



American Society thru the 1950's





A. Returnin g to Peace Time



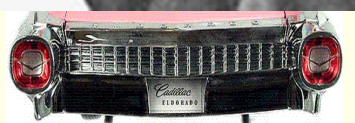


SHALL I GO BACK
TO SCHOOL?



GI Bill

- Servicemen's Readjustment Act (1944)
- Provided for
 - Education
 - Unemployment Compensation
 - Low Cost Home Loans
 - Low Cost Business Loans
- Spurred the Growth of the Economy of the 1950's



Move to the Sunbelt

- Move continued after WWII
- Air-conditioning & defense industries spurred movement



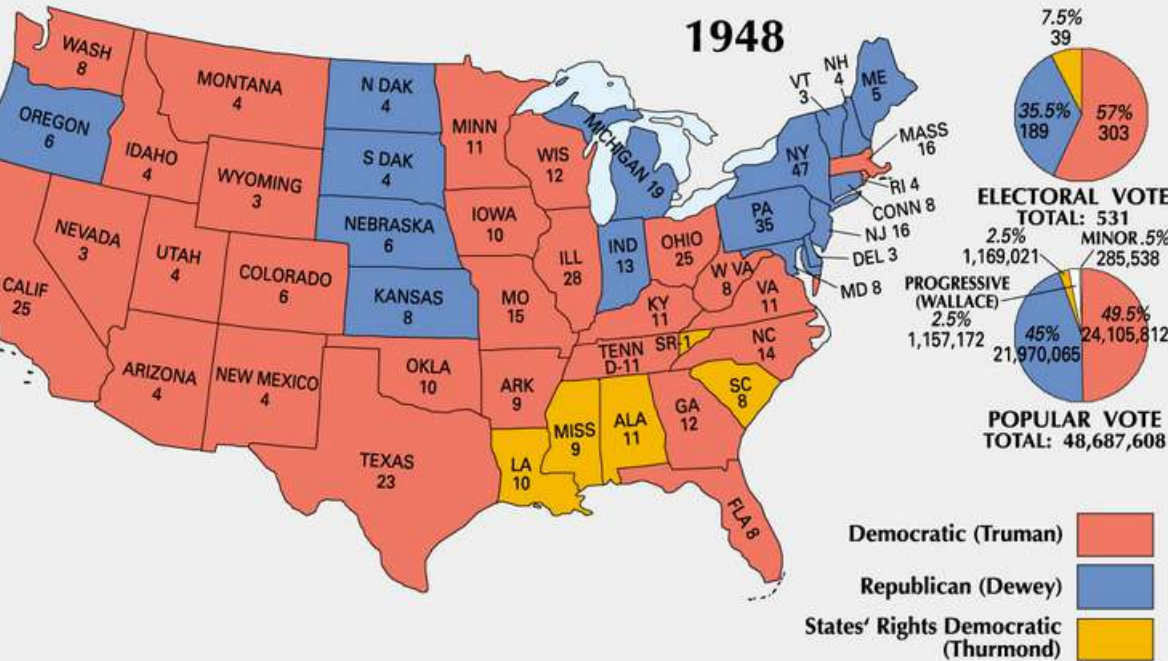
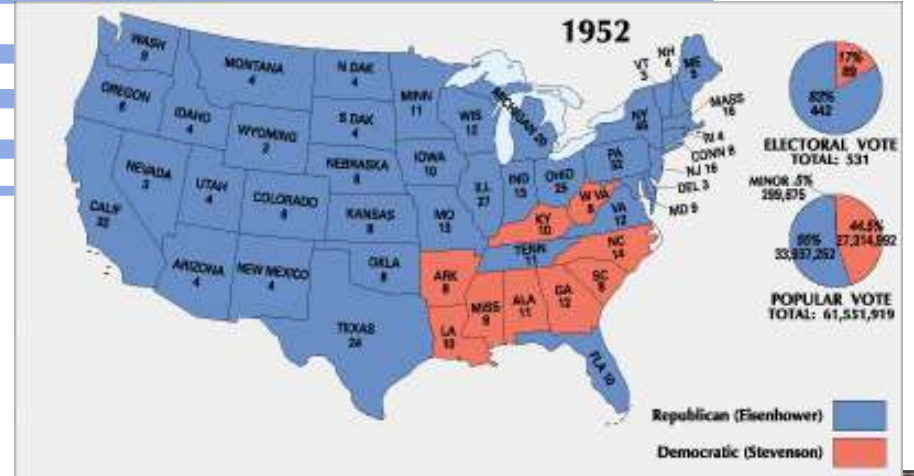


The Affluent Society

- Economic Boom 1950-1970
- National Income doubles each decade



B. Politics of the



Truman's Fair Deal (1949)



- Program of Social Improvement
- Continuation of New Deal with:
 - Minimum Wage
 - Increased rights for African Americans
 - National Health Insurance
- Major success was the Housing Act of 1949 and minimum wage

"Every segment of our population, and every individual, has a right to expect from his government a fair deal."





