

Free essay about the fabulous '50s

War



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The 1950s in America was a great decade, both socially and culturally. Its main legacy is its economic growth. As wealthy as the post-World War II United States had become, there were several reasons that the 1950s was also a decade that had serious problems, aside from the strength of its strong -- and growing -- middle-class.

I admire the 1950s because the family was the social focus of the overall culture. Family life was the hub of America's newly-found status after the Allies prevailed in World War II, in 1945. The 1950s was also a time of phenomenal economic growth (" The 1950s: Happy Days", internet). In the 1950s, affluence centered around the new middle class, and was characterized by its ability to buy " fancy" consumer goods, such as new cars and appliances.

However, there were a number of problems in the American 1950s. First, gender roles were highly-inflexible. Men were still the primary breadwinners, and women were relegated to a secondary role in the family, the culture, as well as overall society. Gender roles were very staid and inflexible -- a paradigm that would be challenged during the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Another problem in the 1950s was the so-called Cold War with Russia (Brinkley, internet). Both the US and Russia built up a large supply of nuclear weapons, and tried to out-compete each other in terms of armaments build-up. Also, the 1950s was the height of the " polio scare", when children were warned to stay out of swimming pools.

While the affluence of the 1950s is something to be admired, it was nonetheless a decade that had its own share of problems. It was a decade of phenomenal economic achievement, but just under the surface, a new social revolution was brewing.

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Works Cited

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