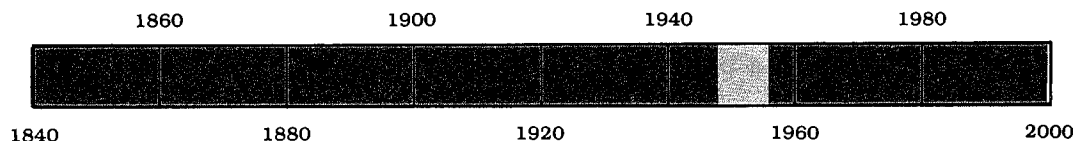


Part **9**

*Post-War  
America*



# Looking Ahead



On a spring evening in 1946, a man hails a cab in New York City. He takes the cab to Grand Central Station where he boards the *20th Century Limited*. He is a business executive going on a long trip. He will take the train to Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco.

The man is back on the job after four years in the Army. But he is still traveling much as he did before the war. He rides the same trains and stays in the same hotels. All the hotels are in the hearts of cities. The executive's clients come to see him at his hotel, or he takes a trolley car or taxi to see them in their stores. At night he may go to a movie or a stage show.

In the years right after the war, the

*America of the 1950's was remade for the automobile. Car washes sprang up overnight, and a new word—freeway—entered the language.*

routines of people in business remained pretty much the same. In the next 15 years, though, U.S. life changed a great deal. These changes took place slowly. Yet they affected the way Americans lived.

**Hotels v. motels.** By 1960 the same executive might live in one of the new suburbs that had sprung up around big cities. For a trip of any great distance, he would most likely drive to the airport and take a plane. On arrival he would probably rent a car and drive to his lodgings. They might be in one of the new motels built next to a freeway on the outskirts of town. He would drive to see his clients. In the evening, he might go to a drive-in movie or watch television in his room.

The changes in the executive's routine show some of the new directions in U.S. life between 1945 and 1960. During these years, the U.S. took the form we see today. New highways and airports were built. People took long journeys by car, bus, or air-



*Backyard barbecues became a standard feature in the American suburbs of the 1950's. For suburbanites, they were just one more part of the good life.*

plane—and less and less by train. Trains still carried some commuters to and from the cities. And of course trains still carried freight. But now they had rivals even for that. Trucks were carrying more freight.

**Cities v. suburbs.** The cities continued to grow. But many people were leaving their old neighborhoods and moving to the suburbs. The suburbs had a somewhat different style of life. People needed cars to get almost everywhere. Shopping centers with big parking lots were built along main roads. As people moved to the

suburbs, city life began to change. Many people came into the city to work or shop. They would go home to the suburbs at night. “Rush-hour” traffic jams became common.

The United States economy grew faster than ever. Many people became wealthier than they had ever hoped to be. They bought new appliances such as washing machines. They also bought another new product—television sets.

**Two Presidents.** Between 1945 and 1960, the nation was led by two Presidents. The first was Harry Truman,

a Democrat who served from 1945 to 1953. During the Truman years, the U.S. began the switch from a war economy to a peacetime one. Millions of soldiers returned home and looked for jobs. Factories which had once made tanks now turned to making autos. Amid these changes, Truman had to keep things running smoothly. This sometimes meant holding a lid on prices. It also meant preventing costly strikes.

President Truman also had political troubles. As a Democrat, he disagreed with the Republican-controlled Congress on many issues. In 1948 he had to fight hard to win the Presidential nomination of his own party. Few experts gave him much chance of winning the election. But Truman showed great determination. In the end, he scored a major upset.

The second President of the period was Dwight D. Eisenhower. In 1953 he became the first Republican President in 20 years. This World War II hero was one of the nation's best-known figures. Eisenhower's patient leadership healed some serious divisions in the U.S. In the middle 1950's, the nation entered a period of peace and plenty.

**Cold War.** But this period of peace and plenty was not without serious problems. During the Presidencies of Truman and Eisenhower, America was engaged in a **Cold War** with the Soviet Union. In this "war," Soviet and U.S. troops did not shoot at each other. Their "war" was one of words, threats, and other actions. Both nations kept large peacetime armies. Both nations worked to win the support of governments in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

**Call to courage.** Some writers of the period thought they saw a drawback to the country's great wealth. They said that Americans had grown too smug (satisfied with themselves). One critic, Walter Lippmann, said the U.S. seemed to be losing its "national purpose." Americans had become too "defensive," Lippmann wrote. They wanted to hold on to what they had. They were losing the courage to reach for a better world, Lippmann believed.

Other critics pointed out that the wealth of the fifties wasn't shared by all Americans. Millions of Americans still lived in poverty. Many black Americans still did not have full legal rights in many parts of the U.S. Yet the post-war period saw the beginnings of a new movement to gain full equality for black Americans. Jackie Robinson became the first black player in major league baseball. Soon many black athletes won fame in major professional sports. But the barriers were slow to come down for most blacks. Some people wondered if full equality would ever come.

Our business executive, though satisfied with his profits, might also have had questions about the future. How long would it take before all the cars and trucks would lead to impossible traffic jams and pollution? Were America's most scenic areas being ruined by all the new roads? What would happen to the cities with so many people moving away to the suburbs? Were Americans too concerned with making money? Were they becoming too "soft"?

These questions had just begun to form in the 1950's. In the 1960's, they would become national issues.

## CHAPTER 52

# “I Will Win the Election”

**H**arry Truman's friends knew he was a fighter. Still, they were worried about him on April 12, 1945. President Franklin Roosevelt had just died. Suddenly Vice-President Truman had become President. Could he handle the job?

The U.S. faced many difficult problems. World War II was still under way in Europe and the Pacific. Important plans for the coming peace were being drawn up by the Allies. No wonder Harry Truman told reporters on his first day as President: “Boys, if you ever pray, pray for me now.”

Truman met his decisions head-on. Others could “pass the buck,” he said, but he could not. He put a sign on his desk: “The Buck Stops Here.” He wanted everyone in the Executive Branch of the U.S. government to know he was the boss.

In his first years as President, Truman showed his leadership in many ways. Here are some examples:

**The atomic bomb.** Truman had not even known of plans for building an

atomic bomb when he became President. Yet it was he who made the final decision to drop atomic bombs on two Japanese cities in August 1945 (see Chapter 51).

