



1950'S AMERICAN CULTURE

Mrs. Majask

US History

GI BILL - OVERVIEW



- June 24, 1944
- Created to help soldiers ease back into civilian life
- It provided for:
 - Job priority for veterans
 - 52 weeks of unemployment benefits
 - A monthly allowance - veteran's were given \$65 a month (\$90 if they had a family)
 - Low interest loans



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

GI BILL & EDUCATION



- Most of the allowance was spent on higher education
- This created a new standard for education in the US
 - College education became an expectation for the children of the men and women who were able to earn their degree because of the GI Bill

IMPACT OF THE GI BILL

- Four million veterans bought homes with low interest government loans
- Rapid domestic growth creates:
 - baby boom
 - Expanding suburbanization.
 - A record demand for new goods and services which fuels the economy.

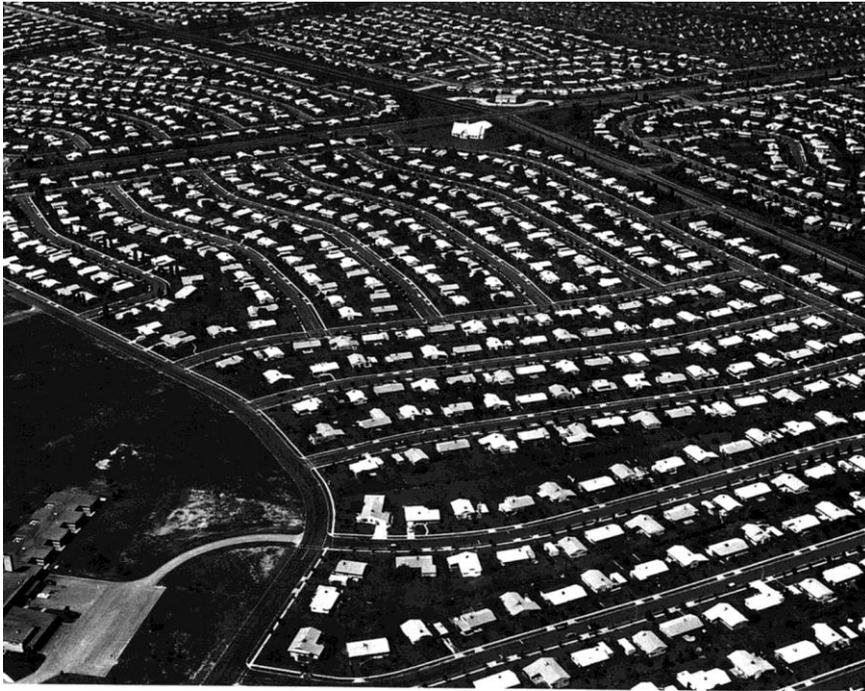


LEVITTOWN

- Developed by William J. Levitt →
- Used mass production techniques in home building
- Towns created in New York, PA – Bucks County, and New Jersey



LEVITTOWN



BABY BOOM



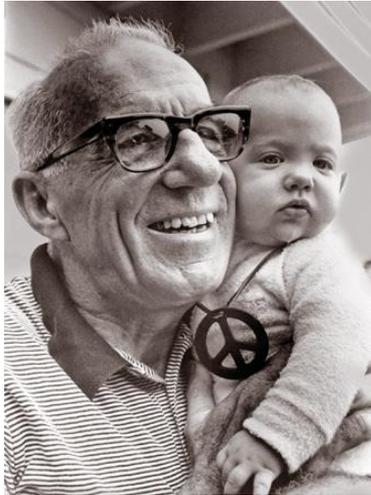
- Fertility rate peaked in 1957. An American baby was born every 7 seconds
- Why?
 - More men in society due to end of WWII.
 - GI bill allows men to start a family.
 - Married at a younger age than their parents
 - 1 in 3 women married by age 19
 - Medical science improved increasing the survival rate of babies.
 - Prosperous economy encouraged parents to have babies sooner. (Less fear of not being able to support the family)



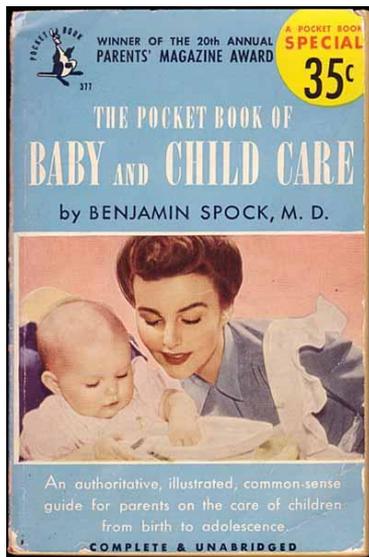
BABY BOOM



DR. SPOCK



- Only the Bible outsold Dr. Benjamin Spock's book: *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (1946)
- He urged mothers to:
 - not work outside the home
 - comfort crying babies so that they wouldn't feel rejected
 - Encouraged less spanking and scolding to create a "democratic" family.



