SESSION PREPARATION
Read the following material before attending the workshop. As you read the excerpts and primary sources, take note of the “Questions to Consider” as well as any questions you have. The activities in the workshop will draw on information from the readings and the video shown during the workshop.

UNIT INTRODUCTION
After World War II, the United States experienced domestic prosperity through a huge baby boom, suburban migration, and advances in science and medicine. In the midst of this prosperity, many Americans were denied the same opportunities to attain the American Dream. Overshadowing the prosperity was a new fear of mass destruction, created by the invention of nuclear weapons.

UNIT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After reading the text materials, participating in the workshop activities, and watching the video, participants will understand
- the changing demographics in America that characterized residential migration patterns and population shifts;
- the achievements in science that boosted the standard of living and the ecological trade-offs of these advancements;
- the limitations of American prosperity and the widespread anxiety that accompanied the burgeoning Cold War.

THIS UNIT FEATURES
- Textbook excerpts (sections of U.S. history surveys, written introductory college courses by history professors)
- Primary sources (documents and other materials created by the people who lived in the period) including a poster, photographs, statistics, a map, and letters
- A timeline at the end of the unit, which places important events in the Cold War era
The United States was the only nation involved in World War II that emerged stronger than before the conflict began. For many Americans, World War II and its aftermath ushered in an era of domestic prosperity. Many servicemen returned home with the expectation of securing a job, raising a family, and owning their home; for others the expectations of better lives went unfulfilled. The GI Bill gave millions of returning veterans low-cost mortgages, medical care through the Veteran’s Administration, and tuition for higher education. Yet, the GI Bill also denied access to some benefits to Native Americans, African Americans, women, and homosexual GIs. The role of women changed as well. Many women lost their well-paying jobs when men returned, but most remained in the paid labor force in lower-paying female-dominated occupations. The proportion of married women in the paid labor force continued to rise after the war.

Many Americans strove to conform to the stereotypical ideal family—living in the suburbs, with the father as the principal breadwinner and the mother as the full-time homemaker—but the reality was much different. Some women had to work part-time to supplement the family income, a life contrary to the ideal of a full-time homemaker. Some scholars have depicted post-war suburbs as bastions of conformity, while others have emphasized the opportunity for self-expression and individuality that suburban life fostered.

As the Cold War began, Americans confronted the possibility of mass destruction from atomic weapons, the expansion of communism, and an arms race. A tension existed in American society that pitted the ideals of conformity against individualism. Individualism had existed for a long time as an American ideal, but became elevated during the anti-communist era of the Cold War. Some argued that the Soviet Union represented mass society, while the United States promoted individualism, free thought, independence, and autonomy.

Theme 1:
World War II and its aftermath ushered in an era of domestic prosperity—a huge baby boom, internal migration, and major scientific and medical breakthroughs.

Theme 2:
The dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki created new fears of mass destruction, raising the stakes in the American effort to combat communist influences at home and abroad.

Theme 3:
While a growing middle class was attaining the American Dream, many in the United States were denied access to the same opportunities.
**Historical Perspectives**

Most soldiers returning from World War II benefited from the newly established GI Bill and accessed the professed American Dream in new suburban residences. After suffering racial segregation in Southern base camps, many African American soldiers found the same systematic barriers in place upon their return from war—despite the promise of a two-front war against segregation abroad and racism at home.

Though the vision of identical houses lined along a cul-de-sac conjures an image of American conformity, the isolation of life in the suburbs meant that white, middle-class Americans could customize their existence. The ever-present threat of Communist saboteurs, real or imagined, kept society ill-at-ease and suspicious of any deviation.

**Faces of America**

A Navajo and a Marine, Keith Little eagerly enlisted after learning of the bombing of Pearl Harbor at his Indian boarding school in Ganado, Arizona. The Marines soon selected Little and other natives for special assignment. Though Native Americans often found themselves in harm’s way for their reputation as warriors, the job of code talker included the intellectual assignment of developing an intricate code that could not be deciphered by intercepting enemy combatants—a code based on the same native language earlier assimilation efforts had discouraged.

J. Robert Oppenheimer emerged as a rising star in the world of physics shortly before heading the effort to develop the atomic bomb. Following the successful detonation of the bomb at Los Almogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945, Oppenheimer began to question the application of science as a means of mass destruction. After proposing international oversight to the United States development of the hydrogen bomb, he found himself the subject of investigation for his dalliance with leftist ideology decades earlier. Capping an era of anti-Communist hysteria, the Atomic Energy Commission would strip Oppenheimer of his security clearance.

Rachel Carson has been called the mother of the environmental movement. Starting as a writer for the Bureau of Fisheries, her career married her twin passions of biology and literature. She published many books celebrating the natural world in a lyrical style that found appreciation from a wide readership. But her book *Silent Spring* challenged the powerful chemical lobby as it posited the dangers of DDT. She defended her findings before Congress and provided a clarion call for future environmentalists in the face of her critics.

**Hands on History**

What does hot-rod culture tell us about conformity/individualism and American culture during the Cold War?

The history of the hot rod provides a framework for interpreting the American mindset after World War II. Bruce Meyer, curator of the Petersen Auto Museum, explains the history of hot-rod culture and the process of creating a hot rod, and gives a guided tour of the birthplace of hot-rod culture—the So-Cal Speed Shop in Los Angeles, California.
**Theme One: World War II and its aftermath ushered in an era of domestic prosperity—a huge baby boom, internal migration, and major scientific and medical breakthroughs.**

**Overview**

The war ended the Depression and ushered in an era of domestic prosperity for most Americans. During the war, rationing and increased income led to pent-up desires for consumer goods. After the war, Americans were eager to spend the money they had saved on new appliances, automobiles, and homes. The GI Bill also gave millions of returning veterans low-cost mortgages, medical care through the Veteran’s Administration, and tuition for higher education. For African Americans, Native Americans, women, and homosexual GIs, however, the institutional practices of American society denied access to some of the benefits of the GI Bill.

As servicemen returned home with the expectation of finding a job, buying a home, and starting a family, the role of women changed as well. Although many women who had worked during the war left their full-time jobs to raise children and manage the household, a large number of married women continued to work outside the home. A baby boom that had begun prior to the war resulted from a high marriage rate, lower marriage age, and increase in the average number of children per couple. The population further increased with the development of such medical breakthroughs as the polio vaccine, which lowered the death rate.

The nation witnessed a migration out of cities and into the suburbs, where people could afford to buy their homes and there was plenty of space for a growing population. The federal government and business interests promoted and financed suburban expansion instead of investing in the nation’s urban centers.

**Questions to Consider**

1. What was the impact of World War II on women and minorities?
2. After the war, how did the spending habits of Americans change?
3. What changes occurred after World War II that prompted Americans to leave urban centers?
1. Wartime Migrations

Even before the United States officially entered World War II, the conflict had begun to change the face of the nation. The sleepy town of Richmond, California, perched near the north end of San Francisco Bay, underwent a profound transformation when the nation stepped up war production. The town’s mostly white population of 23,000 ballooned to 120,000 after industrialist Henry Kaiser constructed four shipyards there. The yards employed over 150,000 workers, more than one-fourth of them African American. Most were young, married migrants from the South, and there were slightly more women than men. They came to Richmond attracted by the better pay and benefits, along with the opportunity for greater freedom than they had known in the Jim Crow South . . .

Many cities, however, were ill equipped to handle the influx of migrants. An estimated 60,000 African Americans moved into Chicago, for example, causing an enormous housing crisis. Many newcomers lacked even a modicum of privacy as they crowded into basements and rooms rented from total strangers. Huge numbers of whites also came north, many leaving hardscrabble farms hoping to prosper in booming war industries.

Wartime also saw new migration from abroad and a reversal of earlier immigration policies. Because of the alliance with China in the war against Japan, Congress repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, and migrants from China became eligible for citizenship for the first time. Few Chinese actually arrived, however, and most immigration restrictions remained in force. The most significant wartime migration from abroad came from Mexico. In 1942, Mexico joined the Allies and provided an air force squadron trained in the United States that fought in the Pacific. An executive agreement between the United States and Mexico created the bracero program, which stipulated that the migrants were to be hired on short-term contracts and treated fairly. Under the bracero program, 300,000 Mexican laborers, mostly agricultural workers, came to the United States to labor in rural areas like California’s San Joaquin Valley, taking the place of “Okies” who migrated to cities for defense work. By the mid-1960s, nearly 5 million Mexicans had migrated north under the program . . .

2. Home Front Workers

Wartime opened up new possibilities for jobs, income, and labor organizing, for women as well as for men, and for new groups of workers. Disabled workers entered jobs previously considered beyond their abilities, fulfilling their tasks with skill and competence. Norma Krajczar, a visually impaired teenager from North Carolina, served as a volunteer aircraft warden where her sensitive hearing gave her an advantage over sighted wardens in listening for approaching enemy planes. Deaf people streamed into Akron, Ohio, to work in the tire factories that became defense plants, making more money than they ever made before. Along with new employment opportunities, workers' earnings rose nearly 70 percent. Income doubled for farmers and then doubled again . . .