**Peace.** In his first months as President, Truman played an important part in setting up the peace. He met with Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin in the German town of Potsdam to plan the future of Europe. Later, Truman put together a plan to aid the war-torn countries of Europe.

**The economy.** When World War II ended, U.S. industries faced new problems. They had to switch from making tanks and guns to making cars and refrigerators. The switch was not an easy one. President Truman had to make sure it took place as quickly and smoothly as possible.

**Strikes.** During the war, the U.S. government had controlled wages and prices. When the war ended, government controls ended too. Prices rose faster than wages. Labor unions grew unhappy. Many workers went out on strike to get more pay. Tru-



*"Are you sure you didn't miss anything?" Harry Truman asks after his first year in office. How many words in Herb Lubner's cartoon can you define?*

man helped to settle one major strike and used tough talk to prevent another.

In spite of Truman's action on these problems, some Americans questioned his ability. Critics called him "the little man from Missouri." They thought he was not "big" enough to be President. Now it was 1948—an election year. Truman's party, the Democratic party, was badly split.

Some Democrats were in favor of Henry A. Wallace, a former Vice-President. Wallace had formed a third party, the Progressive party, and was running for President. He believed

that Truman's Cold War actions might get the U.S. into a shooting war with the Soviet Union.

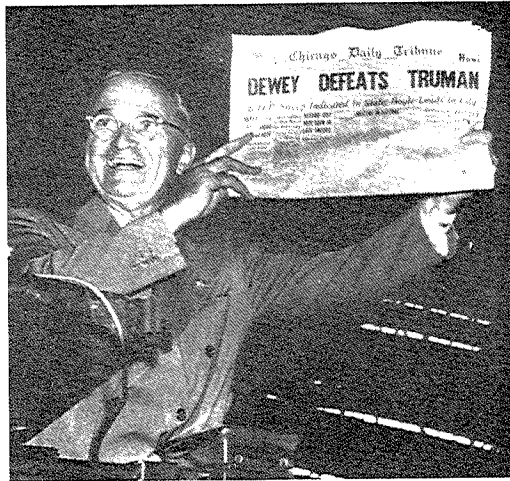
Many Democrats in the South were also against Truman. Truman had called for strong civil-rights laws to end Jim Crow. One woman from the South complained about this. Truman pulled a copy of the U.S. Constitution from his pocket and read her the Bill of Rights!

The Democrats chose Truman to run for President on their ticket. But they did it with very little spirit. Almost all of them were sure he would lose. Some Southern Democrats walked out of the convention. They formed their own party, the **Dixiecrats**. They chose Strom Thurmond, governor of South Carolina, as their candidate for President.

**Ready for battle.** Harry Truman refused to give up. He made a speech with fight in it. "I will win this election and make those Republicans like it," he said. The Democrats cheered him wildly for the first time.

The Republicans had already chosen their candidate. He was Thomas E. Dewey, governor of New York. Dewey had become famous as a fighter of organized crime. All the polls said Dewey would win. And four out of five newspapers were on Dewey's side.

But Truman didn't quit. He rode across the country making speeches from the back of his own special train. As he left on the cross-country trip, one political leader told him to "go out there and mow 'em down." Truman answered: "I'll mow 'em down, . . . and I'll give 'em hell." The remark became a key slogan in the campaign.



The Chicago Tribune was too sure of itself on election night.

All across the nation, Truman talked of how he had continued Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. He attacked Dewey and the Republicans for not helping "the little guy." Everywhere his train went, the crowds got bigger. Truman's simple, down-to-earth speeches were winning friends.

**Ready for victory.** On election night, Republicans prepared for victory parties. One expert was so certain of a Dewey victory that he had stopped taking polls weeks before the election. When Truman went to sleep, he was ahead. But the experts were still predicting a Dewey victory. *The Chicago Tribune* even came out with a big headline: DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN.

At four in the morning, a Secret Service man woke Truman up. He told Truman to turn on the radio, and Truman did. An announcer said,

"Truman is two million votes ahead!" Soon it was all over. Truman had won the election! It was the greatest upset in U.S. election history.

Senator Arthur Vandenberg, a Republican from Michigan, summed up Truman's startling victory: "Everyone had counted him out. But he came out fighting and won the battle. That's the kind of courage Americans admire."

Courage, of course, wasn't the only reason why Truman won. The U.S. had been strongly Democratic ever since 1932. To many people, Truman seemed to be following in Franklin Roosevelt's footsteps.

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## Chapter Check

1. In what ways did Harry Truman show his leadership during his first years as President?
2. In your opinion, what was Truman's most important achievement as President? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Who were Harry Truman's opponents in the election of 1948? What political parties did they represent? Why did "the experts" expect Truman to lose?
4. Truman risked defeat by coming out with a strong civil-rights stand in 1948. Even so, Truman did what he thought was right. In your opinion, do political leaders usually do what they think is right? Or do they more often do what they think will get them elected? Give reasons for your answer.

## CHAPTER 53

# Breakthrough in Brooklyn

**T**housands of fans crowded into Shibe Park, Philadelphia. They had come to see the Brooklyn Dodgers play the Philadelphia Phillies. It was the last day of the 1951 baseball season. The Dodgers had to win to tie for the pennant.

In the 14th inning, with the score tied, Jackie Robinson came up to the plate. His face glistened with sweat. He held the bat high, waving it threateningly at the pitcher. The pitcher delivered a fastball right over the plate. Robinson's bat came around in a clear, powerful motion. *Whack!* The ball took off in an arc toward left field. It was gone—a home run! The Dodgers held the Phillies in the bottom of the 14th and won the game.

Jackie Robinson wasn't just a home-run hitter. He was one of the most exciting all-around players of his day. From 1947 to 1956, he was a triple threat to any ball club that played against the Dodgers. He hit, ran the bases, and fielded with a style all his own.

**Breaking a barrier.** But Jackie Robinson had a more important claim to fame. He was the first black man to play major league baseball. Before Robinson, blacks had not been allowed to play in the major leagues. They had played for much less money in a black league in smaller cities.

