

Why have some seen the 1950s
as a time period of conformity?

Conformity

- Behavior in accordance with socially accepted standards.
(parents, government, schools, and society)

1950s

- <https://archive.org/details/DateWith1950>

Well-Defined Gender Roles

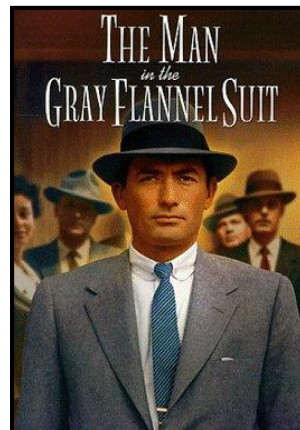
The *ideal modern woman* married, cooked and cared for her family, and kept herself busy by joining the local PTA and leading a troop of Campfire Girls. She entertained guests in her family's suburban house and worked out on the trampoline to keep her size 12 figure.

-- Life magazine, 1956



Marilyn
Monroe

The *ideal 1950s man* was the provider, protector, and the boss of the house. -- Life magazine, 1955



1956 → William H. Whyte, Jr. → *The Organization Man*

A a middle-class, white suburban male is the ideal.

- YouTube - Pete Seeger Little Boxes

malvina reynolds - little boxes - YouTube

- How does mass production affect Levitt's method?
- Does mass production produce better or worse products?
- Does it produce cheaper or more expensive products?

Suburban Living

Levittown, L. I.: "The American Dream"

1949 → **William Levitt** produced
150 houses per week.



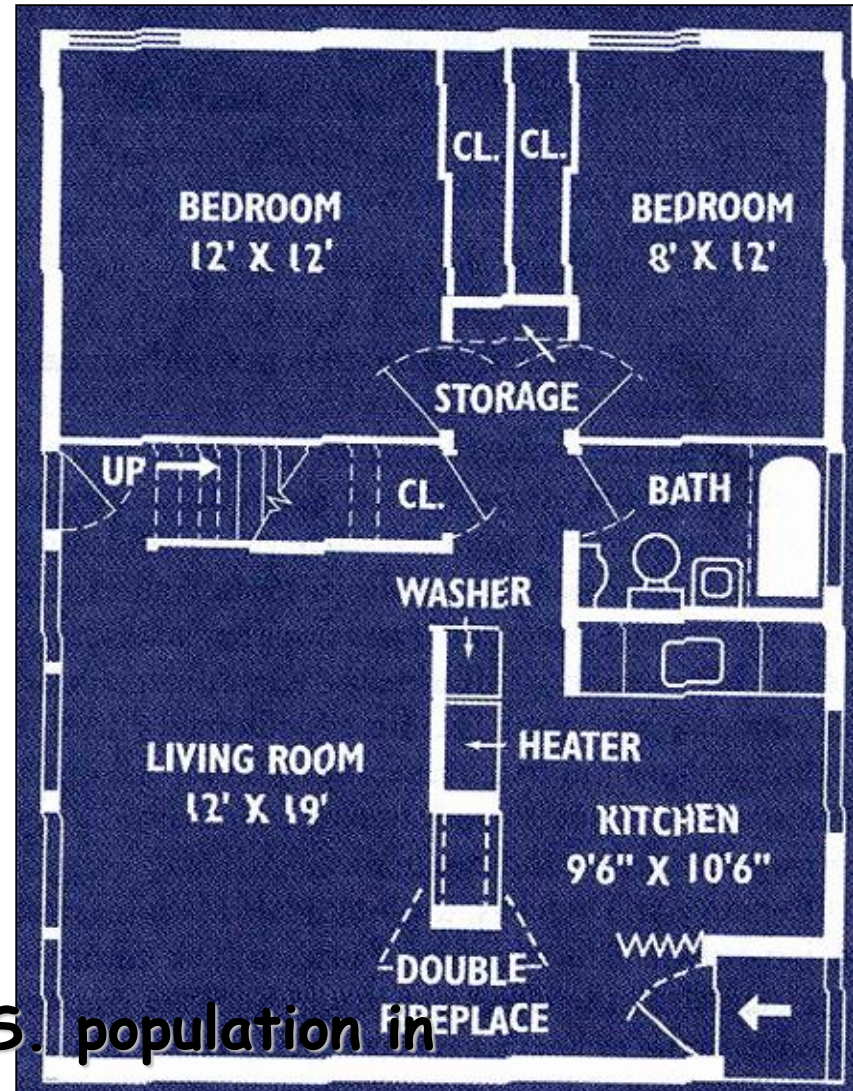
\$7,990 or \$60/month with no down payment.



Suburban Living:

The New "American Dream"

- k 1 story high
- k 12'x19' living room
- k 2 bedrooms
- k tiled bathroom
- k garage
- k small backyard
- k front lawn



By 1960 → 1/3 of the U. S. population in the suburbs.

Suburban Living: The Typical TV Suburban Families



*The Donna
Reed Show*
1958-1966



*Leave It
to Beaver*
1957-1963



Father Knows Best
1954-1958



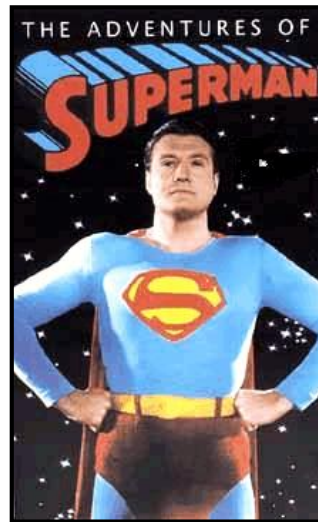
The Ozzie & Harriet Show
1952-1966

Television

1946 → 7,000 TV sets in the U. S.