For the first time, married women joined the paid labor force in droves and public opinion supported them. During the Depression, 80 percent of Americans had objected to the idea of wives working outside the home; by 1942, only 13 percent still objected. However, mothers of young children found very little help. In 1943 the federal government finally responded to the needs of working mothers by funding day-care centers. More than 3000 centers enrolled 130,000 children. Still, the program served only a small proportion of working mothers. Most women relied on family members to care for their children. A Women's Bureau survey in 1944 found that 16 percent of mothers working in war industries had no child-care arrangements at all. Meager to begin with and conceived as an emergency measure, government funding for child care would end after the war.

Before the war, most jobs for women were low-paying, nonunion positions that paid them an average of $24.50 a week. Wartime manufacturing jobs paid almost twice that much—$40.35 a week. During the conflict, 300,000 women worked in the aircraft industry alone . . .

New opportunities for women also opened up in the armed services. All sectors of the armed forces had dwindled in the years between the two wars and needed to gain size and strength. Along with the 10 million men aged 21 to 35 drafted into the armed services and the 6 million who enlisted, 140,000 women volunteered for the Women's Army Corps (WACs) and 100,000 for the Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service).

Wood et al., 782.
"Your children and what to do with them"

Question to Consider
How did the source above suggest women address the “problem” of finding childcare?

As important as it is to build ships, and as urgently as women are needed to help build them, no part of the war production program justifies the neglect of small children. However, excellent provisions have been made for the proper care of children whose mothers want to work in the shipyards. So, if you have small children, and you also want to do your part helping build ships, you might be assured that you can get the right kind of care for them. The important thing to remember is to make the arrangements before you start to work, or even before you start training for your job.

Here’s what to do. First, talk over your problems with the Child Care Counsellor. The telephone number is BRoadway 8411. This service is provided by the Children’s Department of the Multnomah County Public Welfare Commission. The women you will talk to here are experts, and

Item 5832
Portland Public Schools, HANDBOOK FOR NEW WOMEN SHIPYARD WORKERS (1943). Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society, Mss25470.

See Appendix for larger image – pg. 54
3. Postwar Reconversion

To ease the transition home, Congress had passed the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (the GI Bill) to provide crucial financial aid to veterans. It gave low-cost mortgages that helped create an explosion in home ownership. It created Veterans Administration hospitals to provide lifetime medical care. And it paid tuition and stipends for colleges and vocational training, making higher education broadly available for the first time. The 2 percent of veterans who were women also made use of these benefits. In the postwar era, when American politics generally became more conservative—shifting away from the New Deal reform spirit and toward an anticommunist emphasis—the GI Bill was the one area in which the United States expanded its own welfare state. The $14.5 billion spent on veterans over the next decade marked a public investment that helped propel millions of families into an expanding middle class.

[Some veterans did not reap the benefits of the GI Bill, while many women returned to commitments in the domestic sphere. African Americans used education benefits in colleges where they were allowed, but could not get housing loans. Native Americans on reservations had largely no access and no resources to take advantage of the GI Bill, and some banks refused to give them loans.]

Wood et al., 805.
Marital Status of the U.S. Adult Population, 1900–1995

As troops returned from the war, changes took place in the marital status of Americans. What does this graph tell us about the marriage rate after World War II? What do you think accounts for this change?

Marital status of Americans 18 years and older

Percentage

Married Single Widowed Divorced


Item 4138
Wood et al., 837.
The job opportunities that women gained during the war changed when the GIs returned and took the well-paying and highly skilled occupations. Opportunities for women shifted away from full-time work and towards the family. What happened to the fertility rate of U.S. women after World War II? Why did this happen?

Fertility rate is the annual number of live births per 1000 women aged 15–44 years.

Item 4140
Wood et al., 838.
4. Family Lives

Suburban life encouraged a sharpening of gender roles among the growing middle class. Men commuted to work while women were expected to find fulfillment in marriage and motherhood, including a nearly full-time job of unpaid housework. Most women did so while either feeling isolated in their homes or finding community with other women in their neighborhoods and churches. “We married what we wanted to be,” one female college graduate said. “If we wanted to be a lawyer or a doctor we married one.” An enormous amount depended on a woman’s choice of a husband, including class status and lifelong material well-being. Despite this partial retreat from wartime employment, however, fully one-third of American women continued to work for pay outside the home. The economic circumstances of most black women offered them little choice, and most wound up doing double housework: their own and that of families employing them as domestics. Middle-class women tended to view their paid work as a job rather than a career, a way to increase the family income if they did not have small children at home. Quotas in graduate schools and sex-segregated employment limited the number of female professionals.

Children moved even more firmly to the center of American family lives in these years. After a lengthy decline during the 1930s, marriage and birth rates picked up during the war and then accelerated sharply after 1945. After a brief upward spike in 1946, divorce rates declined for the first time in a century. From 1946 to 1964 women giving birth at a younger age to more children created the demographic bulge known as the baby boom. Large families reinforced the domestic focus of most women, putting the work of child-rearing at the center of their lives. Fatherhood became increasingly a badge of masculinity, with Father’s Day emerging as a significant holiday for the first time. Family physician Benjamin Spock published *Baby and Child Care* (1946), a runaway best-seller that helped shift the emphasis in American parenting from strictness to greater nurturance.

Strong feelings about pregnancy hinged on the marital status of the expectant mother. Married mothers were celebrated, but unmarried ones were rebuked. Despite the greater freedom of the war years, the sexual double standard remained in place, with women’s virtue linked directly to virginity in a way that men’s was not. Birth control devices such as the diaphragm were legal only for married women and only in certain states. Women seeking to terminate
unwanted pregnancies had to consider illegal abortions, the only kind available before 1970; millions did so, including one-fifth of all married women and a majority of single women who became pregnant. Two studies of American sexual behavior by Dr. Alfred Kinsey of Indiana University revealed that Americans often did not practice what they preached. The Kinsey reports of 1948 and 1953 shocked the public with their revelation of widespread premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse as well as homosexual liaisons. Rates of sex before marriage actually remained stable from the 1920s to the 1960s, but after World War II rates of teenage sex soared because so many teenagers got married. The average age of couples at the altar dropped as social pressures aimed to contain sex within marriage.

Wood et al., 817.
**Population Shifts, 1940–1950**

This map shows the huge growth in the United States between 1940 and 1950. Where is the largest population increase?

**Population Shifts, 1940–1950**

This map reveals the huge growth of population in the West and the sizable, though less extensive, increase in the Northeast and Southeast between 1940 and 1950.

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**Item 5615**

Shifts in Population Distribution, 1940–1960

These graphs show the change in the numbers of people who lived in central cities, rural areas, and suburbs. What do the graphs reveal about American life between 1940 and 1960?

This graph shows the progressive decline in rural population and the corresponding increase in suburban population between 1940 and 1960.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Item 5903
Nash et al., 900.
5. The Growth of the South and the West

[While changes took place in the American family, changes also occurred in the nation’s internal migration patterns.] The Sunbelt of the South, the Southwest, and California grew rapidly after the war, whereas older Rustbelt cities of the Northeast and Midwest such as Buffalo and Detroit began to lose manufacturing jobs and population. Like the 440,000 people who moved to Los Angeles during the war, postwar migrants to California and Arizona appreciated the weather and the economic opportunities. Military spending underwrote half the jobs in California during the first decade of the Cold War. Migrants from south of the border, meanwhile, found work primarily in California’s booming agricultural sector. The U.S. government continued to use the Bracero program as an exception to immigration laws for Mexicans willing to do arduous labor in the hot fields of the Golden State, thus encouraging the large influx of Mexicans into the U.S. Southwest. Agriculture in the arid Southwest depended on water management and irrigation, especially from dams on the lower Colorado River for Arizona and on several rivers flowing down from the Sierra Nevada range into California’s fertile central valley.

Two industries particularly stimulated the growth of the Sunbelt: cars and air conditioning. Automobiles helped shape the economies of western states, where new cities were built out of sprawling suburbs, and governments erected highways rather than railroads, subways, or other forms of public transportation. New car sales shot up from 70,000 in 1945 to 7.9 million in 1955. Inexpensive gasoline, refined from the abundant crude oil of Texas and Oklahoma, powered this fleet. Automobile exhaust pipes replaced industrial smokestacks as the primary source of air pollution, which by the 1960s shrouded Los Angeles—the “city of angels”—in smog. Air conditioning also became widely available after World War II and contributed to the breakdown of the South’s regional distinctiveness. From Miami and Atlanta to Houston and Washington, D.C., the dramatic economic and demographic expansion of the Sunbelt depended on the indoor comfort brought by controlling summertime heat and humidity.

Wood et al., 818–19.
6. Consumer Spending and the Suburban Ideal

The postwar years witnessed a huge increase in spending power. Between 1947 and 1961, the number of families rose 28 percent, national income increased more than 60 percent, and the number of Americans with money to spend beyond basic necessities doubled. Rather than putting this money aside for a rainy day, Americans were inclined to spend it. Investing in one’s home, along with the trappings that would enhance family life, seemed the best way to plan for a secure future.

Between 1950 and 1970, the suburban population more than doubled, from 6 million to 74 million. Fully 20 percent of the population remained poor during this prosperous time. But most families of ample as well as modest means exhibited a great deal of conformity in their consumer behavior, reflecting widely shared beliefs about the good life. They poured their money into homes, domestic appliances, televisions, automobiles, and family vacations. As prosperity spread throughout the 1950s, expenditures for food and clothing increased modestly, and spending on household appliances, recreation, automobiles, and televisions more than doubled. Homeowners moved into more than 1 million new suburban houses each year.