The man who gave Jackie Robinson his chance was Branch Rickey, the Dodgers' general manager. Rickey was famous for his shrewd judgment of baseball talent. He had two goals: to make the Dodgers the best team in baseball, and to break the color barrier.

In 1946 Rickey sensed the time was right for breaking the barrier. During World War II, blacks had fought bravely in defense of their country. After the war, more and more Americans realized that blacks were not treated fairly in the U.S. Also, in the 1930's and 1940's, two great black athletes had made Americans feel proud. The two athletes were boxing champ Joe Louis and Olympic track star Jesse Owens.



Jack Roosevelt Robinson—the man who would make baseball history—was born in Georgia in 1919. He was the youngest of five children. When Jackie was still a baby, his father left the family. Jackie's mother moved the family to Pasadena, California. There she cleaned houses and washed clothes to support her children.

Jackie was a gifted athlete even as a child. He was coached and encouraged by his older brother, Mack. In high school, Jackie starred in football, basketball, track, and baseball. Later he became a star in all four at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

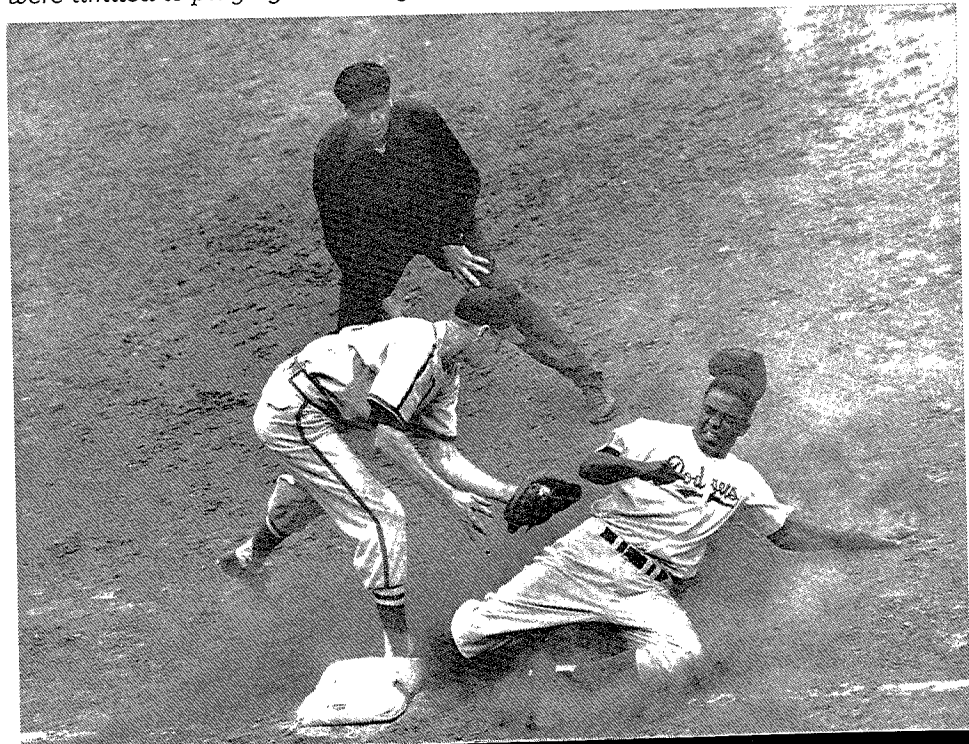
Robinson decided on a career in professional sports. But he never dreamed of playing baseball in the major leagues. After getting out of the Army in 1945, he signed to play with the Kansas City Monarchs. The Monarchs belonged to the Negro

American Baseball League.

Branch Rickey had been following Robinson's career for years. Rickey was a careful man. He could see that the first black player would have a difficult time. Such a player would be insulted and threatened. So Rickey knew that the man he was looking for would have to have more than talent on the playing field. He would have to have character and courage.

**Battling with a bat.** Rickey sent for Robinson. Rickey told him he would play for the Montreal Royals, the Dodgers' top minor league team. "But first there are several things you have to understand," Rickey said. "I know you've always fought for your rights and for the rights of Negroes. You've spoken up, and I admire you for it. But now you'll have to fight that battle with your bat and glove. A lot of players will be against you and a lot of fans too. . . . You will not fight back, do you understand?"

*Jackie Robinson was both a powerful slugger and a master of the stolen base. Before Robinson broke the color barrier in major league baseball, black athletes were limited to playing in the Negro American Baseball League.*



Robinson was confused. "Do you want a ballplayer who is afraid to fight back?" he asked.

"I want a ballplayer who has the guts *not* to fight back," Rickey answered.

Robinson understood. He and Rickey became friends from that day on. In 1947 Rickey brought Robinson up to the big leagues to play with the Dodgers. Some of the Dodgers said they would refuse to play with Robinson on the team. Other teams in the league objected to a black in a major league uniform. But Branch Rickey would have none of it.

Jackie Robinson opened the season at first base for the Dodgers. He helped to make the Dodgers winners. Robinson quickly developed into a clutch hitter and sure fielder. His base-running made pitchers' hair turn gray. Robinson would take a big lead off first base. Bouncing on the balls of his feet, he would dare the pitcher to try to pick him off. His smart base-running often confused pitchers. Then they would make a bad pitch to the next batter. And whoosh, Robinson would bring another run home for the Dodgers.

**Becoming a champ.** Robinson's success on the field won the respect of his teammates. They began to stick up for him when opposing players jeered him. In 1947 the Dodgers became the National League champions. Robinson was voted Rookie of the Year.

In 1949 the Brooklyn team came back to win the pennant once again. Jackie Robinson won the National League batting championship with a .342 average. He was voted the league's Most Valuable Player. By this

time, Robinson was no longer the only black player in the major leagues. He had two black teammates, catcher Roy Campanella and pitcher Don Newcombe.

Jackie Robinson retired from baseball in 1956. He had helped the Dodgers win six National League pennants. He had shattered the color barrier in baseball. By 1956 there were many black players in the major leagues. Willie Mays of the New York Giants was a superstar. In Milwaukee batting champ Henry Aaron was beginning his career.

