The 1950s
Thursday March 8

1. Bellringer: TACOS Truman cartoon

2. Complete CH 17.2 Objectives or Preview & Read CH 17.4 (homework for Friday).

3. Mindmap: 1950s
   - Video Clip: Redlining
   - Discuss CH 17.2

4. Test on Monday: Chapter 16 & 17 – make sure your notes are complete and you review them a few times this weekend.
1. facts
2.
3.
4.
5.
Bulletins

Poll
Dewey to get 30 states
Poll
Dewey given 27 states
Poll
Electoral votes
Dewey - 333
Truman - 82
Wallace - 0
Poll
Dewey to carry Virginia
Poll
All over but the shouting

What's the use of going through with the election?
President Truman

- Became president upon death of FDR (1945)
- Soviet aggression in Europe
- Faced several domestic challenges
- Won election to his own term in 1948
- Korean War began in 1950

Truman (center) stands with Soviet Premier Josef Stalin (right foreground) during the 1945 Potsdam Conference
Truman and Civil Rights

- Congress rejected his civil rights legislation
- Formed President’s Committee on Civil Rights
- Desegregated federal employees EO 9980 and armed forces EO 9981
- “Dixiecrats” or States Rights party split from Democrats in 1948 due to Truman’s policies
Returning Veterans “Readjust”

- **GI Bill of Rights** (Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944)
- Provided vets with education, training, and low-cost loans for businesses and homes
- Millions took advantage of benefits
- College enrollment skyrocketed
- GI Bill helped create “baby boom” of 1950s and 1960s
The “Baby Boom”

- Term “baby boom” first coined by columnist Sylvia Porter
- Postwar boom ran from 1946–1964
- Estimated 78 million Americans born during boom
- Veterans used GI Bill benefits for mortgages and businesses
- A return to typical gender roles
- Boom leveled off by 1958
Levittown and the Suburbs

- Levittown first developed on Long Island in 1947
- Affordable, mass-produced housing
- Highways spurred shift to suburbs, and from Rust Belt to Sun Belt

Levittown in the late 1950s
“White Flight”

- Refers to a movement of whites from cities to suburbs
- Populations of inner-city areas remained constant or declined
- Suburbs remained largely white
- Differing theories as to this phenomenon
The Creation of Franchises

• Roots in the Singer Company in the 1850s
• Coca-Cola soon followed with bottling franchise
• Franchisees paid fee to sell a company’s product
• Instant name recognition and consumer confidence
• Franchising boom after WWII
• Ray Kroc and McDonald’s

The oldest operating McDonald’s, in Downey, California
The Election of 1952

- Truman decided not to run again
- Democrats nominated Stevenson; Republicans ran Eisenhower
- Eisenhower promised to “go to Korea” if elected
- Eisenhower won handily

Republican running-mates Eisenhower (left) and Nixon campaigning in 1952
Nixon’s “Checkers Speech”

- Reports of a secret campaign “slush fund”
- Calls for Ike to drop Nixon
- Nixon brought his case to voters on TV
- Refused to give up his kids’ dog, Checkers
- Popular opinion kept him on the ticket

In a nationally televised speech, Nixon stated his case and saved his political career.
The Rise of Richard Nixon

- Congressman (later Senator) from CA
- Became famous for prosecuting Alger Hiss
- Eisenhower’s VP, 1953–1961
- Lost close presidential election to JFK in 1960
- Elected president in 1968

Richard M. Nixon
Dwight D. Eisenhower

• Nicknamed “Ike”
• Led troops in North Africa, planned and ran D-Day invasion
• President of Columbia University
• NATO commander
• Elected president in 1952 and 1956
• Died 1969
1. Complete Objectives for Chapter 17.4
2. Mindmap: 1950s
   - Video Clip: Redlining
   - Discuss CH 17
   - Ten Facts from Powerpoint
3. Test on Monday: Chapter 16 & 17 – make sure your notes are complete and you review them a few times this weekend.
The Affluent Society

- Written by John Kenneth Galbraith in 1958
- Held that America had great “private sector” wealth but little in the “public sector”
- Advocated putting federal money into public works
- Helped shape U.S. economic policy into the 1960s
- Coined phrase “conventional wisdom”

John Kenneth Galbraith
Rise of the “Affluent Society”

- Increase in availability of consumer goods
- Gross national product and median family income grew
- Majority of Americans considered “middle class”
- Rise in consumer borrowing
- More two-income households

A 1950s kitchen filled with new appliances, including a top-loading dishwasher
### Shifts in Population Distribution, 1940-1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Cities</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburbs</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Areas/Small Towns</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census
Economics (cont)