. . . [F]amilies who settled in the suburbs provided the foundation for new types of community life and leisure pursuits, sometimes at the expense of older ones grounded in ethnic neighborhoods and kinship networks. Family-oriented amusement parks such as Disneyland in Anaheim, California, which opened in 1955, catered to middle-class tastes, in contrast to older venues such as Coney Island, known for their thrill rides, class and ethnic mixing, and romantic environments. Religious affiliation rose to an all-time high as Americans built and joined suburban churches and synagogues, complete with youth programs and summer camps. Families piled into the car for outings to local drive-in theaters and weekend excursions or shared leisure time gathered around television sets. In 1949, fewer than 1 million American homes had a television. Within the next four years, the number soared to 20 million . . .

The Cold War made a profound contribution to suburban sprawl. In 1951 the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* devoted an issue to “defense through decentralization” that argued in favor of depopulating the urban core to avoid a concentration of residences or industries in a potential target area for a nuclear attack. Joining this effort was the American Road Builders’ Association, a lobbying group second only in power and wealth to the munitions industry. As a result of these pressures, Congress passed the Interstate Highway Act in 1956,
which provided $100 billion to cover 90 percent of the cost for 41,000 miles of national highways. When President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the bill into law, he stated one of the major reasons for the new highway system: “[In] case of atomic attack on our key cities, the road net must permit quick evacuation of target areas.” Many people believed that the suburbs also provided protection against labor unrest, which might lead to class warfare.

According to the Cold War ethos of the time, class conflict within the United States would weaken the nation and harm its image abroad, bolstering the Soviet Union and making the United States vulnerable to communism.

The worst-case scenario was communist takeover and the defeat of the United States in the Cold War. Pentagon strategists and foreign policy experts feared that the Soviet Union might gain the military might to allow its territorial expansion and, eventually, world domination. But observers also worried that the real dangers to America were internal: racial strife, emancipated women, class conflict, and familial disruption. To alleviate these fears, Americans turned to the family as a bastion of safety in an insecure world. Most postwar Americans longed for security after years of depression and war and saw family stability as the best bulwark against the new dangers of the Cold War.

Wood et al., 837.
7. Population Growth

The rising birthrate was the dominant factor affecting population growth, but the death rate was also declining. Miracle drugs made a difference. Federal sponsorship of medical research during World War II had spurred the development of penicillin and streptomycin, now widely available. They helped cure strep throat and other bacterial infections, intestinal ailments, and more serious illnesses such as tuberculosis. A polio vaccine introduced a decade after the war virtually eliminated that dreaded disease. Life expectancy rose: midway through the 1950s, the average was 70 years for whites and 64 for blacks, compared with 55 for whites and 45 for blacks in 1920.

Nash et al., 896.
Question to Consider
What do these items convey about the use of DDT by the U.S. Army?


Historical Significance:
DDT was a result of scientists’ efforts during World War II to fight insect-transmitted diseases such as typhus and malaria that could infect American troops. In the 1930s, scientists discovered that a chemical substance called DDT not only exterminated insects, but also left a residue on surfaces that could exterminate pests for weeks. Both the German and American armies used DDT, and the U.S. Army used it to stop a typhus epidemic in Italy during December 1943. In the Pacific, the Allies used hand sprayers, such as the one pictured above, to spray troops. In Third World countries, DDT succeeded in controlling malaria. In 1944, the federal government sprayed DDT to reduce flies on a New Jersey island, but it significantly reduced the fish population. By 1950, there were enough examples of DDT’s harmful effects that the Food and Drug Administration determined that it was “extremely likely that the potential hazard of DDT has been underestimated.”
**Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring***

**Questions to Consider**

1. What was the threat that Carson presented?
2. Why would this information be considered risky to publish in 1962?

... The chemicals to which life is asked to make its adjustment are no longer merely the calcium and silica and copper and all the rest of the minerals washed out of the rocks and carried in rivers to the sea; they are the synthetic creations of man’s inventive mind, brewed in his laboratories, and having no counterparts in nature.

To adjust to these chemicals would require time on the scale that is nature’s; it would require not merely the years of a man’s life but the life of generations. And even this, were it by some miracle possible, would be futile, for the new chemicals come from our laboratories in an endless stream; almost five hundred annually find their way into actual use in the United States alone. The figure is staggering and its implications are not easily grasped—500 new chemicals to which the bodies of men and animals are required somehow to adapt each year, chemicals totally outside the limits of biologic experience.

Among them are many that are used in man’s war against nature. Since the mid-1940s over 200 basic chemicals have been created for use in killing insects, weeds, rodents, and other organisms described in the modern vernacular as “pests”; and they are sold under several thousand different brand names.

These sprays, dusts, and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests, and homes—nonselective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the “good” and the “bad,” to still the song of the birds and the leaping of fish in the streams, to coat the leaves with a deadly film, and to linger on in the soil—all this though the intended target may be only a few weeds or insects. Can anyone believe it is possible to lay down such a barrage of poisons on the surface of the earth without making it unfit for all life? They should not be called “insecticides” but “biocides.”

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**Creator:** Rachel Carson  
**Context:** In farming, the use of chemical pesticides yielded huge gains in productivity. By the 1950s, the spraying of chemical pesticides was commonplace  
**Audience:** The general public and policy makers in the Kennedy Administration  
**Purpose:** Carson questioned the indiscriminate use of chemicals and their effects on the environment  
**Historical Significance:** Not all scientific advances signaled progress. Since 1945, Rachel Carson had questioned the governmental use of the pesticide DDT, which the government hailed as a scientific breakthrough in eradicating malaria and controlling mosquitoes. In 1962, Carson published *Silent Spring*, a critique of the chemical industry's use of pesticides. It climbed up the best-seller list and remained there for months, eventually selling more than 1.5 million copies. Based on Carson’s research, the federal government established a commission to investigate pesticides, and reversed its pesticide policy by banning the use of DDT by the end of the 1960s. The book spurred on the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s.
8. The New Suburbs

... For people of means, cities were places to work in but then to leave at five o’clock. In Manhattan, south of the New York borough’s City Hall, the noontime population of 1.5 million dropped to 2,000 overnight. “It was becoming a part-time city,” according to writer John Brooks, “tidally swamped with bustling humanity every weekday morning when the cars and commuter trains arrived, and abandoned again at nightfall when the wave sucked back—left pretty much to thieves, policemen, and rats.”

[After 1945] Americans moved to the suburbs to buy homes that could accommodate their larger families. [Prior to 1945, there was some suburban growth, but it accelerated dramatically in Levittown’s Long Island, outside Philadelphia, and other suburban developments. The flight to the suburbs fragmented urban ethnic neighborhoods and changed the nature of communities within cities.] Often rapidly constructed, suburban tract houses provided the appearance of comfort and space and the chance to have at least one part of the American dream—a place of one’s own. They seemed protected from city problems, insulated from the troubles of the world outside.

[Some criticized suburban developments as bastions of conformity. Historians have recently argued that, despite rows of identical houses, there was room for self-expression and individuality. New homeowners customized these suburban houses to suit their family and tastes by rearranging walls and redesigning interior space.]

... As suburbs flourished, businesses followed their customers out of the cities. Shopping centers led the way. At the end of World War II, there were eight, but the number multiplied rapidly in the 1950s. In a single three-month period in 1957, 17 new centers opened; by 1960, there were 3,840 in the United States. Developers like Don M. Casto, who built the Miracle Mile near Columbus, Ohio, understood the importance of location as Americans moved out of the cities. “People have path-habits,” he said, “like ants.” Shopping centers catered to the suburban clientele and transformed consumer patterns. They allowed shoppers to avoid the cities entirely and further eroded urban health.

Nash et al., 898.
Conclusion
World War II opened up new opportunities for people serving on the Home Front and in the military. Americans migrated to areas needing workers for the production of war materials. After the war, women and minorities who had gained economic independence as a result of the war lost ground to returning servicemen seeking jobs. The expectation for women was that they would get married and raise children; the expectation for men was that they would earn enough income to support a middle-class, suburban lifestyle. The large number of women who continued to work outside the home challenged this expectation.

Questions to Consider
1. What were some causes that resulted in increases in suburban development?
2. How did scientific discoveries change the way people lived in the postwar years?
3. How did the interstate highway system change American transportation?
**Theme Two:** The dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki created new fears of mass destruction, raising the stakes in the American effort to combat communist influences at home and abroad.

**Overview**

After the atomic bombs annihilated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, many Americans became anxious about the destructive power of this new technology. Science-fiction stories described a world devastated by nuclear war, while movies such as the *The Attack of the Crab Monsters* depicted a world full of radiation exposure. In 1949, the Soviet Union successfully detonated an atomic bomb, which shocked the American public into the realization that the United States no longer held a monopoly on atomic power. In 1952, the successful testing of the hydrogen bomb, a thousand times more powerful than the atom bomb, further heightened the fear of mass destruction.

This fear became exacerbated when the Soviets used a rocket to launch the space satellite, Sputnik. Some feared the Soviets would deliver a bomb via a rocket. A competitive arms race developed in which both the United States and the Soviet Union stockpiled nuclear weapons.