In 1962 Jackie Robinson was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame. He had been a great baseball champion. But more important, he had been a great champion for black Americans. By breaking the color barrier in major league baseball, he had helped to break color barriers of other kinds.

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## Chapter Check

1. Why was Jackie Robinson's joining the Brooklyn Dodgers an important event?
2. Why did Branch Rickey think that in 1946, the time was right for breaking the color barrier?
3. Branch Rickey expected more from Jackie Robinson than just athletic ability. What did he expect from Robinson that he didn't ask of his other players? Was it fair to make these demands of Robinson? Was it wise?
4. Both Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson showed courage in breaking the color barrier. Which man showed the greater courage? Why?

## CHAPTER 54

# Affluent Americans

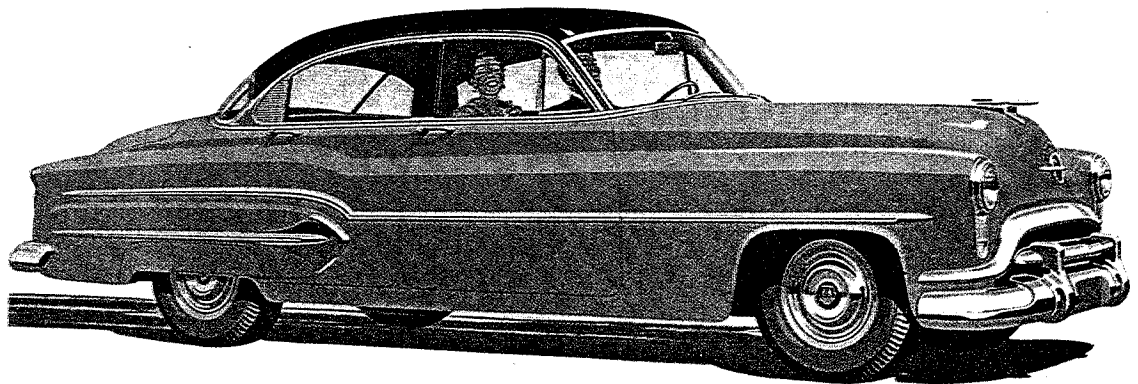
**A** cold March wind blew across the Long Island, New York, potato fields. The slate gray sky promised snow before nightfall. Yet on this uncomfortable day in 1949, more than a thousand people waited in lines outside a small building. Some had been there for four days.

William J. Levitt was about to open his sales offices for new homes. Thousands of home-hungry people

were eager to buy. After World War II, the U.S. had a housing shortage. Few homes had been built during the war. Young married couples now had to live with parents. Many lived in old Army camps.

Levitt was the first builder of cheap, mass-produced houses on large tracts (areas) of land. He bought a tract, marked out lots, and started building homes. In Levitt-

*The car became a sign of power in America. The fancier one's car, the more admired one would be. This drawing shows a "Rocket Engine" Oldsmobile, said to combine power, "glamor," and "effortless ease."*



town, Long Island, he put up 17,500 houses. They looked very much alike. But this didn't bother most of the people who bought them. Buyers were happy just to have a home of their own at last.

The housing boom that built new suburbs was part of a larger boom taking place across the U.S. The causes for this exploding growth went back to World War II. The war had made jobs for almost everybody. Good jobs had put money in people's pockets. But while the war was on, there were many things people could not buy. The U.S. was making ships and planes instead of houses, cars, or refrigerators. So people worked overtime and saved their money.

**Spending spree.** When World War II ended, Americans wanted to buy all the things they couldn't get during the war. Now they could use their savings. Many people went on a spending spree. They bought some goods as fast as factories could make them. The factories hired more workers and stepped up production. The economy grew and grew. Americans had never been so well off—so **affluent**.

Returning veterans shared in this affluence. A new law, the "G.I. Bill of Rights," gave veterans advantages that earlier veterans had not had. The government paid for the education or job training of these returning veterans. In many cases, it gave them monthly living allowances while they went to school. It helped them get loans for homes, farms, or businesses.

The auto once again became part of the changing scene. In many suburbs, people could get around only in



*Life in sprawling housing developments called for cars and more cars. Many Americans, including this disabled veteran of World War II, found they could not get along without the automobile.*

cars. Builders put up new shopping centers along highways. People had to drive to work or to the store. Many families bought two cars. Workers laid down new roads to help handle the increase in traffic. Trucks began to lure some of the freight away from trains.

**"Baby boom."** The economy wasn't the only thing growing in the post-war years. The number of people living in the U.S. soared. Millions of soldiers returned from the war, got married, and had children. The country had a **"baby boom."** Thousands of new schools had to be built in the 1950's to educate the new Americans.