MIDDLE CLASS WOMEN

- Popular culture glorified marriage and parenthood more than any other era.
- Women were told to be “helpmates” to their husband’s and full time mothers to their children
 - “A woman isn’t a woman until she is married and had children.” (*The Tender Trap*)
 - Working women were called “a menace” (*Esquire*)
 - The ideal wife was married at 16, raised 4 children, cooked and sewed, headed the PTA and exercised to keep her size 12 figure(*Life*)



WOMEN'S ROLE

- Education continued the “gender roles” trend.
 - Girls = typing and cooking
 - Boys = carpentry and business courses.
 - Guidance counselors cautioned women to not “miss the boat” of marriage by pursuing higher education.
 - 2/3 of college women failed to get a degree.
 - Common joke was that they dropped out to get their M.R.S. degree or their Ph. T (Putting Hubbie Through)



MCDONALD'S

- 15¢ Burgers (4¢ extra for cheese)
- 20¢ milkshake
- Ray Kroc partnered with the McDonald's brothers and sisters and started franchising the restaurant in 1954
- Known for fast service

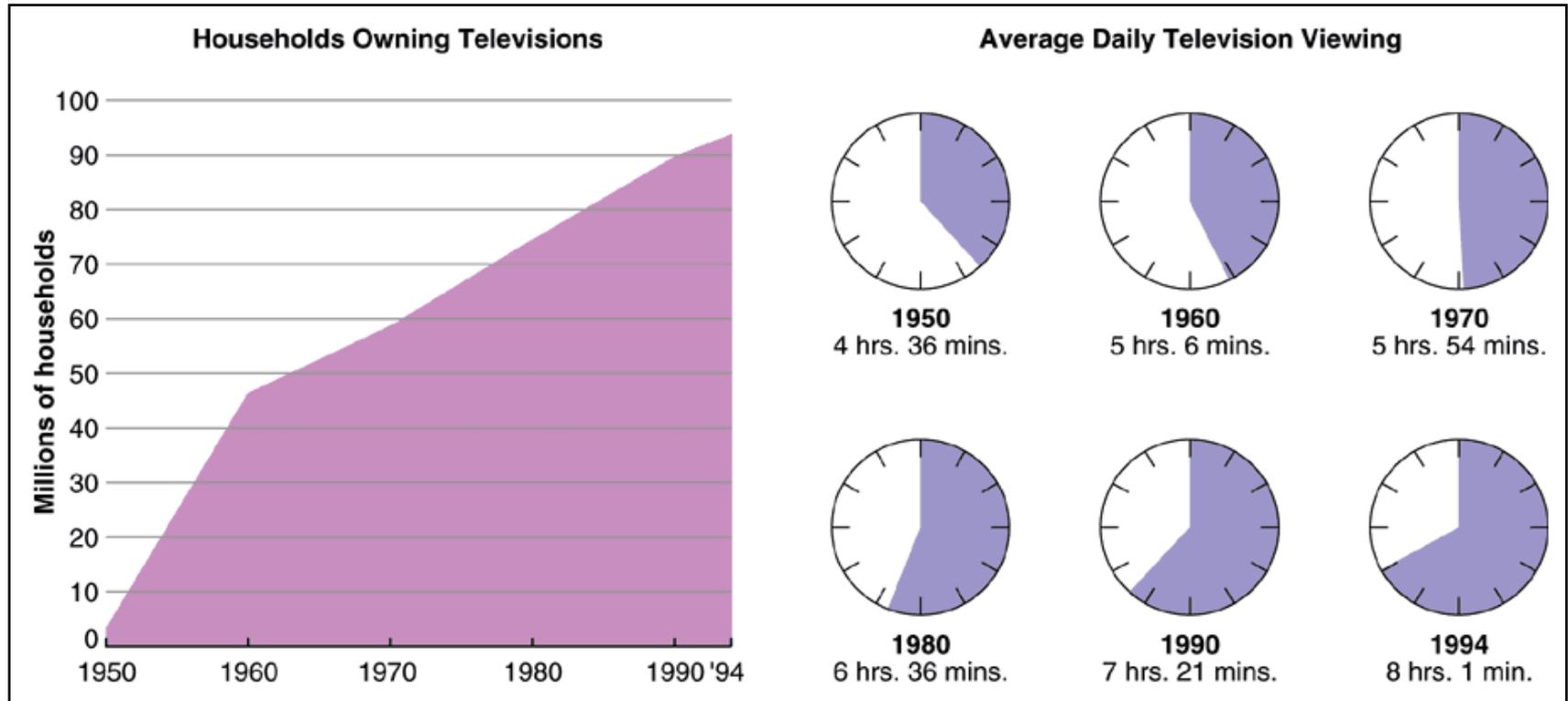


TELEVISION

- TV ownership rose as the cost of owning them dropped.
- 1952 - TV Guide outsold every other magazine.
- The TV Dinner was introduced in 1954 and altered America's eating habits.
- TV became the center of consumer culture.



THE TELEVISION REVOLUTION, 1950–1994



TELEVISION



- Shows like *Leave it to Beaver*, and *I love Lucy* portrayed a perfect family life and not the reality of everyday homes

- Moms were always pretty and doing domestic things
- Children were adventurous but obedient
- Dads never worked late, never lost their temper and knew all the right answers.



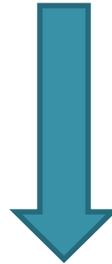
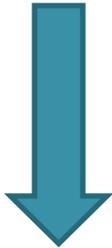
THE AMERICAN DREAM



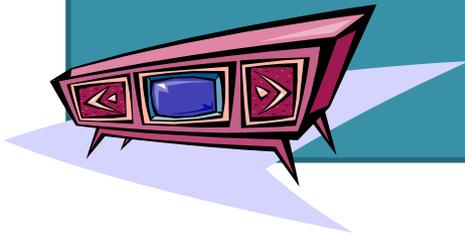
Values

Home/Family

Work



- Conformity
- Material goods = success



- 2 or 3 Children
- Close family ties
- Single family home in suburbia
- One or 2 Cars
- Television

- Man as breadwinner who works at white collar job
- Woman takes care of home and children

