

American history 1950's



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Describe the 1950's in America. To what extent was this an era of hope? For whom? Why? I) Referred to as Affluent Society or "golden age". American idea of freedom was economic abundance. This was a time of prosperity for the middle class (60% of Americans). Between 1946-1960, American gross national product more than doubled. The Cold War fueled industrial production. This led to an increase in wages and more jobs. II) American Standard of living increased. Former luxuries became standard. Home ownership, cars, TVs, refrigerators. Owning a car was the American idea of freedom. Automobiles = increase in job. Better travel, more employment opportunities, hotels, motels, fast food, movie theatres Federal Highway Act = more jobs, buses/trains/trolleys were replaced by highways, increase employment, increased industrial production i. e. steel, rubber. TV's changed American politics, TV shows, advertising America = Levittown homes, expansion, shopping malls, highways III) Agriculture Increased by 50% due to A., new machinery tractors harvesting machine, b. irrigation systems c. fertilizers and insecticides d. Decrease in small farms, increase in large farms. IV) Government Stimulated economic growth a. GI Bill . Credit - low or no interest increased purchasing power c. Tuition for vocational training d. Interstate Hwy Act V) Rebel Culture - Entertainment industry - youth felt alienated from middle class e. Rock n Roll - Elvis, James Dean f. Sex g. Exec Order 10450 gays lesbians can be fired h. Daughters of Bilitis - lesbian rights group VI) Baby Boom increased population 30 million i. 2 generations have babies j. Men coming home from war k. Penicillin VII) Era of Hope for women l. Working women increased m. More educational opportunities for women n. Worked to support lifestyle not for necessity . Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act and War Brides Act = 40K Chinese women immigrated to U. S. VIII)

Expansion p. 90% white moved from cities to suburbs q. Southern blacks moved to cities looking for better economic opportunity. Many lost jobs in south due to the invention of the mechanical cotton picker. Many unemployed, unskilled work demand low, discrimination, lack of education r. Inner city ghettos s. Poverty rate still at 22% mostly displaced ethnic groups t. Housing Act of 1949 - federally subsidized housing and redevelopment for displaced ethnic groups unable to buy homes.