The babies of the 1940's grew into

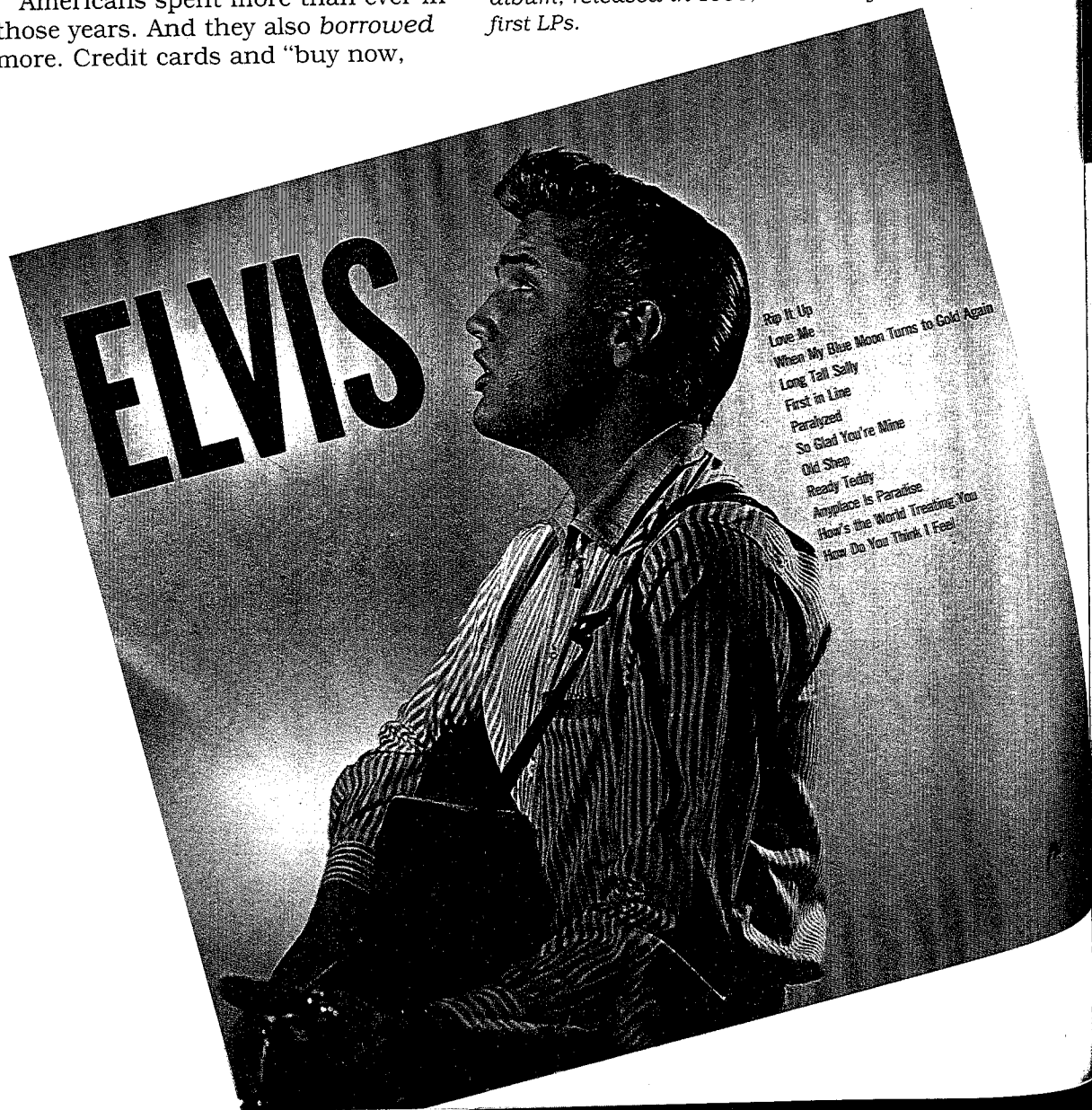
young people. A new word—*teenager*—was made up to describe them. Teenagers had their own culture, language, and heroes. Their music took on a restless beat that annoyed many adults. A young Southern singer named Elvis Presley swung his hips and tossed his head. His teenage fans screamed with delight. Rock 'n' roll music swept the country. Teenagers had money to spend now, and many of them spent it on rock 'n' roll records.

Americans spent more than ever in those years. And they also *borrowed* more. Credit cards and "buy now,

pay later" plans became popular. Thrift had long been considered a virtue. But now people were encouraged to go into debt. By 1970 Americans owed more than 100 *billion* dollars.

To many, the new affluence seemed like the "American dream" come true. But others pointed to some disturbing clouds on the horizon:

*Elvis Presley and the long-playing record became hits at about the same time. This album, released in 1956, was one of Elvis' first LPs.*





*This early ad for a color TV set shows the square lines and wood paneling popular in the early 1950's.*

**Poverty.** The economic boom did not include everyone. Millions of poor people in the U.S. did not share in the wealth. Many—but by no means all—were blacks or members of other **minority groups**. Some of these poor people were jammed into city slums. Others lived in country shacks. Wherever they lived, their lives were scarred by poverty and despair. They were proof that the gap between the poor and the rest of the nation had grown larger in the post-war years.

**Urban decay.** U.S. cities developed troubles. Many people were moving from the cities to the suburbs. Buildings decayed and good neighborhoods slowly turned to slums. Meanwhile the costs of running cities rose higher and higher. City governments

had to raise taxes to meet their budgets. Some of these governments tried to cut back on services such as garbage pickups and street cleaning. But this only hastened the spread of the slums.

**Social worries.** Even in the suburbs, all was not well. Critics charged that suburban people tended to act, dress, and think alike. In both cities and small places, **juvenile delinquency** (law-breaking by young people) was on the rise. Some experts worried about family life. More people got married than ever before. Yet more of these marriages were ending in divorce.

But while experts studied such problems, most Americans went on living, working, and buying. The U.S. was changing faster than ever before. For some, the changes were troubling. For others, the changes were part of the routine. Many Americans just hoped the changes would be good for them.

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## Chapter Check

1. Describe three ways in which the United States changed in the years after World War II. What was a major cause of each change?
2. Some post-war changes seemed to be good for Americans. What were they? Other post-war changes seemed to be bad for the country. Name them. Were there some changes that could be both good and bad? If so, list them, and give your reasons.

## CHAPTER 55

# The Coming of TV

**M**ilton Berle first stumbled into U.S. living rooms in 1948. Every Tuesday night, he made a point of doing everything wrong. He wore funny clothes. He twisted his mouth into strange shapes. He had pies thrown in his face. And for what? Strictly for laughs.

Berle was a stand-up comic. In his skits, he was usually the brunt of the jokes. But Berle had the last laugh. He and a few other comics did something earlier entertainers could not have done. These show people of the late 1940's played a large part in making TV-watching a national habit.

Berle's show was called *The Texaco Star Theatre*. When it began, few Americans had TV sets. TV screens were still quite small. All that viewers could see were greenish pictures that flickered. TV networks did not broadcast many shows. At night, most people went to movies, read, or listened to radio.

Then came Berle and other stars of early TV. Some of their shows were

sudden hits. People with TV sets would invite friends over to watch such programs. More and more Americans wanted to have sets of their own. More and more of them saved their money and made down payments.

In 1947 only about 14,000 U.S. homes had sets. In 1948 about 180,000 sets were sold. TV screens kept getting larger. TV pictures kept getting clearer. And Americans kept on buying sets. By 1953, five years later, 20 million sets had been sold.