22nd Amendment (1951)

- Limited presidents to 2 terms or 10 years maximum
- Conservative move because of 17 years of Democratic control





Election of 1952



- Truman decides not to run
- Eisenhower wins
- 1st Republican president since the Depression



Dynamic Conservatism

- Ike's policy conserving money, while still providing for citizens
 - Increased Soc Sec & minimum Wage
 - Created the Dept of Health, Education & Welfare (1953)
- Tried to balance the budget:
 - Reducing farm subsidies
 - Reducing defense spending



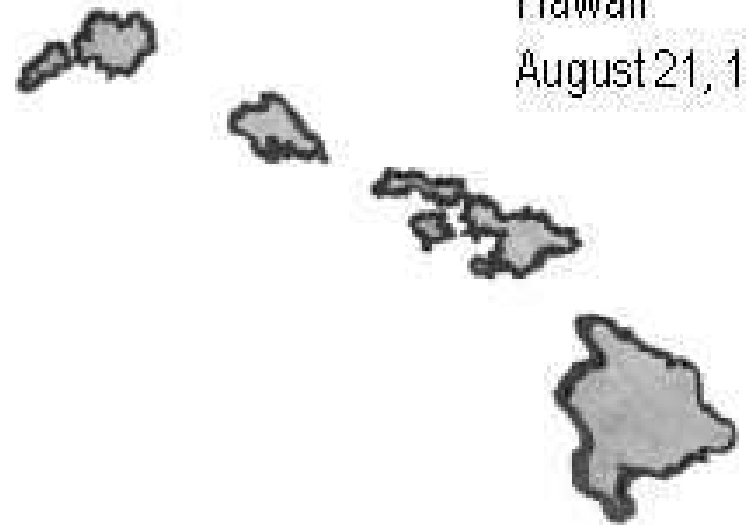


Alaska & Hawaii

- Alaska becomes 49th state