Controversy ensued about the use of nuclear weapons, with scientists warning that all life on Earth could be wiped out. The production of nuclear weapons alone fatally exposed thousands to radiation, produced radioactive waste, and stirred such fear of fallout that some Americans purchased bomb shelters. With the mission of leading “mankind away from war and toward peace and justice,” the Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE) alerted the public to the risks of nuclear radiation. Inspired by the SANE effort and worried about the effects of nuclear radiation on their children, women activists took to the streets and organized protest movements to halt the testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

**Questions to Consider**

1. What were the major national security concerns after World War II?
2. In what ways did the idea of the “American way of life,” centered on the family, become part of the government’s domestic and international Cold War agenda?
3. Why was it necessary for the United States to respond to the launching of Sputnik with a competitive arms race with the Soviet Union?
1. The Creation of the National Security State

[In 1949] President Truman shared some . . . grim news with the American public: the Soviet Union had detonated its first nuclear device. The United States had lost the atomic monopoly that for four years had assured Americans of their unique position of military strength. These events in the fall of 1949 shook the confidence of American political leaders. Truman asked his advisers for a full reevaluation of the nation’s foreign policy . . .

The National Security Act of 1947 and its 1949 amendments created the institutions of the new national security state. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) organized spying and covert operations, the Department of Defense unified the separate branches of the military and the National Security Council (NSC) coordinated foreign policy information for the president.

Wood et al., 823.
From NSC-68: U.S. Objectives and Programs for National Security (April 14, 1950)

Questions to Consider
1. What evidence did NSC-68 use to support its argument?
2. How did NSC-68 propose to stop the expansion of communism?

The Soviet Union, unlike previous aspirants to hegemony, is animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own, and seeks to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world . . .

The issues that face us are momentous, involving the fulfillment or destruction not only of this Republic but of civilization itself . . . The assault on free institutions is worldwide now, and in the context of the present polarization of power a defeat of free institutions anywhere is a defeat everywhere . . .

The integrity of our system will not be jeopardized by any measures, covert or overt, violent or non-violent, which serve the purposes of frustrating the Kremlin design, nor does the necessity for conducting ourselves so as to affirm our values in actions as well as words forbid such measures . . .

The total economic strength of the U.S.S.R. compares with that of the U.S. as roughly one to four . . . The military budget of the United States represents 6 to 7 percent of its gross national product (as against 13.8 percent for the Soviet Union) . . . This difference in emphasis between the two economies means that the readiness of the free world to support a war effort is tending to decline relative to that of the Soviet Union.

It is true that the United States armed forces are now stronger than ever before in other times of apparent peace; it is also true that there exists a sharp disparity between our actual military strength and our commitments . . . It is clear that our military strength is becoming dangerously inadequate . . .

In summary, we must [engage in] a rapid and sustained build-up of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world.

Wood et al., 825.
2. The Cold War at Full Tide, 1953–1979

During the third quarter of the twentieth century, the Cold War cast a long shadow over the United States and the rest of the world. Tensions mounted at home and abroad as the United States and the Soviet Union vied for power among the world’s nations. In poor Third World countries, insurgents attempted to throw off the yoke of colonialism and play the two superpowers against each other. The United States used a variety of strategies to counter Soviet influence in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, including military force in Korea and Vietnam, white-knuckle diplomacy in Cuba, extensive aid to non-aligned countries and covert operations worldwide.

Soviet advances in science and technology spurred the U.S. government to sponsor bold new domestic initiatives in the areas of public education and space exploration. The Cold War even helped to shape a post–World War II domestic ideal: a . . . family living in a house in the suburbs, with a breadwinner father and a full-time homemaker mother. Many Americans believed that their prosperous, consumer-oriented economy, with its emphasis on individualism and personal choice, was a key weapon in the fight against communism.

Wood et al., 832.

3. The Middle of the Road

Eisenhower’s plans to reduce defense spending derailed on October 4, 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial Earth satellite. Although Sputnik could not be seen with the naked eye—it was only 22 inches in diameter and weighed only 184 pounds—it emitted a beeping noise that was broadcast by commercial radio stations in the United States, making its presence very real and causing near hysteria among the public. The Soviet’s launching of Sputnik II a month later seemed to confirm widespread fears that the United States was behind in the space race and, more significantly, in the arms race. Eisenhower’s popularity in the polls suddenly dropped 22 points.

Acquiescing to his critics, the president allotted increased funds for military, scientific, and educational spending. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which developed the program of space exploration, was one result of this increase. But Eisenhower believed that “the most critical problem of all” was the lack of American scientists and engineers. He proposed that the federal government subsidize additional science and math training for both teachers and students. He also called for an improvement in overall education so that the next generation would be “equipped to live in the age of intercontinental ballistic missiles.” On September 2, 1958, Eisenhower signed Public Law 85-864, also known as the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which authorized more than $1 billion in education spending.

Wood et al., 849.
4. Eisenhower’s Foreign Policy

The Eisenhower administration continued to distrust countries that maintained neutrality in the Cold War, fearing that those not aligned with the United States might turn to communism and become allies of the Soviet Union. In 1956 Secretary of State John Foster Dulles declared that neutrality “is an immoral and shortsighted conception.” Anticommunism became the guiding principle behind nearly all U.S. foreign policy, taking precedence over other American ideals, such as support for democratically elected governments and national self-determination. Acting on its anticommunist priority, the United States helped overthrow democratically elected leaders and prop up corrupt and often brutal dictatorships.

... In 1958 Latin Americans expressed their displeasure when Vice President Richard M. Nixon, on a goodwill tour of South America, faced angry protesters wherever he went. Nixon was nearly killed in Caracas, Venezuela, when demonstrators attacked his motorcade.

In 1959 revolutionary leader Fidel Castro overthrew Cuba’s U.S.-friendly dictator Fulgencio Batista. Castro established a regime in Cuba based on principles of socialism. His government took control of foreign-owned companies, including many owned by Americans. Castro’s socialist policies alarmed U.S. officials and investors in Cuba. Eisenhower’s hostility encouraged Castro to forge an alliance with the Soviet Union. The CIA then launched a plot to overthrow Castro, which would culminate in an ill-fated invasion in 1961. In 1960–1961, the CIA also helped orchestrate the overthrow and assassination of the charismatic left-leaning Patrice Lumumba, the first minister of the Republic of the Congo, soon after its independence from Belgium.

Wood et al., 850.

5. The Cold War at Home

... The era of [McCarthyism] found its name in the previously obscure junior senator from Wisconsin, Republican Joseph McCarthy. With a single speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, on February 9, 1950, this genial but ambitious politician soared to prominence. “I have here in my hand a list of 205” Communist party members working in the State Department, he declared. Over the next four years, the numbers and names changed as McCarthy stayed one step ahead of the evidence while intimidating witnesses before his Senate subcommittee. In reality, one reporter joked, McCarthy “couldn’t find a Communist in Red Square” in Moscow. He talked about Communists, but his show was about Democrats. As the war in Korea raged, he mercilessly red-baited the Truman administration. But after the Republican electoral victory in 1952, his excesses lost their partisan utility. With the end of the war in Korea and his ill-advised attacks on the U.S. Army itself as supposedly infiltrated by Communists (the Army–McCarthy hearings), he was at last censured by his Senate colleagues in 1954 and died an early, alcohol-related death in 1957.

Wood et al., 820.
The Kitchen Debate, 1959

Question to Consider
What is the larger argument between Nixon and Khrushchev that is going on over these kitchen appliances?

Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev U.S. Embassy, Moscow, Soviet Union
[Both men enter kitchen in the American exhibit.]

Nixon: I want to show you this kitchen. It is like those of our houses in California. [Nixon points to dishwasher.]

Khrushchev: We have such things.

Nixon: This is our newest model. This is the kind which is built in thousands of units for direct installations in the houses. In America, we like to make life easier for women . . .

Khrushchev: Your capitalistic attitude toward women does not occur under communism.

Nixon: I think that this attitude towards women is universal. What we want to do, is make life more easy for our housewives . . .

Nixon: This house can be bought for $14,000, and most American [veterans from World War II] can buy a home in the bracket of $10,000 to $15,000. Let me give you an example that you can appreciate. Our steel workers as you know, are now on strike. But any steel worker could buy this house. They earn $3 an hour. This house costs about $100 a month to buy on a contract running 25 to 30 years.

Khrushchev: We have steel workers and peasants who can afford to spend $14,000 for a house. Your American houses are built to last only 20 years so builders could sell new houses at the end. We build firmly. We build for our children and grandchildren.

Creator: Richard M. Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev

Context: The “kitchen debate” took place in the context of increased tension between the United States and the Soviet Union at a U.S. trade exhibit in Moscow that featured an American kitchen.

Audience: Visitors to the American National Exhibition in Moscow

Purpose: In 1959, while touring an American trade exhibition in Moscow, the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and Vice President Richard Nixon had a heated exchange of words about the merits of capitalism versus communism.