Television led to a revolution in U.S. buying habits. And it led to a revolution in other ways as well. Television brought events and entertainment into homes from far-off places. It changed the way people lived. It changed how they thought. It even influenced the way they voted.

**Whirling disk.** How did television begin? In 1884 a German scientist named Paul Nipkow (NIP-koe) performed an experiment. He made a whirling disk with holes in it. This disk was able to scan moving images.



*Funnyman Milton Berle was one reason why many Americans of the 1950's spent their evenings at home.*

The light from various parts of the images fell on a chemical cell. This was a crude form of TV camera. A lamp that looked like a headlight reproduced the images. The "headlight" was an early form of a TV picture tube. The images on the lamp were only flickering shadows. Even so, they made a moving picture.

This invention paved the way for the development of TV. Yet scientists still had to find a way to send moving pictures over long distances. In 1925 U.S. inventor Charles Francis Jenkins made a discovery. He sent a picture over a distance in much the same way that radio waves are sent. Soon after, the first TV sets were built.

The first models were very expensive. Though few people could afford a TV set, many were curious about the device. Hundreds crowded into the RCA Building in New York City in 1939. They went to watch the first televised sports-cast. It was a college baseball game between Columbia and

Princeton. The show wasn't like today's sports-casts. Only one camera was set up—at the third-base line. When the ball was hit, the camera had to hunt all over the field for it. A sportscaster later recalled: "We got so we were praying for all the batters to strike out. That was *one* thing we knew the cameras could record."

**TV dinners.** A few years after World War II, television started to catch on. TV sets were produced more inexpensively. A few shows such as Milton Berle's became sudden hits. In 1948 sales of TV sets skyrocketed. The television revolution had begun.

People hurried home from school or work to watch "the tube." They went out at night less often, so other businesses were affected. Pre-cooked "TV dinners" went on the market. Restaurant sales took a dip. Movie houses started closing because fewer people went to them. Libraries and book stores reported a drop in business. Even jukebox profits were down. Huge numbers of Americans were home, watching TV.

Before the 1950's, radio networks had carried many dramas and variety shows. Once TV caught on, the audience for these shows faded. Many radio stations started playing rock music for teenagers. Other stations produced more talk shows.

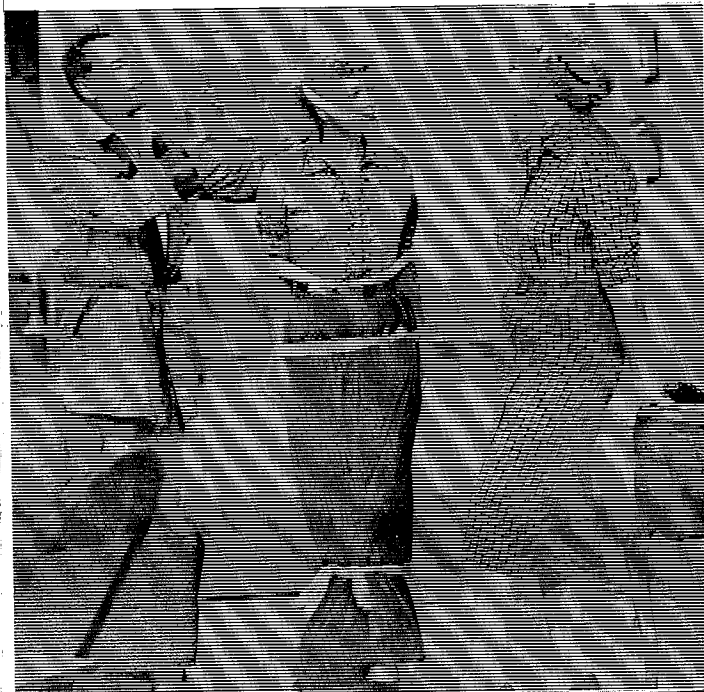
TV programs were paid for by advertising. Advertisers knew that large numbers of people watched TV commercials. So commercials were beamed to mass audiences. One lipstick company hit the jackpot. It started advertising on TV in 1950. By 1952 it was selling 90 times as many cosmetics as it had two years before.



**"Global village."** TV news informed people about national and local events. It covered political speeches and conventions. It showed what was going on across town—and around the world. By doing so, television turned the world into a kind of "global village." That is, it made the world appear even smaller than it had already come to seem.

The rules of political campaigns began to change. How candidates looked sometimes seemed as important as what they said. TV's political importance was shown in the 1952 Presidential election campaign. The Republican candidate, General Dwight D. ("Ike") Eisenhower, made 50 campaign ads for TV. His Democratic opponent, Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson, decided not to make TV campaign ads. Stevenson said they would make him feel he was being sold "like breakfast food."

*In I Love Lucy, Lucille Ball (center) got into a new scrape every week. Helping her into or out of it were Desi Arnaz (left) and Vivian Vance.*



Stevenson's campaign managers did schedule some of his speeches on network TV. But in order to carry one speech, the network had to cancel a popular show, *I Love Lucy*. Stevenson got angry letters with messages such as "I Love Lucy, I Like Ike—Drop Dead." Eisenhower won the election, and his TV campaign probably helped.

From the beginning, television had led to heated arguments. Some people called TV an "idiot box" and said most programs were silly. Others said that TV news was too powerful—and sometimes unfair. Yet TV was also praised as educational. Viewers said it had shown them parts of the world and its people they would not normally have seen.

Whatever the case, the hubbub proved again how much television had changed life in U.S. living rooms.

## Chapter Check

1. List three ways in which television changed American habits.
2. In what ways has television affected political campaigns? Do you think the good effects outweigh the bad effects? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Critics still charge that TV entertainment shows give a false image of the world. They say that TV comedies and dramas lack depth and meaning. They charge that characters on such programs are too shallow to be real. Do you agree with such criticism? How would you defend the shows you watch? Illustrate your points with examples from these programs.

## CHAPTER 56

# President Ike

**H**is blue eyes twinkled when he smiled. His warm grin put people at ease. On looks alone, some people said, Dwight David Eisenhower could be elected President. In 1952 he *was* elected President—but not simply on his looks. His career as a military man had won him the respect of the country.