- Hawaii becomes 50th state



Alaska
January 3, 1959



Hawaii
August 21, 1959



C. The Baby Boom

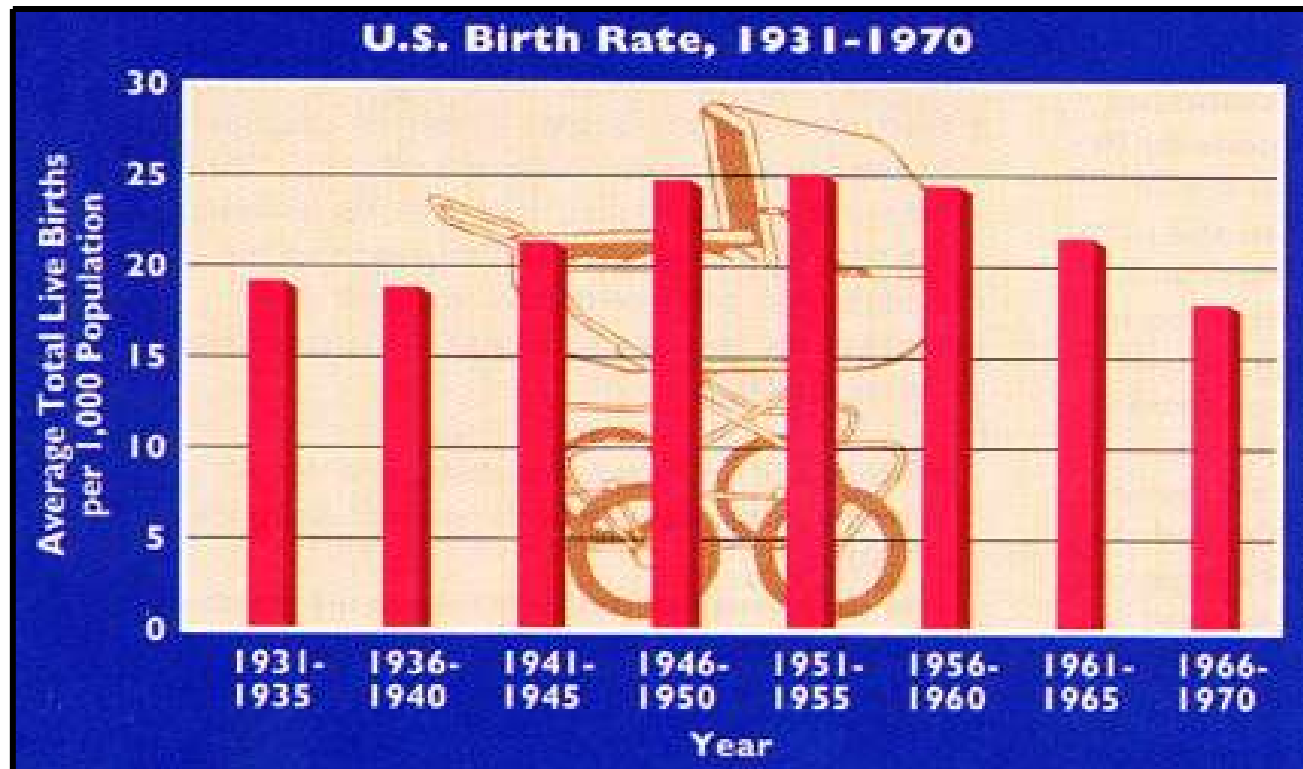




It seems to me that every other young housewife I see is pregnant.

-- British visitor to America, 1958

• Increase in birth rate from 1946-1964



1957 → 1 baby born every 7 seconds





D. Suburban Living





Housing Shortage led to planned mass produced suburban communities

Levittown, NY: "The American Dream"

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



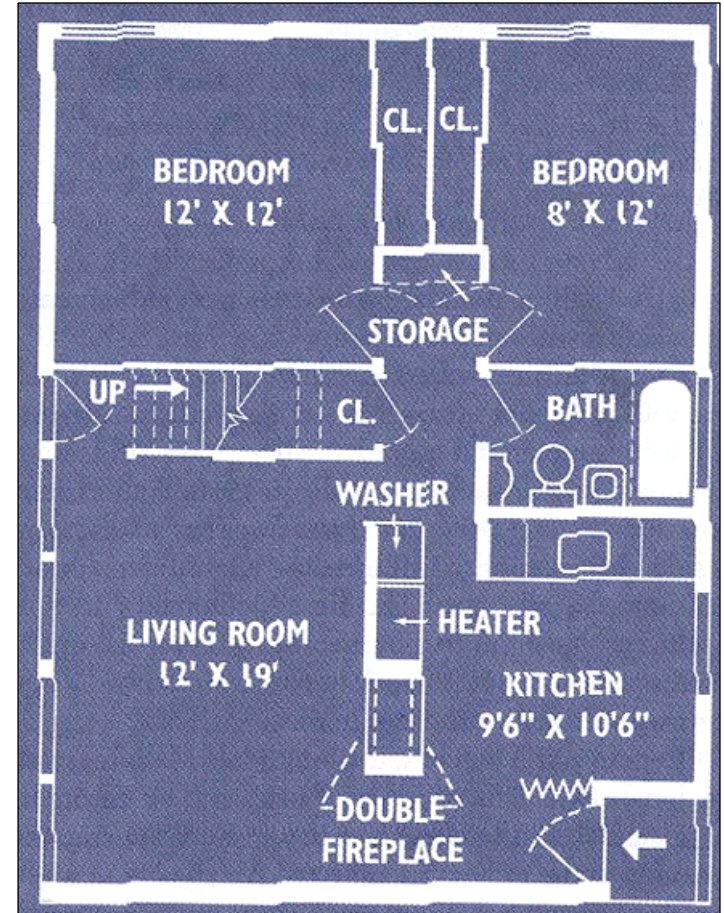
\$7,990 or \$58/month with \$90 down payment.