- Social effects (cont)
  - Families become mobile
  - Sunbelt
    - Political geography changes
  - Suburbs
    - Levittown
    - White Flight
  - Baby Boom
    - Dr. Spock The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care
Urban-Suburban Pattern of American Life

Inner City low-income families

Business District

Suburbs middle-income families

Suburbs high-income families
"...ONE NATION... INDIVISIBLE..."
Urban Renewal

- Federal Housing Act of 1949
- Pittsburgh an early example of renewal
- 1954 Housing Act popularized term “urban renewal”
- Results of urban renewal mixed
The Interstate Highway System

- Created by Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956
- Championed by Eisenhower
- Initial planning had begun in 1920s
- Cost $114 billion to complete
- Named the “Eisenhower Interstate System”

This government map from 1955 detailed the projected growth of interstate highways through 1965.
Social Conformity in the 1950s

- People “too timid to be individuals”
- Women encouraged to be obedient housewives
- Popular culture defined “typical” family roles
- Likely helped spur later countercultural movements
The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit

- Sloan Wilson (1955)
- A fictional indictment of the Organization Man
- Shows career men having dysfunctional family lives
- Book (and film) stressed importance of family over advancement

Gregory Peck
The Organization Man

- William H. Whyte (1956)
- Indictment of impact of conformity on American society
- Individuality a handicap; conformity needed for success in business
- Organization Man must not only accept being controlled, but must “accept it as if he liked it”
“We have found out...that we cannot trust some people who are nonconformists,” declared Ray Kroc, one of the founders of McDonald’s, angered by some of his franchisees. “We will make conformists out of them in a hurry...the organization cannot trust the individual; the individual must trust the organization.”
Asch's Experiments in Conformity

- Asch asked the group to visually compare lengths of lines on cards.
- All but one (the subject) were in on the experiment.
- When the group gave incorrect answer, subject tended to go along, though obviously wrong.
- When at least one other gave the correct answer, subject would agree.
The Beat Generation

- Group of American writers
- Included Ginsberg, Burroughs, Kerouac
- Rejected much of American values and culture
- Started in New York; later San Francisco
- Gave way to 1960s counterculture
- Lost Generation writers of 1920s: Dos Passos; Hemingway; Fitzgerald

Jack Kerouac
1950s Teenage Rebellion

- James Dean and Marlon Brando as antiheroes
- Juvenile delinquency hyped by ’50s mass media
- Dress and hair styles became more “rebellious”
- Influence of rock music and the “Beats”

James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*
Rock ‘n’ Roll

• Elements of gospel, country, blues, other music forms
• Considered subversive
• DJ Alan Freed
• White artists made rock acceptable to a wider audience
• *The Blackboard Jungle*

Bill Haley and His Comets
Rock ‘n’ Roll: Cultural Backlash

- Strong African American influences
- Said to encourage race mixing and immoral behavior
- Variously called:
  - the devil’s music
  - a communist plot
  - a communicable disease
“Elvis the Pelvis”

• Elvis made TV appearances (including Ed Sullivan)
• Some saw his dancing as lewd behavior
• Seen as symbol of ‘50s “teenage rebellion”
• Religious and political leaders critical of his performances

A promotional picture shows Elvis during the recording of *Jailhouse Rock*
Television in the 1950s

- Television ownership boomed
- In 90 percent of homes by 1961
- Radio networks bought TV stations
- Iconic pitchmen
- TV encouraged fads
Television in the 1950s (cont.)

- TV reinforced gender and racial stereotypes
- Called a “vast wasteland” by FCC chairman
- Negatively affected movies and magazines
- Greatly affected politics

The cast of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*
Women in the 1950s

- Roles began to evolve
- Number of women entering workforce increased
- Wages about half of male counterparts’
- Schools and media reinforced traditional roles
- Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* questioned these roles
Hispanics in the 1950s

- Discrimination common
- Puerto Ricans:
  - Migrated to New York
  - Culture faded with assimilation
- Mexican Americans:
  - *Bracero* program
  - Deportations by Eisenhower
- Some gains by Hispanics
Native Americans in the 1950s

- Among the poorest minorities
- High death rates
- U.S. policy changed from preserving tribal identities to assimilation – Ike’s **Termination** policy.
- Several treaties terminated
- Voluntary relocation policy a failure

A Navajo dwelling
The Legacy of the 1950s

- Cold War got “colder”
- Civil rights movement led to Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965)
- Women’s rights movement and NOW
- Beats and other symbols of rebellion contributed to social activism
- 1960s “British invasion” built on early rock ‘n’ roll