similar** houses in the same neighborhood. This method allowed workers to build houses in **weeks** rather than in months.
 - It was affordable for those just starting families.
 - On the **installment** plan, buyers could pay \$58/month toward their home.
 - Suburbs were **linked** together by gov't. funded **highways**.
 - Homeowners benefited from the FHA (Federal **Housing** Administration) who offered **low-interest** loans.



Suburban Living

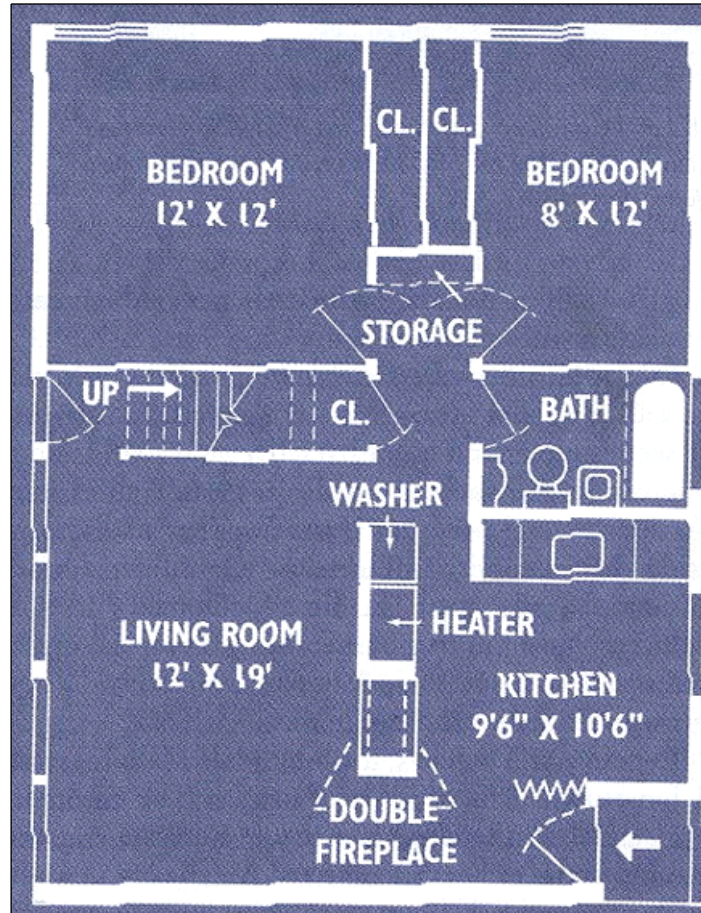
Levittown “The American Dream”

1949 → **William Levitt** produced 150 houses per week.



\$7,990 or nearly \$60/month with no down payment.

Suburban Living: The New "American Dream"



By 1960 → 1/3 of the U. S. population in the suburbs

Suburban Living



SHIFTS IN POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, 1940-1970

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
Central Cities	31.6%	32.3%	32.6%	32.0%
Suburbs	19.5%	23.8%	30.7%	41.6%
Rural Areas/ Small Towns	48.9%	43.9%	36.7%	26.4%

U. S. Bureau of the Census.





Suburban Living: The Typical TV Suburban Families



*The Donna
Reed Show*
1958-1966



*Leave It
to Beaver*
1957-1963



Father Knows Best
1954-1958



The Ozzie & Harriet Show
1952-1966



Consumerism



"IRON CURTAIN LOOK IS HERE"

IRON CURTAIN LOOK IS HERE

U. S. ENJOY'S WEEE FINEE WUSSEW MOLES. HEE PRICEE, WEEE SHAKLEDREED, HEE FORTY FIVE...

TUPPERWARE
THE PROMISE
OF PLASTIC
IN 1950s
AMERICA

Alison J. Clarke



Model 12C109
Big 12½" tube

BLACK-DAYLIGHT TELEVISION

Finest picture plus greatest eye comfort. Tests show 140% greater range of picture tones than ordinary TV! Smartly styled consoles and table models from \$179.95 in the East. Tax, installation extra.

General Electric Company, Syracuse, N. Y.