Eisenhower had been born on October 14, 1890. He got the nickname "Ike" while he was growing up in Abilene, Kansas. His parents were poor. His father worked in a creamery, a place where butter and cheese are made. His mother grew fruits and vegetables, which she sold to people in town. She raised Ike and his five brothers strictly and taught them to work hard.

After finishing high school, Eisenhower attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. He was graduated from West Point in 1915, in the top third of his class. He became an Army officer, and, in time, a general. During World War II, Eisenhower was named top com-

mander of the Allied armies that would invade France.

At the end of the war, Ike was a great hero to millions of Americans. His friends suggested that he run for President. Ike ruled out this idea in 1948. But in 1952 he changed his mind. He became the Republican candidate against Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic nominee.

At first, experts thought the election would be close. Stevenson was a thoughtful speaker with a fine sense of humor. At the time, the U.S. was fighting a war in Korea. The war had dragged on since 1950. During the election campaign, Eisenhower pulled a surprise. If he were elected, he said, he would go to Korea to help end the war.

Eisenhower won the election easily. In December 1952, he went to Korea. The war did not end overnight. But in the summer of 1953 a truce was signed. The fighting came to a halt.

**Political restraint.** Meanwhile people wondered what Eisenhower would do about problems at home.

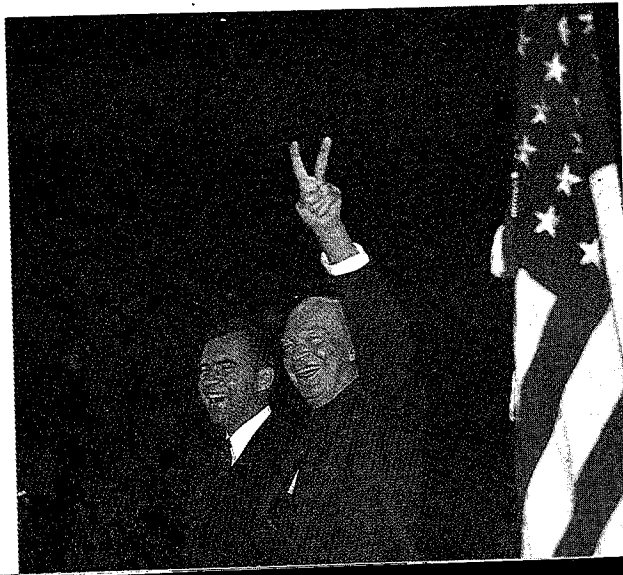
He was the first Republican President in 20 years. Presidents Roosevelt and Truman had worked hard to promote the programs they favored. Many of those programs had become law. Would Eisenhower now try to get rid of them?

Eisenhower disliked some of the programs. But he did not believe it was the President's job to twist Congress' arm to change them. He had a strong belief in the balance of power among the three branches of government. As President, he stated his ideas and proposed some new laws. Then he simply let Congress debate them. His restraint surprised many people.

Eisenhower was humble, frank, and quietly confident. He actively asked for other people's opinions on important issues. This President's strength, said one reporter, was his ability to get people to work together toward common goals.

The United States continued to grow and change under Eisenhower's leadership. Some of the change was

*Dwight Eisenhower was a confident campaigner. He is shown here with his Vice-Presidential running mate, Richard Nixon, accepting their party's nomination.*



physical. The nation began a massive 20-year program of road-building. These roads had a new name: *interstate highways*. Two new states, Alaska and Hawaii, were added to the Union. Now there were 50 stars in the U.S. flag.

**Diplomatic upset.** When Eisenhower entered the White House, the Cold War with the Soviet Union was at its coldest. Eisenhower spoke often of the need for world peace. Soviet leaders too were thinking about peace. The Soviet dictator Stalin died in 1953. Soon Soviet leaders began using a new word—**coexistence**. It meant different systems of government living in peace.

In 1959 Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev came to the United States. He inspected cornfields in Iowa. He talked face-to-face with Eisenhower. The Cold War seemed to be thawing. The "Big Four"—the U.S., the Soviet Union, Britain, and France—made plans for a conference in 1960. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss world peace. Soon after the meeting, Eisenhower was to visit the Soviet Union. But in May 1960, this plan fell apart.

Just before the meeting, the Soviets shot down a U-2 spy plane over their territory. It was a U.S. plane. At first, Eisenhower denied that the plane was on a spying mission. It was a weather plane that had strayed off course, U.S. officials said. But the Soviets had captured the pilot, Francis Gary Powers. Powers confessed he was on a spy mission. Khrushchev was angry. He took back his invitation to Eisenhower. The crisis became known as the U-2 incident. It was a great setback for Eisenhower.

**Military concern.** At the end of his second term in 1961, Eisenhower was 70 years old. He was the oldest U.S. President ever. He had not run for election to a third term. But he did not just withdraw quietly. He made a farewell speech on TV that raised some disturbing questions.

For the first time in history, the President declared, the U.S. was keeping a large peacetime military force. The federal government was constantly spending money to buy newer and better military equipment. One result was the growth of a large arms industry. Companies all across the country made weapons and parts for the military. These companies employed many people.

Eisenhower called this "the **military-industrial complex**." He said it was necessary. The nation had to maintain a strong defense. But he warned the nation to be careful. It must not let the military-industrial complex get too much power.

Eisenhower did not spell out just what he meant. But over the next few years, other people took up his warning. They made these further points:

**Jobs.** It was unwise, they said, to have too many jobs depend on military spending. If peace should suddenly "break out," many people would lose their jobs.

**Influence.** Many companies do all or most of their business with the military. Often these companies are major employers and have great national influence. Some people feared that they might use this influence to push for unwise military spending.

**Civilian rule.** Our system of government depends upon rule by civilians.

The President is a civilian. He is elected by the voters and is responsible to them. As President, he is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Military leaders take orders from him. Some people worried that, if the military became too strong, it might try to give orders to the President.

Eisenhower knew that the nation's founders had tried to create a government of checks and balances. He did not want the system to get out of balance. "We must never let the weight [of the military-industrial complex] endanger our liberties," he warned. "We should take nothing for granted."