Historical Significance: This was a debate between a capitalist and a communist over which system provided a better material life for its citizens. For Nixon, American freedom amounted to consumer choice, particularly the opportunity for American women in the home to purchase and select the consumer goods of their liking. Nixon grounded his argument in American consumerism and private life—where women were homemakers, alleviated from the drudgery of household chores through modern appliances and technology. Khrushchev argued that capitalists had too many rich and too many poor, but the distribution of wealth was more equitable under socialism. The debate illustrated the heightened tension between the United States and the Soviet Union and added to Vice President Nixon’s prestige at home. Nixon returned to the Soviet Union in 1972—this time as president.
**Nixon:** American houses last for more than 20 years, but, even so, after 20 years, many Americans want a new house or a new kitchen. Their kitchen is obsolete by that time . . . The American system is designed to take advantage of new inventions and new techniques.

**Khrushchev:** This theory does not hold water. Some things never get out of date—houses, for instance, and furniture, furnishings perhaps—but not houses. I have read much about America and American houses, and I do not think that this is exhibit and what you say is strictly accurate.

**Nixon:** Well, um . . .

**Khrushchev:** I hope I have not insulted you.

**Nixon:** I have been insulted by experts. Everything we say [on the other hand] is in good humor. Always speak frankly . . .

6. Consumer Spending and the Suburban Ideal

The house and commodity boom had tremendous propaganda value during the Cold War, as Nixon demonstrated in the Kitchen Debate.

Although they may have been unwitting soldiers, consumers who marched off to the nation’s shopping centers to equip their new homes joined the ranks of Americans taking part in the Cold War. As early as 1947, newscaster and noted cold warrior George Putnam described shopping centers as “concrete expressions of the practical idealism that built America . . . plenty of free parking for all those cars that we capitalists seem to acquire. Who can help but contrast [them] with what you’d find under communism?”

Wood et al., 837.
7. The Impact of Nuclear Weapons

[N]uclear weapons altered the American environment. Weapon tests with such code names as “Dirty Harry” released vast quantities of radiation into the atmosphere. The Atomic Energy Commission assured those near the mushroom clouds, “Fallout does not constitute a serious hazard.” But local cancer rates spiked upward for Bikini Islanders in the Pacific, where the first tests occurred, and then for farmers and ranchers in Utah and Nevada, when tests began 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas in 1953. At St. George, Utah, downwind from the test site, radioactive plutonium dusted the citizens, livestock, and a crew shooting a movie in the desert. Of the 0 people from Hollywood who worked on The Conqueror, 91 had contracted cancer by 1980 and 40 had died, including film star John Wayne.

Related dangers stalked other parts of the “nuclear West.” Navajo Indians mining uranium in the Four Corners region (where Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet) paid dearly for their intensive exposure to the poisonous material, as did thousands of workers involved in nuclear weapon production. Weapon assembly plants in Hanford, Washington, and Rocky Flats, Colorado, leaked radioactivity into the groundwater. In combination with the nuclear power industry, atomic weapon development resulted in an enormous supply of radioactive waste—deadly for 10,000 more years—that the U.S. government still does not know how to dispose of safely. The quest for security produced a whole new kind of insecurity.

The government offered reassurances about the safety of the atom, and the Atomic Energy Commission covered up evidence of radioactivity’s ill effects. But many Americans were deeply anxious about this destructive new power that loomed over their lives, especially as the Soviet–American arms race intensified. Science fiction stories painted frightening pictures of a future devastated by nuclear war. Movies such as The Blob and The Attack of the Crab Monsters portrayed a world haunted by exposure to radiation. Them! featured mutant ants the size of buses crawling out of a New Mexico atomic test site. Concerns about a nuclear world escalated with the successful 1952 test of an American hydrogen bomb, a thousand times more powerful than the device that destroyed Hiroshima. Always suspicious of centralized power, Americans worried that one person in the Oval Office or the Kremlin could almost instantaneously obliterate entire continents.

Wood et al., 815.
**The Day the Earth Stood Still**

**Movie Poster**

**Question to Consider**

How does the poster contextualize the anxiety of the “atomic age”?

*FROM OUT OF SPACE.... A WARNING AND AN ULTIMATUM!*

**THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL**

*WITH: MICHAEL RENNIE • PATRICIA NEAL • HUGH MARLOWE* 

*JULIAN BLAUSTEIN • ROBERT WISE • EDMUND H. NORTH 20TH CENTURY FOX* 

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**Creator:** Twentieth Century Fox  
**Context:** Released during heightened Cold War tensions in 1951  
**Audience:** American movie-viewing public  
**Purpose:** To show how Hollywood produced science-fiction films that reflected the threat of nuclear war with our Cold War enemies  

**Historical Significance:**

In 1951, Twentieth Century Fox released what became the science fiction classic, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Displeased by the Earth’s detonation of the atomic bomb, an alien planetary federation sends Klaatu and his robot, Gort, to warn Earthlings to stop their aggressive use of atomic weapons or face obliteration. The film reflected Cold War fears and anxieties of nuclear war. Unlike other Hollywood science-fiction films of the day, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* portrayed space aliens as peaceful, portending a message of inevitable doom if Earth continued to use atomic weapons.

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Item 5513  
Twentieth Century Fox; MOVIE POSTER FOR *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951).  
Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox/Photofest.  

*See Appendix for larger image – pg. 56*
8. Nuclear Proliferation

. . . Authors in both the scientific and the popular press focused attention on radioactive fallout . . . Nevil Shute's best-selling 1957 novel On the Beach, and the film that followed, also sparked public awareness and fear. The story described a war that released so much radioactive waste that all life in the Northern Hemisphere disappeared, while the Southern Hemisphere awaited the same deadly fate. Worried about public opinion around the world, the Eisenhower administration sought to counter the film's pessimistic message both at home and abroad. The assumption that a war would wipe out all life was untrue, officials argued, as was the image of people simply passively awaiting death. In 1959, when Consumer Reports, the popular magazine that tested and compared various products, warned of the contamination of milk with the radioactive isotope strontium-90, the public grew even more alarmed.

The discovery of fallout provoked a shelter craze. Bob Russell, a Michigan sheriff, declared that “to build a new home in this day and age without including such an obvious necessity as a fallout shelter would be like leaving out the bathroom 20 years ago.” Good Housekeeping magazine carried a full-page editorial in November 1958 urging the construction of family shelters. More and more companies advertised ready-made shelters. A firm in Miami reported numerous inquiries about shelters costing between $1,795 and $3,895, depending on capacity, and planned 900 franchises. Life magazine in 1955 featured an “H-Bomb Hideaway” for $3,000. By late 1960, the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization estimated that a million family shelters had been built.

Nash et al., 951.
**Theme Two: Primary Source**

**Dr. Spock Is Worried**

**Question to Consider**

How does this advertisement convey that Dr. Spock is worried?

![Advertisement Picture]

**Creator:** The Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy

**Context:** The escalation of nuclear arms in the United States and among other world powers

**Audience:** Readers of the *New York Times*

**Purpose:** To alert Americans to the threat of nuclear weapons

**Historical Significance:**

The Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy formed in 1957 in response to the nuclear arms race, with the purpose of leading humanity away from war and towards peace. The leaders of SANE persuaded Dr. Spock to appear in their advertisements. Dr. Spock’s name was a household word among Americans; his best-selling books had promoted giving affection to children instead maintaining strict discipline. Because of his appearance in the full-page advertisements in the *New York Times*, SANE’s campaign to limit the production and testing of nuclear weapons reached a major turning point.

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*Item 4107*

Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE), ANTI-NUKES ADVERTISEMENT FEATURING DR. SPOCK (1962), Courtesy of the Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, PA.

See Appendix for larger image – pg. 57.
9. Mobilizing for Peace and the Environment

... On November 1, 1961, 50,000 suburban homemakers in more than 60 communities staged a protest, Women Strike for Peace (WSP). Participants lobbied government officials to “End the Arms Race—Not the Human Race.” The strikers were mostly educated, middle-class mothers; 61 percent did not work outside the home. WSP leaders were part of a small group of ... [activists] who had worked on behalf of women’s rights throughout the 1940s and 1950s. According to Newsweek magazine, the strikers “were perfectly ordinary looking women . . . They looked like the women you would see driving ranch wagons, or shopping at the village market, or attending PTA meetings . . . Many [were] wheeling baby buggies or strollers.” Within a year their numbers grew to several hundred thousand.

Wood et al., 856.
Transcript from the Hearings of the House Un-American Activities Commission Investigating Women Strike for Peace

Questions to Consider
1. What was the purpose of the Women Strike for Peace movement?
2. Why did HUAC investigate WSP?

“I don’t know, sir, why I am here, but I do know why you are here, because you don’t quite understand the nature of this movement. This movement was inspired and motivated by mothers’ love for children . . . When they were putting their breakfast on the table, they saw not only the Wheaties and milk, but they also saw strontium 90 and iodine 131. . . They feared for the health and life of their children. This is the only motivation.”


Creator: Blanche Posner, Women Strike for Peace (WSP) member
Context: The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) of the U.S. House of Representatives investigated the activities of the WSP.
Audience: HUAC
Purpose: To describe why the WSP protested the arms race

Historical Significance:
In what amounts to a modern day version of the Greek comedy Lysistrata, the WSP deflated the prestige of the exclusively male committee with their earnest testimony, making a mockery of the suggestion that Communists had infiltrated their peace movement.
Photograph from WSP March

Question to Consider
What is the role of children in the WSP demonstration?