GENERAL ELECTRIC

A Changing Workplace

Automation:

1947-1957 → factory workers decreased by 4.3%, eliminating 1.5 million blue-collar jobs.

By 1956 → more white-collar than blue-collar jobs in the U. S.

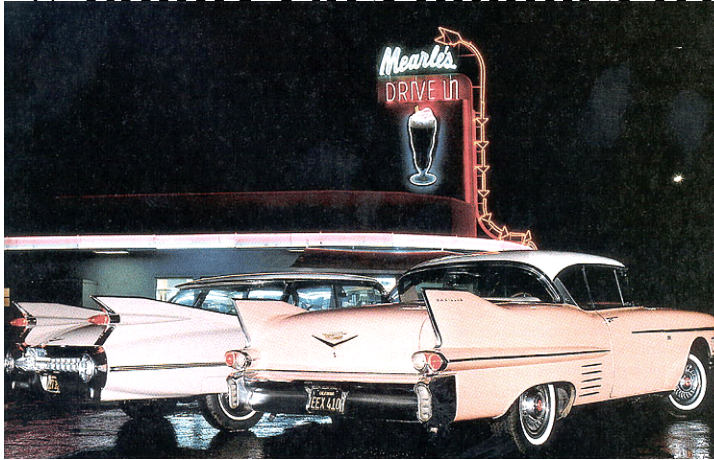
Computers → First IBM mainframe computer(1951).



The Culture of the Car

Car registrations: 1945 → 25,000,000
1960 → 60,000,000

2-family cars doubles from 1951-1958



1958 Pink Cadillac



1959 Chevy Corvette

1956 → Interstate Highway Act →
largest public works project in American history!

- Cost \$32 billion.
- 41,000 miles of new highways built.



The Culture of the Car



First McDonald's (1955)



Drive-In Movies



Howard Johnson's

The Culture of the Car

The U. S. population was on the move in the 1950's.

NE & Mid-W → S & SW (“Sunbelt” states)

1955 → Disneyland opened in Southern California.
(40% of the guests came from outside
California, most by car.)



California Master Plan

- States wanted to make education more accessible.
- The Plan called for three tiers of higher education:
 - Research Universities
 - State Colleges
 - Community Colleges
- 1954- Brown vs. Board of Education
 - Segregated schools were unconstitutional.



Television

1946 → 7,000 TV sets in the U. S.

1950 → 50,000,000 TV sets in the U. S.





Television – The Western



Davy Crockett
King of the Wild Frontier



Gunsmoke



The Lone Ranger



Television - Family Shows

View of mostly middle-class suburban life.



I Love Lucy



The Honeymooners



Television - Family Shows



Howdy Doody



Mickey Mouse Club



Teen Culture

In the 1950s → the word “**teenager**” entered the American language.

By 1956 → 13 million teens with \$7 billion to spend a year.



1951 → “**rock music**” → “**ROCK ‘N ROLL**”



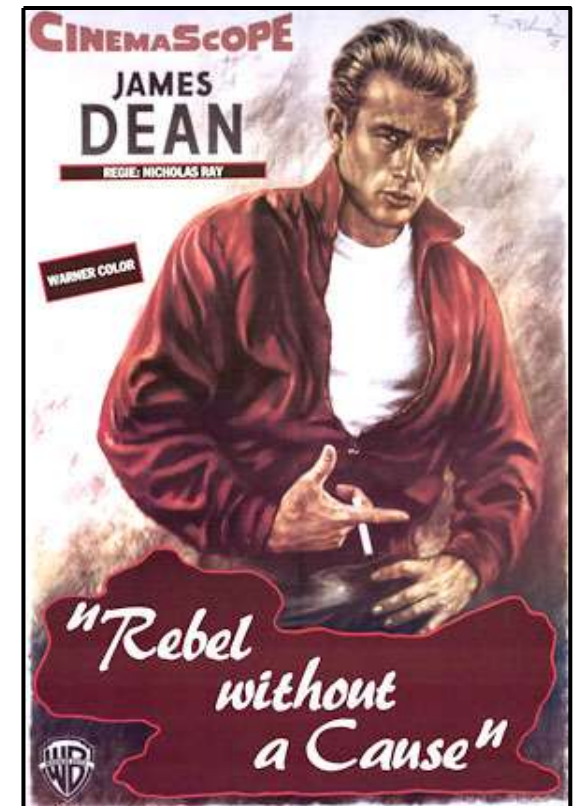
Elvis Presley → “**The King**”

Teen Culture

“Juvenile Delinquency”?



Marlon Brando in
The Wild One (1953)



James Dean in
Rebel Without a Cause (1955)



Teen Culture

Behavioral Rules of the 1950's:

- **Obey Authority.**
- **Control Your Emotions.**
- **Don't Make Waves → Fit in with the Group.**



Religious Revival

Today in the U. S., the Christian faith is back in the center of things. -- *Time* magazine, 1954

Church membership: 1940 → 64,000,000
1960 → 114,000,000

•Revival of religion

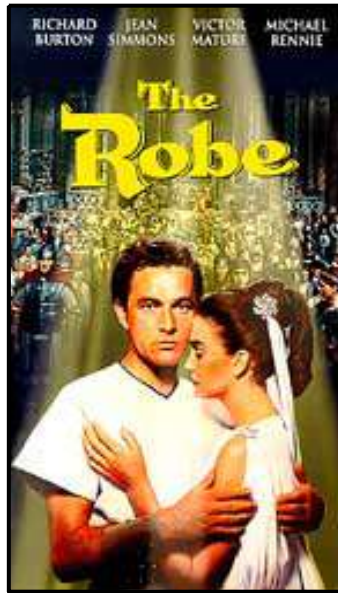
–Regular church attendance went from 50 million in 1940 to 80 million in 1958.

–During the 1950's, Congress added the words, “In God We Trust” to the dollar bill and “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance.

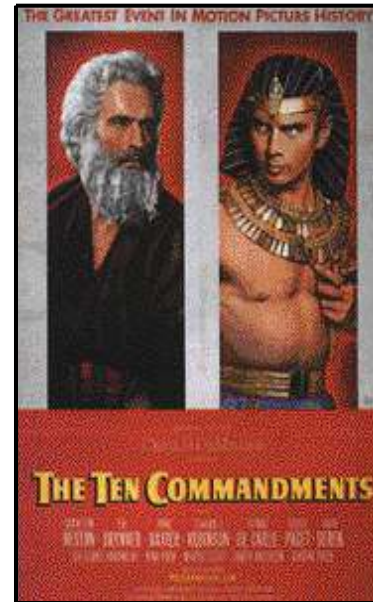


Religious Revival

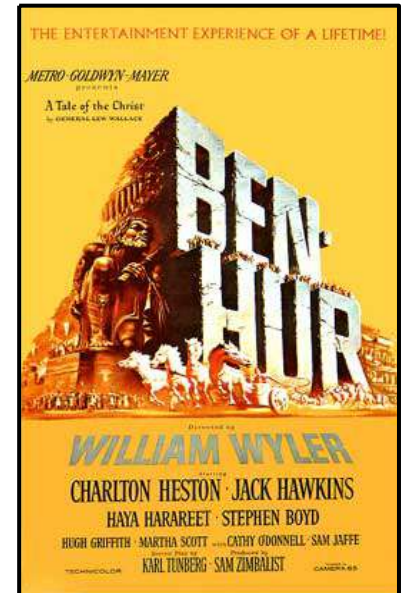
Hollywood: Biblical epics.



The Robe
1953



The Ten Commandments
1956



Ben Hur
1959

It's un-American to be un-religious!

-- The Christian Century, 1954



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



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



- A middle-class, white suburban male is the ideal.



Progress Through Science



1951 -- First IBM Mainframe Computer

1952 -- Hydrogen Bomb Test

1953 -- DNA Structure Discovered

1954 -- Salk Vaccine Tested for Polio

1957 -- First Commercial U. S. Nuclear Power Plant

1958 -- NASA Created

1959 -- Press Conference of the First 7 American Astronauts



Progress Through Science

Atomic Anxieties:

à “Duck-and-Cover Generation”

Atomic Testing:

à 1946-1962 → U. S. exploded 217 nuclear weapons over the Pacific and in Nevada.

