

AP United States History

1950s Culture and Early Civil Rights

- Eisenhower's Dynamic Conservatism: First Modern Republican
 - Sought to balance budget + lower taxes
 - Lower tax rates for corporations
 - Did not roll back social + economic legislation but ended wage and price controls
 - Extended social security legislation
 - Interstate Highway Act — 1956: 42,000 miles of interstate highways
- Economy Prospers under Eisenhower
 - Post-war economy gave US the highest standard of living in the world
 - Per capita disposable income triples 1945-1960
 - Lower federal deficit
- Military Industry Complex
 - Eisenhower's Farewell Address warns about large scope of military in US
 - Coins this term to characterize close relationship between military and defense industry that supplies its hardware needs
- 1950s Big Ideas
 - Burgeoning private sector and continued federal spending
 - Baby boom and technological advancements spur economic growth
 - Middle-class suburbanization, social mobility, rapid expansion of higher education
 - Rise of the "Sun Belt" as political and economic force
- Levittown: Small affordable homes within driving distance of NYC + Philadelphia
 - Huge tracts of land, modest, identical houses
 - More people buying homes because mortgages were low and government insured, tax deductible
 - Led to the decline of the inner-city and "white flight"
- Rise of Sun Belt
 - Higher education opportunities, new technologies rapidly expanded
 - Increasing social mobility many Americans move to the southwest states

- Consumerism
 - Rise in automobile ownership
 - Television, Consumer products, and the importance of advertising
- Rock and Roll
 - Elvis, Chuck Berry
 - Originally was deemed dangerous by mainstream white commentator
 - Elvis made the genre accepted
- Beat Generation
 - Subversive undercurrent of the 1950s
 - Rejects conformity and Consumerism that were characteristic of the 50s
 - Could be seen as a prototype to counterculture of 1960s
 - Allan Ginsburg, Jack Kerouac