Item 5613

See Appendix for larger image – pg. 58

Creator: Unknown
Context: Across the nation, Women Strike for Peace demonstrated against nuclear testing by the United States and the Soviet Union.
Audience: Unknown
Purpose: To persuade the federal government to ban the testing of nuclear weapons

Historical Significance:
Women organized WSP out of a fear of the effects of radiation from a nuclear war would have on their children. WSP protests drew the investigation of their activities from the House Un-American Committee. On December 11, 1962, HUAC subpoenaed WSP members, but the mothers turned the hearings into a circus with their tactics of ridiculing the committee’s investigation. Those who testified appealed to mothers throughout the nation.
Conclusion
The dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan changed the nature of warfare. Once the Soviet Union acquired the bomb, nations were forced to reckon with the possibility of worldwide destruction from nuclear weapons. The United States entered a Cold War with the Soviet Union in which one of the outcomes was the arms race. The fear engendered from nuclear weapons caused some Americans to prepare for nuclear fallout and others to protest their testing and proliferation.

Questions to Consider
1. How and why did the CIA emerge and what was its impact on foreign policy?
2. When and why did Americans begin to protest against nuclear proliferation, and who were the major participants in those protests?
Theme Three: While a growing middle class was attaining the American Dream, many in the United States were denied access to the same opportunities.

Overview

After 1945, the United States witnessed an expansion of economic opportunities, but a narrowing of political freedoms for some citizens. African American efforts to overcome discrimination met fierce white resistance in 1946 and 1947. Native Americans and Mexican Americans faced similar discrimination in the Southwest and elsewhere. Fears of subversion at home extended beyond Communists to homosexuals working in the federal government.

Many Americans think of the 1950s as a golden era of economic prosperity with families living in comfortable suburban homes, but home ownership was more difficult for some Americans. For some families, men’s earnings were not sufficient to provide the trappings of the consumer-oriented middle-class lifestyle. In addition to full-time jobs as homemakers, many married women worked part-time to help pay the bills.

Some realtors and bankers also excluded African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities from white suburbs through a process called “red-lining.” They designated certain areas of the suburbs for whites only. The assumption behind the red-lining policy was that any mixing of the races would reduce the housing prices in the neighborhood. Some banks refused mortgage loans to minorities who wished to buy houses in red-lined areas, even if the prospective buyers could afford to purchase the house. Some developers, such as William Levitt, had buyers sign restrictive clauses stating that they would not sell their homes to non-whites. Although Americans of color remained concentrated in urban and rural areas, some did move to the suburbs, usually into segregated communities.

Questions to Consider
1. How was the “American Dream” defined during the years of the Cold War?
2. Who had access to suburban neighborhoods and who did not?
3. What government policies encouraged some people to move to the suburbs and prevented others from doing so?
4. Why were Native Americans, African Americans, women, and homosexual GIs excluded from some of the benefits of the GI Bill?
1. Fighting for the “Double V”

In spite of discrimination at home, members of minority groups responded enthusiastically to the war effort. The numbers of blacks in the Army soared from 5000 in 1940 to 700,000 by 1944, with an additional 187,000 in the Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. Four thousand black women joined the WACs. Almost all soldiers fought in segregated units, despite protests by the NAACP that “a Jim Crow army cannot fight for a free world.” Nearly 1 million blacks also joined the industrial labor force during the war. African Americans fought for the “Double V”—victory over fascism abroad and racial discrimination at home. Wartime experiences and sacrifices would inspire African Americans, along with Mexican Americans and other minority citizens, to mobilize for civil rights after the war.

Like Keith Little and his boarding-school buddies who became Navajo “Code Talkers,” American Indians all over the country declared their willingness to fight for the cause. The Iroquois League announced:

> It is the unanimous sentiment among the Indian people that the atrocities of the Axis nations are violently repulsive to all sense of righteousness of our people. This merciless slaughter of mankind upon the part of those enemies of free peoples can no longer be tolerated. The Cheyenne agreed, vowing to defeat an “unholy triangle” determined to “conquer and enslave the bodies, minds and souls of all free people.” Fully 25,000 Native Americans, including 800 women, served in the military during the war. By 1945, nearly one-third of all able-bodied Native American men between 18 and 50 had served. Five percent of them were killed or wounded in action. Native Americans enlisted at a higher rate than the general population, prompting the Saturday Evening Post to editorialize, “We would not need the Selective Service if all volunteered like the Indians.”

In addition to those who enlisted, half of all able-bodied Native American men not in the service and one-fifth of women left reservations for war industry jobs. At the beginning of the war, men on reservations earned a median annual income of $500, less than one-fourth the national average. One-third of all Native American men living off reservations were unemployed. Worse, the average life expectancy for Native Americans in 1940 was just 35 years, compared with 64 years for the population at large. Like others who found new opportunities during the conflict, Native Americans hoped that the economic progress they had made would be permanent. But the boom would end for them when the war ended. Fewer than 10 percent of Native Americans who relocated to cities found long-term employment after the war.

Wood et al., 788.
**Democracy: Double Victory at Home-Abroad**

**Question to Consider**

How did the “Double V” campaign inspire the Civil Rights Movement?

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**These Men Developed The “Double V” Idea**

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** The Pittsburgh Courier’s “Double V” idea, created in the mind of James G. Thompson of Pittsburgh, resonated and brought to glowing life through the brilliant pen of Wilbert L. Holloway. Courier staff writer, has captured the essence like religion.

**DEAR EDITOR:**

Like all true Americans, my greatest desire at this time, this central point of my history is an idea for a complete victory over the forces of evil, which threaten our existence today. Behind that desire is also a desire to serve, this, our country, in the most unambiguous way. Most of our leaders are suggesting that we sacrifice every other ambition to the paramount one, victory. With this I agree, but I also wonder if another victory could not be achieved at the same time.

After all, the things that bind the world are basically the same things which open the earthquake slammed necessarily, make every man a victim and even the individual. Being an American of dark complexion and some 25 years, these questions skirt through my veins.

“Would I sacrifice my life to help my historical?”

“Will things be better for the next generation in the years to follow?”

“Would it be acceptable to have a united front to achieve victory in the war against the Axis?”

“Do American blacks deserve the same support?”

“Would America be a true and perfect democracy when it’s victory is achieved?”

“Should the Negro be allowed to defend the United States?”

There are questions that have been bugging me for a long time. These will be prejudices that have been bugging me for a long time.

This is the wrong time to brand such subjects, but being a first-generation American, I believe every colored American, who is thinking, wants to know.

This may be the wrong time to brand such subjects, but being a first-generation American, I believe every colored American, who is thinking, wants to know.

I suggest that while we keep these ideas in the background, there is no doubt that this country is worth defending, and there is no doubt that this country can defend itself. There is no doubt that this country can defend itself. It’s not clear what the future will bring. But we know that the future will bring a better day. It’s not clear what the future will bring. But we know that the future will bring a better day.

*Note:* This newspaper article has been excerpted to improve readability. The original article appeared on page 5 of the Courier. It was centered on the page and was surrounded with quotes related to it. Thompson receiving an award for his efforts.

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**Item 5826**


See Appendix for larger image – pg. 59

Transcript – pages 60 & 61

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**Historical Significance:**

During World War II, many African Americans served in the armed forces, but some questioned the rationale for supporting the war effort. James Thompson wrote a letter to the *Pittsburgh Courier* expressing his belief that he should not fight for a nation that discriminated against him and African Americans in general. He suggested the idea that African Americans wage a “Double V” campaign that stood for “victory from without” over the Axis powers and “victory from within” the United States to end discrimination. This letter prompted the *Courier* to launch a campaign that promoted the idea of “Double V” through lapel pins, stickers, songs, and posters. The campaign caused the U.S. military to ban African American newspapers from its libraries and J. Edgar Hoover to seek the indictment of African American publishers for treason. By the end of the war, the “Double V” campaign was so popular among African Americans that the *Pittsburgh Courier* had a record weekly circulation of two million readers.
2. Contesting Racial Hierarchies

African Americans faced a similar problem. After finding new opportunities in industrial employment during the war, they were laid off afterward in favor of returning white veterans. Like women, blacks were expected by others to retreat into deference. Black veterans spearheaded the resistance to this notion. They had fought in disproportionate numbers for their country and for the cause of defeating the world’s most murderous racists, the Nazis. They then returned to a nation still deeply segregated, by law in the South and by practice elsewhere. Like Native American, Latino American, and Asian American veterans, they were determined to be full citizens in the country for which they had spilled their blood. “I went into the Army a nigger,” one black soldier said about typical white views of him, but “I’m coming out a man.”

African American efforts to overcome discrimination met fierce white resistance in 1946 and 1947. In the South, where most black Americans still lived, a wave of beatings and lynchings greeted black veterans in uniform and their attempts to register to vote. White Northerners also used violence to preserve the segregated character of neighborhoods in Chicago, Detroit, and other cities. They destroyed the property and threatened the lives of blacks who dared to move to previously all-white blocks, effectively confining African Americans to impoverished areas. Sometimes local authorities encouraged such extralegal use of force. The police chief of Cicero, Illinois, was indicted for conspiracy to incite a riot in 1951 after several thousand white residents destroyed an all-white apartment building to prevent African American veteran Harvey E. Clark and his family from moving in . . .