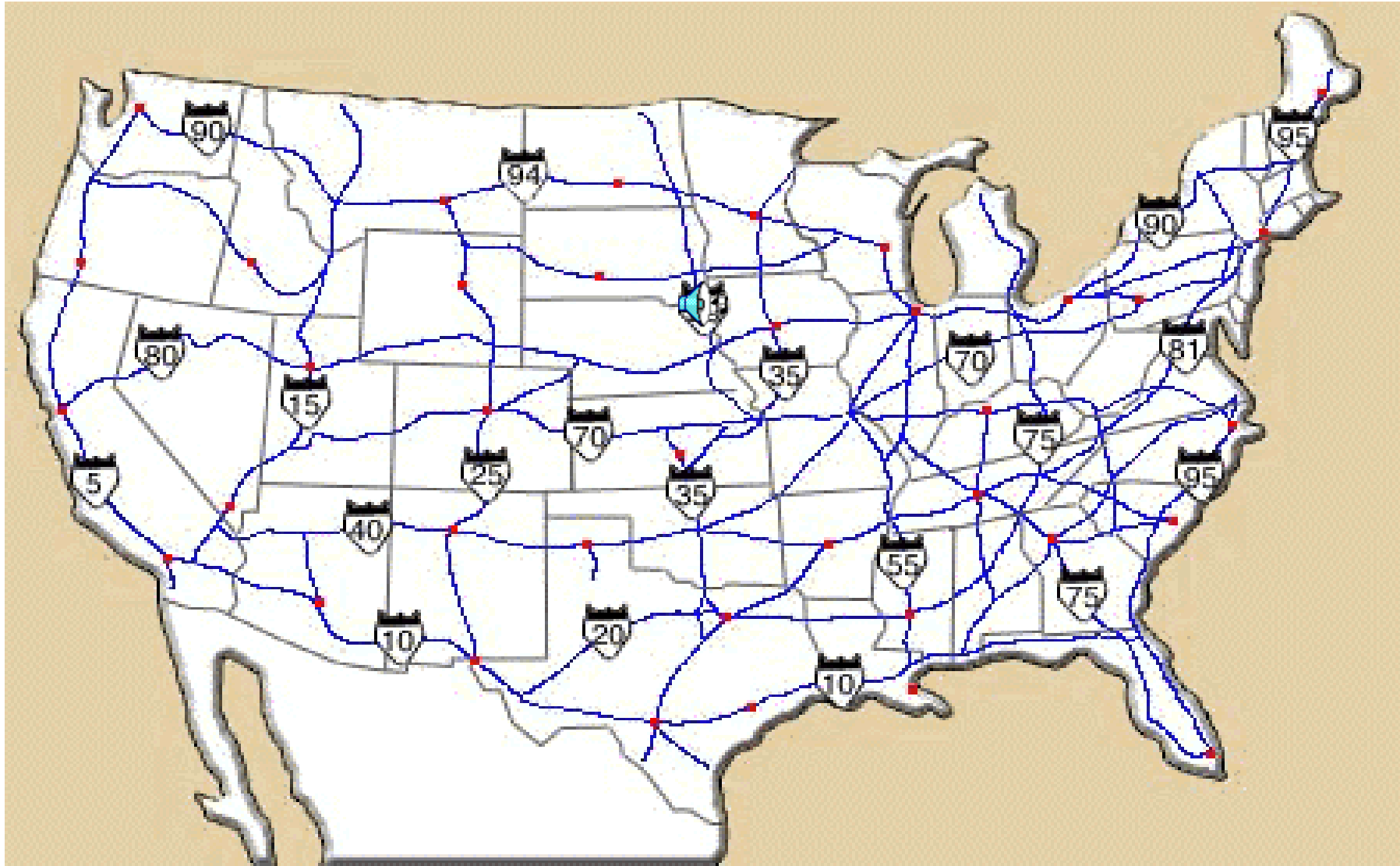
1950 → 50,000,000 TV sets in the U. S.

Mass Audience → TV celebrated traditional
American values.



Truth, Justice, and the American way!

Federal Highway Act (Interstate Highway System)



Factors Encouraging Suburbanization

- Mass-produced low-cost housing (Levittown)
- G.I. Bill – low interest, 0% down loans
- Post-war economic prosperity → **Consumerism**
- Baby Boom - 1957 → **1 baby born every 7 seconds**
- Interstate Highway System - Federal Highway Act - Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953 to 1961)



- Harry Truman



1945 to 1953

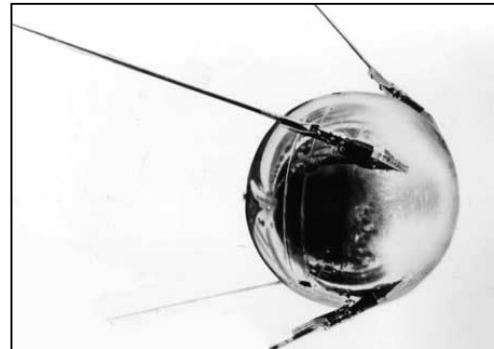
- **22nd Amendment (1951)** - a person can only be elected to be president two times for a total of eight years

Television and Gender Roles

- [YouTube - leave it to beaver](#)
- [YouTube - folgers coffee ad](#)

Progress Through Science

1957 → Russians launch **SPUTNIK I**



1958 → **National Defense Education Act** - funding to improve American schools (**Science & Technology**)

Progress Through Science

Atomic Anxieties:

→ “Duck-and-Cover Generation”



Atomic Testing:

→ 1946-1962 → U. S. exploded 217 nuclear weapons over the Pacific and in Nevada.