The New “American Dream”



- 1 story high
- 12'x19' living room
- 2 bedrooms
- tiled bathroom
- garage
- small backyard
- front lawn



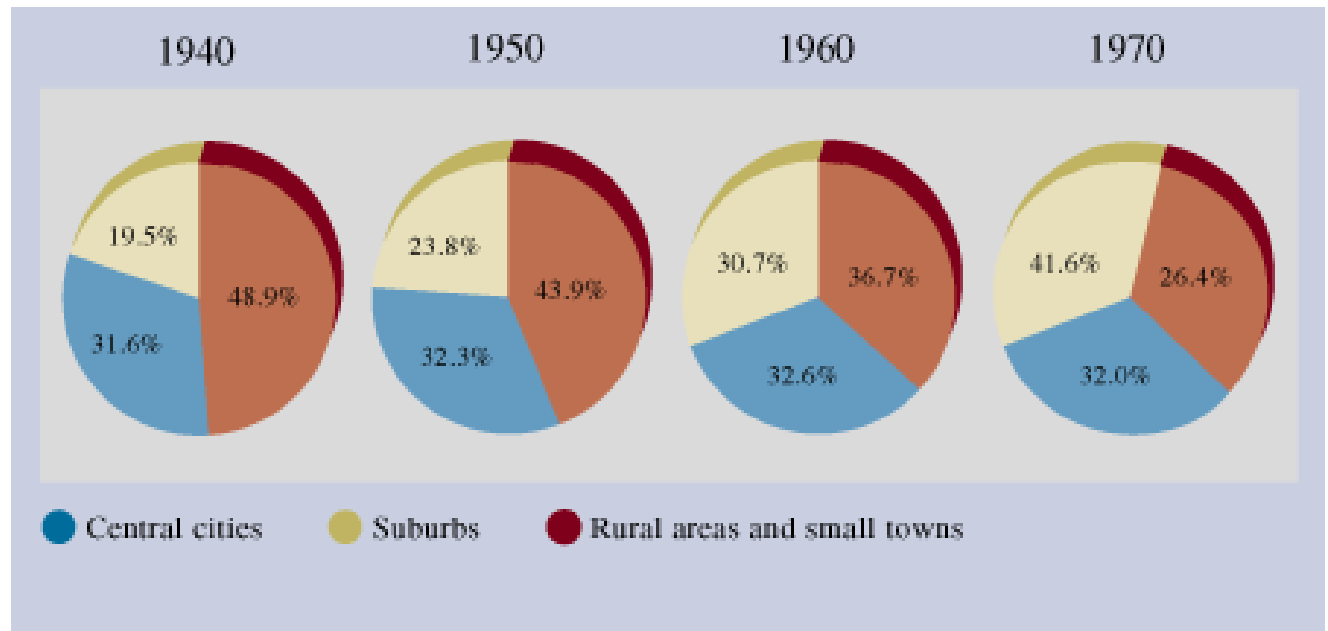
By 1960 → 1/3 of the U. S. population in the suburbs.



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%

Shifts in Population Distribution, 1940-1970





- Strengthened the idea of the nuclear family as the model for American life





E. Consumption



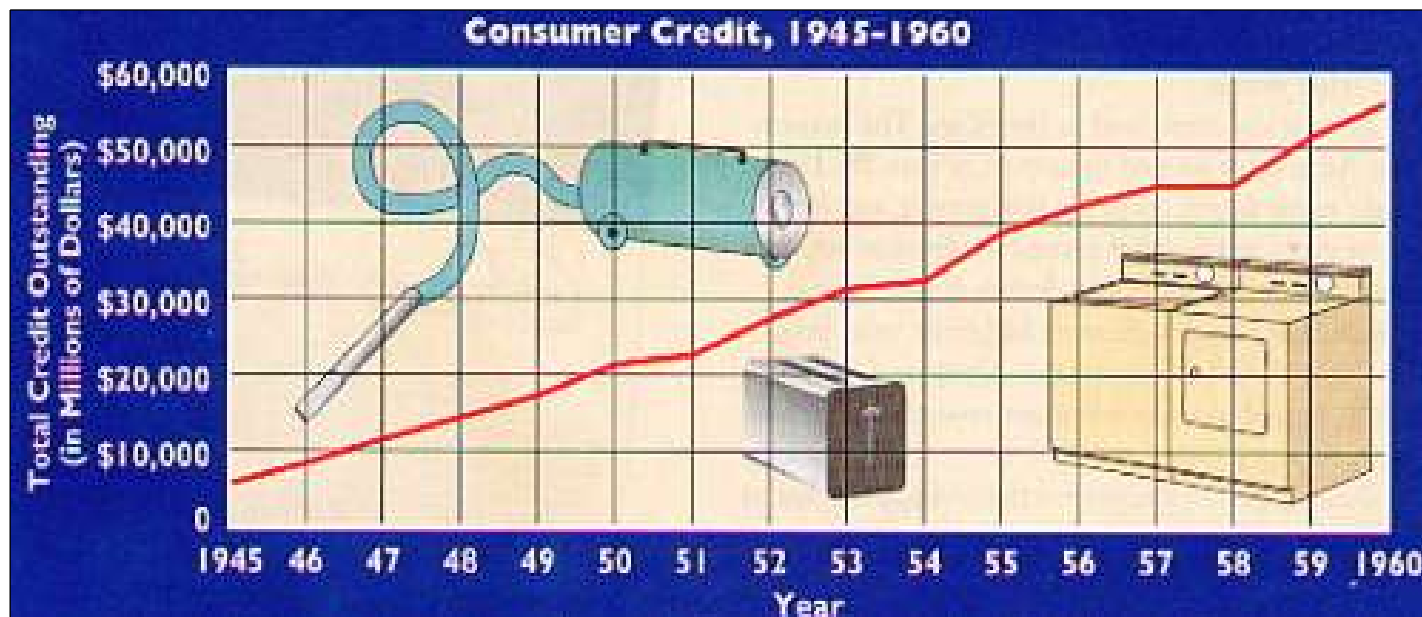
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS





- Money saved in WWII was ready to be spent

- More disposable income increased spending



All babies were potential consumers who spearheaded a brand-new market for food, clothing, and shelter.

-- Life Magazine (May, 1958)





- Americans were buying new products that would modernize their lives
- Planned Obsolescence - goods would wear out



"IRON CURTAIN LOOK IS HERE"

IRON CURTAIN LOOK IS HERE

U.S. ENJOY! NOTE: FASHION MOSCOW MODELS: HIGH PRICES, WARE SHAPED, NOT VERY HANDSOME!

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





E. A Changing Workplace





Taft-Hartley Act (1947)

- Response to the strikes of 1946 - 5 million workers went on strike
- Gave government more control over unions
 - 60 day wait period
 - Outlawed closed shops
 - States could regulate union shops





AFL-CIO Merger (1955)

- 2 largest labor unions joined in 1955
- Will run into problems because of Jimmy Hoffa & the Teamsters



Landrum-Griffin Act (1959)

- Ike's response to Jimmy Hoffa & the Teamsters
- Tightened government control over unions
- ALL unions suffered because of this and membership declines



Further Changes

Automation of Industries:

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 → **Mark I** (1944). First IBM mainframe computer (1951).

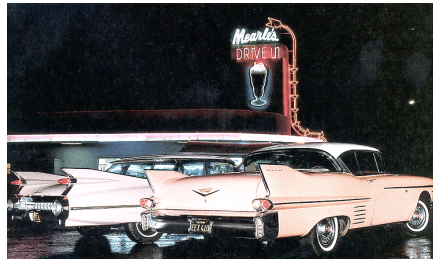


G. Culture of the Car





Became the center of the new lifestyle of the 1950's



1958 Pink Cadillac



1959 Chevy Corvette

Car registrations: 1945 → 25,000,000

1960 → 60,000,000

2-family cars doubles from 1951-1958



The Drive-In Culture

America became a more uniform nation with franchise businesses because of the automobile.



First McDonald's
(1955)



Howard
Johnson's



Drive-In
Movies





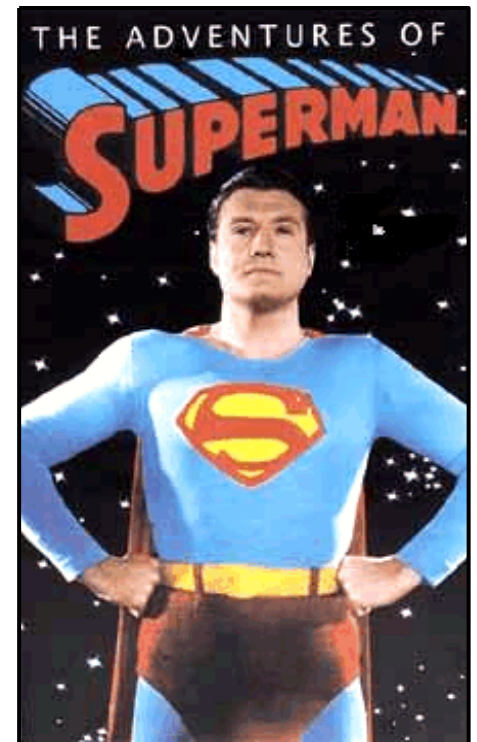
H. The Television



The Rise of T.V.