Native Americans and Mexican Americans faced similar discrimination in the Southwest and elsewhere. With war veterans in the fore, they also organized to contest unfair education and election practices. “If we are good enough to fight, why aren’t we good enough to vote?” asked returning Navajo soldiers in New Mexico and Arizona, where the state constitutions prohibited Indian residents from voting until successfully challenged in 1948.

Wood et al., 805.
3. Who Is a Loyal American?

[While postwar economic opportunities and consumer choices expanded for the majority of Americans, political freedoms narrowed for some. Fears of subversion at home extended beyond Communists to homosexuals working in the federal government. In 1950, in response to Senator Joseph McCarthy’s accusation that the State Department was full of Communists, the State Department revealed that it had fired 91 homosexuals as security risks. By doing so, the State Department set off what later became known as the “Lavender Scare.” With the military’s ban on homosexuals as a foundation, President Eisenhower issued an executive order banning homosexuals and other “moral subversives” from all federal jobs.]

The Cold War politics of inclusion and exclusion established a new profile for loyal Americans . . . in an era when anticommunists launched a withering assault on homosexuals as “perverts” and threats to the nation’s security. Church membership climbed in tandem with condemnations of “godless Communism,” and Congress added the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance. Warning that “God is giving us a desperate choice, a choice of either revival or judgment,” revivalist preacher Billy Graham launched his first evangelical crusade in Los Angeles in 1949, en route to becoming the nation’s foremost religious figure. Discrimination against Roman Catholics and Jews, though still evident, declined as Catholics such as McCarthy proved intensely anticommunist and as pictures and stories emerged to reveal the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews. More inclusive references to the “Judeo-Christian tradition” became common.

American leadership of the global anticommunist cause strengthened the struggle for racial equality at home, within certain limits. The NAACP and most African Americans took an anticommunist position in accord with Truman, in return for his support of civil rights. They downplayed their concern for colonial independence in Africa and Asia to support NATO. The American GI Forum (Latino veterans) and the Japanese American Citizen League also worked within the confines of Cold War politics to end discrimination. More radical black leaders such as scholar W. E. B. Du Bois and actor and singer Paul Robeson refused to make any such accommodation to anticommunism . . .

For impoverished Native Americans, the government seemed to give with one hand and take away with the other. In 1946 Truman established the Indian Claims Commission to consider payment for lands taken and treaties broken. But gestures toward compensation led to policies of termination. Developers seeking access to Indian lands joined reformers troubled by reservation poverty in urging Congress—with limited success—to terminate the special status Indian
tribes had held with the federal government since its founding. Dillon S. Myer, who had overseen internment camps for Japanese Americans during World War II, became director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1950. He closed reservation schools, withdrew support for traditional cultural activities, and launched an urban relocation program, all intended to move Native Americans into the mainstream and get the government “out of the Indian business.”

Immigrants also received mixed messages. The McCarran–Walter Act (1952) ended the long-standing ban on allowing people of Asian descent not born in the United States to become U.S. citizens. But it preserved the discriminatory 1924 system of “national origins” for allocating numbers of immigrants from different countries. The bill also strengthened the attorney general's authority to deport aliens who were suspected of subversive intentions. Like Guatemalan-born leftist Luisa Moreno, a successful labor organizer in California deported in 1950, immigrants learned that their welcome depended on their politics.

Wood et al., 821.
4. Race, Class, and Domesticity

Many Americans think of the 1950s as a golden era of economic prosperity and happy families nestled in comfortable suburban homes. But this mythical vision obscures the fact that the government subsidized suburban developments and restricted who could live in them. After World War II, the nation faced a severe housing shortage. The federal government gave developers financial subsidies to build affordable single-family homes and offered Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loans and income tax deductions to homebuyers. These benefits enabled white working-class and middle-class families to purchase houses. Second- and third-generation European immigrants moved out of their neighborhoods in the cities and into the suburbs. Postwar prosperity, government subsidies, and the promise of assimilation made it possible for white-skinned Americans of immigrant background to blend into the suburbs.

. . . For Americans of color, suburban home ownership offered inclusion in the postwar American dream. In her powerful 1959 play A Raisin In the Sun, African American playwright Lorraine Hansberry articulated with great eloquence the importance of a home in the suburbs, not to assimilate into white America but to live as a black family with dignity and pride. Asian Americans also had good reason to celebrate home and family life. With the end of the exclusion of Chinese immigrants during World War II, wives and war brides began to enter the country, helping to build thriving family-oriented communities. After the disruptions and anguish of internment, Japanese Americans were eager to put their families and lives back together. Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants, including braceros, established flourishing communities in the Southwest. Puerto Ricans migrated to New York and other eastern cities, where they could earn four times the average on the island.

Racial segregation did not prevail everywhere. For example, in Shaker Heights, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, white residents made a conscious decision, as a community, to integrate their neighborhood. Drawing on postwar liberal ideals of civil rights and racial integration, they welcomed black homeowners. They succeeded in this effort by emphasizing class similarity over racial difference. White residents encouraged other white families to move into Shaker Heights, pointing out that their prosperous black neighbors were “just like us.” The city of Claremont, California, established an interracial housing cooperative of Mexican and African American residents along with white married college students at the edge of the Arbol Verde barrio, a Mexican American neighborhood. Desegregation experiments such as these established harmonious racially integrated communities at a time when residential segregation was the norm across the country.
White attitudes toward racial integration began to shift, but only slightly. In the late 1950s, 60 percent of whites outside the South said they would stay in their homes if a black family moved next door, but only 45 percent said they would remain in the neighborhood if large numbers of people of color moved in. In 1964, demonstrating their belief in property rights over civil rights, 89 percent of those polled in the North and 96 percent in the South believed that “an owner of property should not have to sell to a Negro if he doesn’t want to.”

Wood et al., 839.
**Question to Consider**
Where are the red-lined neighborhoods located within the city?

*Image of a red-line map of Syracuse and vicinity.*

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**Creator:** Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC)

**Context:** Home ownership after World War II

**Audience:** Only federal officials and senior bank personnel

**Purpose:** To show red-lining in urban neighborhoods

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**Historical Significance:**
In 1936, the federal government established HOLC to inventory and grade all residential areas throughout the nation. HOLC hired appraisers and surveyors to assign a “grade” on a scale from “A” to “D” for residential homes. Red was the color used for the “D” grade—thus, the term “red-lining.” If a neighborhood received a “D” grade, mortgage lenders often refused to make loans to properties within the neighborhood. The appraiser looked at such factors as building decay, neglect, and a neighborhood’s racial and ethnic makeup. If African Americans, Jews, and the foreign-born lived in the neighborhood, the appraiser downgraded the area for mortgage insurance. HOLC produced hundreds of maps—viewed only by federal government officials and senior bank managers.
5. The New Suburbs

[William] Levitt argued that his homes helped underscore American values. “No man who owns his own house and lot can be a Communist,” he once said. “He has too much to do.” Levitt also helped perpetuate segregation by refusing to sell homes to blacks. “We can solve a housing problem, or we can try to solve a racial problem but we cannot combine the two,” he declared in the early 1950s. Government-insured mortgages, especially for veterans, fueled the housing boom. So did fairly low postwar interest rates. With many American families vividly remembering the Depression and saving significant parts of their paychecks, the nation had a pool of savings large enough to keep mortgage interest rates in the affordable 5 percent range.

Nash et al., 898.

6. Women: Back to the Future

... The elevation of the housewife as a major cultural icon contrasted sharply with the reality. The proportion of women who fit the mold of full-time homemaker was rapidly shrinking. Although most American women married, had children, and carried the lion's share of responsibility for housework and child-rearing, increasing numbers of married women also held jobs outside the home. The employment of married women began to rise during World War II and kept rising after the war, even though most of the well-paying and highly skilled jobs returned to men at the war’s end.

For the majority of white working-class and middle-class women, the end of the war closed off a number of possibilities for occupational training, professional education, and career opportunities. Often a woman’s best chance to secure a decent standard of living was to marry a competent breadwinner. But the pressures on blue-collar as well as white-collar men to earn enough money for the trappings of middle-class affluence strained their ability to provide. Married women took jobs to help pay the bills. College-educated women often worked in clerical positions as secretaries or clerks, but these jobs did not make use of their knowledge and skills. Working-class women found work in the “pink collar” service sector of the economy—such jobs as waitress and hairdresser—with low pay and few chances for advancement. But for most Mexican women, pink-collar work was an improvement over migrant labor or factory work. African American women also found these jobs preferable to domestic work in white middle-class homes.

Many women worked part-time while their children were at school, but they considered their primary occupation to be homemaker. With few other
opportunities for creative work, women embraced their domestic roles and turned homemaking into a profession. Many fulfilled their role with pride and satisfaction and extended their energies and talents into their communities, where they made important contributions as volunteers in local parent–teacher associations (PTAs) and other civic organizations. Most postwar mothers finished childbearing by the time they were 30 and had many years ahead of them when their child-rearing responsibilities ended. Some expanded part-time employment into full-time occupations when their children left the nest. Others felt bored and frustrated and drowned their sorrow with alcohol or tranquilizers. In 1963 author Betty Friedan described the constraints facing women as the “problem that has no name” in her feminist manifesto, *The Feminine Mystique*.