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## Chapter Check

1. When was Dwight Eisenhower elected President? Name two changes that took place while he was in office.
2. In the U-2 incident, the United States was caught spying on the Soviet Union. Spying in peacetime is a troublesome issue. Many say it is against the spirit of democracy. But others say it is necessary to protect the safety of the U.S. Do you think the United States should spy on other countries? Why or why not?
3. In Eisenhower's last speech as President, he warned the nation to keep the power of two groups under control. What two groups was Eisenhower talking about? How had they achieved great influence? Was their influence good or bad for the U.S.? Explain your answer.

# Looking Back: Post-War America

## MAIN EVENTS

1. Harry Truman became President in 1945 after the death of Roosevelt. The Truman years were a time of recovery when the U.S. switched back to a peacetime economy.
2. The post-war years saw many changes. America's population grew rapidly with the "baby boom." Shopping centers and housing developments sprang up in suburban areas. People needed cars to get around. Americans discovered credit cards and "buy now, pay later" plans and went on a shopping spree.
3. The new affluence was not shared by all Americans. The gap between the poor and the rest of the population grew greater in these years. Millions of Americans still lived in poverty.
4. Television entered American homes and changed the "American way of life."
5. Jackie Robinson became the first black to play major league baseball. It was just the beginning of a new movement to gain full equality for black Americans.
6. Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected President in 1952. During his Presidency, two new states—Alaska and Hawaii—joined the Union.
7. The U.S. and the Soviet Union were in the midst of a Cold War. Eisenhower met with Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, in 1959. A peace conference was planned. Then, an American spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union. Khrushchev canceled the conference. It was an important setback for Soviet-American relations.
8. Eisenhower built up a strong peacetime military force. But he also warned the nation of the dangers of a powerful "military-industrial complex."

## WORDS TO KNOW

Below is a list of vocabulary terms from Part 9. Decide which term best completes the sentences that follow. Number your paper from 1 to 9. Write the correct term next to each number.

Cold War

baby boom

juvenile delinquency

Dixiecrats

minority groups

coexistence

affluent

urban decay

military-industrial complex

1. Immigrants, blacks, and other \_\_\_\_\_ suffered from poverty in the post-war years.
2. As people moved from the cities to the suburbs, city neighborhoods slowly began to turn into slums. This process is called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. In cities and suburbs, young people were breaking the law. \_\_\_\_\_ was on the rise.
4. After Stalin died, Soviet and American leaders had hopes of peaceful \_\_\_\_\_.
5. President Eisenhower called the booming arms industry a \_\_\_\_\_. He warned that it should not become too powerful.
6. World War II was followed by a \_\_\_\_\_ in the U.S. Many soldiers returned home and started families right away.
7. After World War II, \_\_\_\_\_ Americans bought houses, cars, and other consumer goods that had not been available during the war.
8. A conflict that involves words and threats rather than military action is known as a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ were Southern Democrats who did not support Truman in the 1948 election. They chose Strom Thurmond as their candidate for President.

## THINKING AND WRITING

### A. Comparing Presidents

In this exercise, you will compare Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. First, review Chapter 52. Make a list of the professional accomplishments and personal qualities of Harry Truman. Your list should include things he did, things he said, how he felt, and what he believed. Second, review Chapter 56. Make a similar list for President Eisenhower.

Write an essay that compares the *styles* of these two Presidents. Use your lists as a basis for the comparison. Your essay should begin with an introductory paragraph. In the second paragraph, discuss their *differences*. In the third paragraph, discuss their *similarities*. Your final paragraph should tie up your ideas and conclude your essay.

### **B. When Was It So?**

Set up two columns on your paper. Call one column "During World War II." Call the other column "After World War II."

Each of the words or phrases in the list below fits in one of these columns. Read each word or phrase, decide where it belongs, and write it in the proper column.

urban decay  
air-raid drills  
black market  
juvenile delinquency  
factories making refrigerators  
automobile factories making tanks  
factories making cars  
relocation camps  
rationing  
credit cards  
rush-hour traffic jams  
victory gardens  
mass-produced houses  
saving money  
spending money  
war bonds  
shopping centers  
two-car families  
shortage of gasoline  
shortage of tires  
baby boom  
teenage culture  
more working women  
rock 'n' roll music

### **C. Changing Times**

This exercise will use the columns that you set up in the previous exer-

cise. First, write a paragraph about life during World War II. Include all the items in your first column. Then, write a paragraph about life after World War II. Include all the items in your second column. Finally, write a paragraph about changing times. In this paragraph, discuss the changes that America experienced as it moved from wartime thrift to post-war affluence.

### **D. Expressing Your Opinion**

Some people think that watching TV is a waste of time. Other people think that watching TV is a great way to learn new things. What do *you* think? Write a short essay expressing your opinion. Support your opinion with specific examples of programs on TV today and in the past.

### **E. Teen Culture**

During the post-war years, teenagers became a recognized subculture. To find out the nature of teen subcultures today, you are going to compare your feelings and preferences with those of adults. Start by listing the following categories on the left-hand side of a piece of paper: Favorite Singers, Favorite TV Shows, Favorite Foods, Favorite Sports, Clothing Styles, Attitude Toward Money, Attitude Toward Education, Attitude Toward Career. On the right side of the page, make two columns: one headed Teenagers, one headed Adults. First fill in your answers in the Teenager column. Then fill in the Adult responses by interviewing family members and neighbors. Finally, compare results in class.

## SHARPENING YOUR SKILLS

This map shows the electoral vote by states in the Presidential election of 1948. In this election, there were four parties—Republican, Democratic, States' Rights, and Progressive—and four candidates—Thomas E. Dewey, Harry S. Truman, Strom Thurmond, and Henry Wallace. But although the Progressive party candidate, Wallace, won more than a million popular votes, he won no electoral votes at all. Study the map carefully. Then answer the questions.

1. Which state had the most electoral votes in 1948? Which of the

four candidates won this state?

2. True or false? Harry Truman won most of the electoral votes in the West.

3. True or false? Thomas Dewey won almost all of the electoral votes in the Northeast.

4. In what part of the U.S. did Strom Thurmond have most success?

5. In what part of the U.S. was Thomas Dewey most successful?

6. How many electoral votes did Truman receive? How many electoral votes did Dewey win?

## Electoral Vote, 1948