- 1946 → 7,000 TV sets in the U. S.
- 1950 → 50,000,000 TV sets in the U. S.
- 1960 → 9 out of 10 families owned at least one set

Reached a Mass Audience →
TV celebrated traditional
American values.



Truth, Justice, and the American way!





• Television - Family Shows

Glossy view of mostly middle-class suburban life.



*The Donna
Reed Show*
1958-1966



*Leave It
to Beaver*
1957-1963



Father Knows Best
1954-1958



The Ozzie & Harriet Show
1952-1966





I. Teen Culture





Who is a Teenager?

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

Person between 13-19 who had their own unique fads and fashions separate from the adult world that will be targeted by advertisers





Behavioral Rules of the 1950s:

CONFORMITY

U Obey Authority.

U Control Your Emotions.

U Don't Make Waves → Fit in with the Group.

U Don't Even Think About Sex!!!

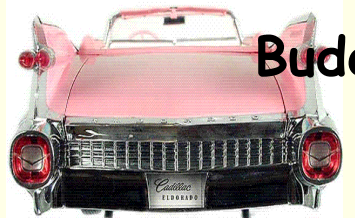
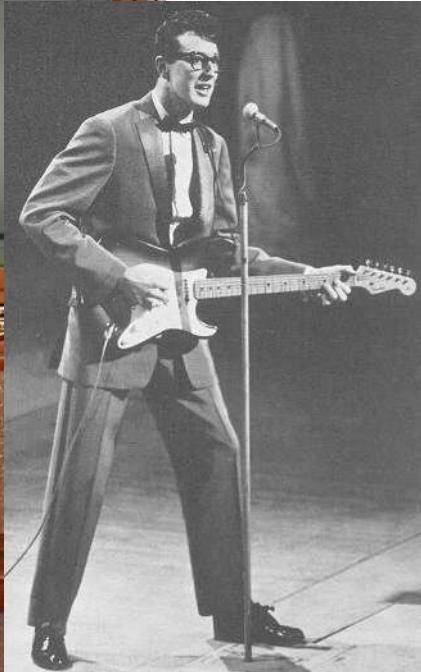
1951 → "Race" Music: Rhythm & Blues → Rock 'N Roll





Rock 'n Roll

- Believed to make teenagers behave inappropriately



Buddy Holly



Jerry Lee Lewis

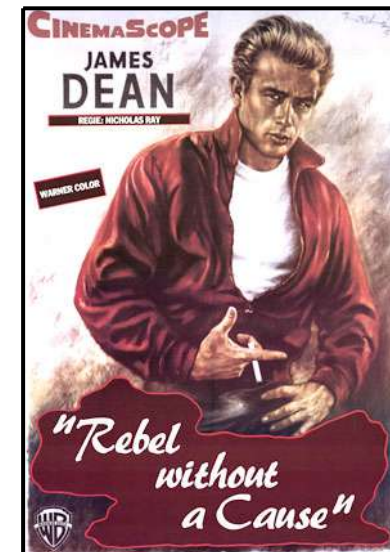
Delinquency

"Juvenile Delinquency"

1951 → J. D. Salinger's
A Catcher in the Rye



Marlon Brando in
The Wild One
(1953)



James Dean in
Rebel Without a Cause
(1955)



The Non-Conformists

The "Beat" Generation:

f Jack Kerouac (*On The Road*) and other writers

f Wrote about not conforming to society's mores

f Found a strong following in teenagers

"Beatnik"



"Clean" Teen





J. Gender Roles

Housekeeping Monthly 13 May 1955

Housekeeping Monthly 13 May 1955



Advertising Archives

The good wife's guide

- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. 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 (especially his favorite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.
- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, 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 for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.

- Gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper etc and then run a dustcloth over the tables.
- Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.
- 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. Minimise all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet.
- Be happy to see him.
- Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.
- Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first – remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.
- Make the evening his. Never complain if he comes home late or goes out to dinner, or other places of entertainment without you. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his very real need to be at home and relax.
- Your goal: Try to make sure your home is a place of peace, order and tranquillity where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.
- Don't greet him with complaints and problems.
- Don't complain if he's late home for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.
- Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or have him 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, soothing and pleasant voice.
- Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.
- A good wife always knows her place.

The Cult of Domesticity Returns



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



☎ The women's place was in the home, the man was the breadwinner.

☎ In reality, to support the middle class lifestyle, more women are going to enter the workforce.

☎ By 1960 40% of women are working full or part time.