Despite the powerful cultural expectation that women’s primary responsibilities were to care for their homes and families, there were many single and married women who followed alternative paths. Women pursued careers in a wide range of fields, including the arts, business, and politics. Harvard Medical School admitted its first female students in 1945, although the medical profession remained heavily male-dominated . . .

. . . [C]ollege degrees for white women did not necessarily open up career opportunities or greatly improve their job and earning prospects. By 1956, one-fourth of white female students married while still in college. Many of these women dropped out of school to take jobs in order to support their husbands through college. But the situation was quite different for black women. Like their mothers and grandmothers, most black women had to work to help support their families. Even in the prosperous postwar years, few black families could survive on the meager earnings of a single breadwinner. Job prospects for black women generally were limited to menial, low-paying occupations. Young black women knew that a college degree could mean the difference between working as a maid for a white family and working as a secretary, teacher, or nurse. Although few in number, more than 90 percent of black women who entered college completed their degrees.

. . . Although poverty still plagued large numbers of black citizens, the black middle class expanded during the 1950s. Postwar prosperity enabled some African Americans, for the first time, to strive for family life in which the earnings of men were adequate to allow women to stay home with their own children rather than tending to the houses and children of white families . . . For black women, domesticity meant “freedom and independence in her own home.” It is no wonder that in the early 1960s, women of color bristled when white feminists such as Betty Friedan called upon women to break free from the “chains” of domesticity.

Wood et al., 841.
Theme Three

Conclusion
The idea of the “loyal American” emerged at the ideological center of the American way of life during the Cold War. The lifestyle of the consumer-laden suburban single-family home was difficult to maintain for many families. Many women also held jobs to help support the middle-class lifestyle for the family. Plenty of people did not achieve the “American Dream” of home ownership nor acquire the latest in consumer goods. Some minorities achieved the American Dream of home ownership in new suburban developments, but usually not in white neighborhoods.

Questions to Consider
1. What aspects of personal identity and behavior marked someone as “patriotic” during the Cold War and why?
2. How did conformity manifest itself in postwar America? Who bought into this collective image of America?

Unit Conclusion
World War II contributed to the end of the Depression and ushered in an era of post-war domestic prosperity. This prosperity was evident in a huge baby boom that had begun before the war, internal migration to the suburbs, and major medical and scientific breakthroughs. For some Americans, a growing middle class was able to fulfill the American Dream of home ownership, but other groups did not receive access to the same opportunities. For those who attained home ownership, it was difficult to keep up with the 1950s conformist ideal of a single-income family. In the decade following World War II, there was a heightened tension between conformity and individuality as Americans confronted new fears of mass destruction from atomic weapons.
**Timeline**

1941  Japanese attack Pearl Harbor; United States declares war on Japan

1942  Internment of Japanese Americans

1943  Keith Little enlists in the Marine Corp

1944  Congress passes GI Bill

1945  Successful test of Atomic Bomb, Alamagordo, New Mexico; Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombed; Japan surrenders

1946  Benjamin Spock releases *Baby and Child Care*; American plan for control of atomic energy fails; the Atomic Energy Act

1947  House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigates the movie industry

1949  Soviet Union tests atomic bomb

1950  Truman authorizes development of the hydrogen bomb; NSC-68; Sen. Joseph McCarthy accuses State Department of harboring communists

1952  Dwight S. Eisenhower elected president; McCarthy heads Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee

1953  Defense budget of $47 billion

1954  Army–McCarthy hearings

1955  Polio vaccine approved for use

1956  Interstate Highway Act; majority of U.S. workers hold white-collar jobs; Eisenhower re-elected

1957  Baby Boom peaks; Russians launch Sputnik satellite

1959  Nixon-Khrushchev Kitchen Debate

1963  Rachel Carson releases *Silent Spring*

1968  Navajo code declassified
UNIT REFERENCE MATERIALS


**Further Reading**


**Visit the Web Site**

Explore these themes further on the *America’s History in the Making* Web site. See how this content aligns with your own state standards, browse the resource archive, review the series timeline, and explore the Web interactives. You can also read full versions of selected *Magazine of History* (MOH) articles or selected National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) lesson plans.
Your children and what to do with them

As important as it is to build ships, and as urgently as women are needed to help build them, no part of the war production program justifies the neglect of small children. However, excellent provisions have been made for the proper care of children whose mothers want to work in the shipyards. So, if you have small children, and you also want to do your part helping build ships, you may be assured that you can get the right kind of care for them. The important thing to remember is to make the arrangements BEFORE you start to work, or even before you start training for your job.

Here’s what to do. First, talk over your problems with the Child Care Counsellor. The telephone number is BRoadway 8411. This service is provided by the Children’s Department of the Multnomah County Public Welfare Commission. The women you will talk to here are experts, and

THEME ONE PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 5832
Portland Public Schools, HANDBOOK FOR NEW WOMEN SHIPYARD WORKERS (1943).
Courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society, MSS25470.
APPENDIX 2-1

THEME TWO PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 5855
THEM TWO PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 5513
Twentieth Century Fox, MOVIE POSTER FOR THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951).
Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox/Photofest.
THEME TWO PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 4107
Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy (SANE), ANTI-NUKES ADVERTISEMENT FEATURING DR. SPOCK (1962).
Courtesy of the Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, PA.
THEME TWO PRIMARY SOURCE
Item 5613
Courtesy of AP/Wideworld.
These Men Developed the "Double V" Idea

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Pittsburgh Courier’s “Double V” idea, created in the mind of James G. Thompson of Wichita, Kansas, and brought to glowing light through the brilliant pen of Wilbert L. Holloway, Courier staff artist, has swept the nation like wildfire.

The letter of Mr. Thompson, which appeared first in our issue of January 31, is reprinted here, because of its over all significance and because of its gem-like literary value.

The editors of The Pittsburgh Courier suggest that everyone who reads this letter, clip it out and place it in a conspicuous place... where all may see and read!

DEAR EDITOR:

Like all true Americans, my greatest desire at this time, this crucial point of our history; is a desire for a complete victory over the forces of evil, which threaten our existence today. Behind that desire is also a desire to serve, this, my country, in the most advantageous way. Most of our leaders are suggesting that we sacrifice every other ambition to the paramount one, victory. With this I agree; but I also wonder if another victory could not be achieved at the same time.

After all, the things that best the world now are basically the same things which upset the equilibrium of nations internally, states, counties, cities, homes and even the individual. Being an American of dark complexion and some 26 years, these questions flash through my mind:

“Should I sacrifice my life to live as an American?”

“Will the things be better for the next generation in the peace to follow?”

“Would it be demanding too much to demand full citizenship rights in exchange for the sacrificing of my life?”

“Is the kind of America I know worth defending?”

“Will America be a true and pure democracy after this war?”

“Will colored Americans suffer still the indignities that have been heaped upon them in the past?”

These and other questions need answering; I want to know, and I believe every colored American, who is thinking, wants to know.

This may be the wrong time to broach such subjects, but haven’t all good things obtained by men been secured through sacrifice during just such times of strife?

I suggest that while we keep defense and victory in the forefront that we don’t lose sight of our fight for true democracy at home.

In conclusion let me say that though these questions often permeate my mind, I love American and am willing to die for the America I know will someday become a reality.

The “V for Victory” sign is being displayed prominently in all so-called democratic countries which are fighting for victory over aggression, slavery and tyranny. If this V sign means that to those now engaged in this great conflict then let colored Americans adopt the double VV for a double victory...The first V for victory over our enemies from without, the second V for victory over our enemies within.

For surely those who perpetrate these ugly prejudices here are trying to destroy our democratic form of government just as surely as the Axis forces.

This should not and would not lessen our efforts to bring this conflict to a successful conclusion; but should and would make us stronger to resist these evil forces which threaten us.

America could be made one as never before and become truly the home of democracy.

In way of an answer to the foregoing questions in a preceding paragraph, I might say that there is no doubt that this country is worth defending; things will be different for the next generation; colored Americans will come into their own, and America will eventually become the true democracy it was designed to be. These things will become a reality in time; but not through any relaxation of the efforts to secure them.

JAMES G. THOMPSON.

Please Note: This newspaper article has been retyped to improve readability. No wording, punctuation, or layout has been altered in the process. The original article appeared on page 5 of the COURIER. It was centered on the page and was surrounded with photos related to Mr Thompson receiving an award for his efforts.

Theme Three Primary Source


Transcript on the following two pages
TRANSCRIPT: THESE MEN DEVELOPED THE “DOUBLE V” IDEA

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After all, the things that beset the world now are basically the same things which upset the equilibrium of nations internally, states, counties, cities, homes and even the individual.

Being an American of dark complexion and some 26 years, these questions flash through my mind: “Should I sacrifice my life to live half American?” “Will things be better for the next generation in the peace to follow?” “Would it be demanding too much to demand full citizenship rights in exchange for the sacrificing of my life.” “Is the kind of America I know worth defending?” “Will America be a true and pure democracy after this war?” “Will colored Americans suffer still the indignities that have been heaped upon them in the past?”

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James G. Thomson, letter to the editor, Pittsburgh Courier, originally printed January 31, 1942;
reprinted April 11, 1942, page 5.
Appendix 3-2

Theme Three Primary Source
Item 4394

Courtesy of Emanuel J. Carter, State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry.