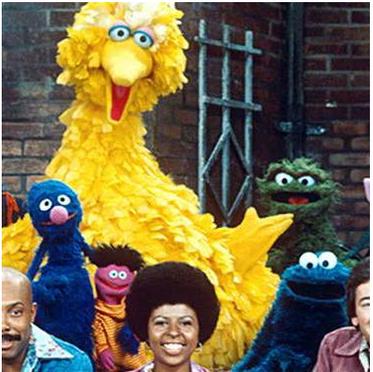
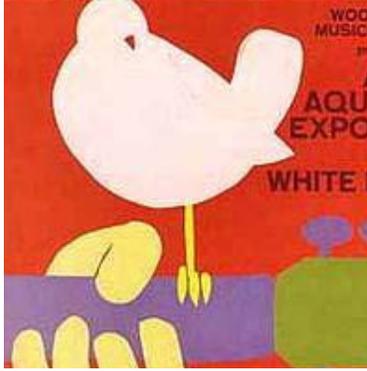


# WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION



# ACTUALLY? REVOLUTIONARY?

EXPLORING AMERICA'S HISTORY THROUGH COMPELLING QUESTIONS



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QUESTION SEVENTEEN

**WAS THE SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION  
ACTUALLY  
REVOLUTIONARY?**

EXPLORING AMERICA'S HISTORY THROUGH COMPELLING QUESTIONS

**SUPPORTING QUESTIONS**

- 1** CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?
- 2** WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE UN-AMERICAN?
- 3** CAN WE END POVERTY?
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- 5** CAN MEN AND WOMEN BE EQUAL?
- 6** WHY DID AMERICANS TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

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JONATHAN LOOMIS

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## QUESTION SEVENTEEN

# WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

# ACTUALLY REVOLUTIONARY?

Throughout the nation's history, Americans have seen their nation swing from excitement about change to an embrace of traditional ways of life. In the late 1800s, muckrakers, progressives and waves of new immigrants brought about major changes. Then in the 1920s, people reacted with laws restricting immigration, promoting traditional Christian ideas, and banning social evils like alcohol.

After World War II, the nation experienced a swing away from this conservatism toward what could be its most liberal time ever. This Social Revolution coincided with changes in divorce law, the legalization of abortion, the expansion of government, new experimentation with drugs, abandonment of sexual rules, the advent of rock and roll, and the entire Civil Rights Movement. It was an exciting time to live.

All this change was unsettling for some Americans. They responded in the 1970s and 1980s by pulling the nation back from its liberal binge and promoting a more conservative mindset once again. Christian leaders got involved in politics and promoted candidates that put the brakes on the rush of change. In 1980, Americans elected Ronald Reagan, a champion of conservatism.

By definition, a revolution is a change that cannot be undone, and it could be argued that the Social Revolution was not revolutionary at all. After all, it was followed by the Conservative Revolution. However, many of the new ideas ushered in during the 1960s have endured. Government programs to provide healthcare to the elderly and poor, to pay for the arts, and to protect the environment remain. Social norms about sex, marriage and divorce did not go back to the way they were before.

This leads us to the question to consider as we study this time in America's story. Was the Social Revolution actually revolutionary?



# 1

## F I R S T Q U E S T I O N CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

**WAS THE SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION  
ACTUALLY  
REVOLUTIONARY?**

### INTRODUCTION

The 1950s is a decade remembered nostalgically by most of the Americans old enough to have lived through it. The economy was roaring. Conveniences that had been toys for the upper classes such as fancy refrigerators, range-top ovens, dishwashers, and convertible automobiles became middle-class staples.

Homes became affordable to many apartment dwellers for the first time and thousands of young families moved into newly build suburbs with backyard barbeques, lawns, community swimming pools and new shopping malls. The huge youth market had a music all its own called rock and roll, complete with parent-detested icons such as Elvis Presley. Disneyland, the happiest place on Earth, opened in 1955.

The pressures of the Cold War were papered over with rosy images of bliss on newly purchased television sets. Happy housewives and successful businessmen fathers tended to their dutiful children in saccharine sitcoms while cowboys in white slew cowboys in black in the pursuit of simplified justice.

Of course, not everything was as rosy as it seems at first glance. Beneath the pristine exterior, a small group of critics and nonconformists pointed out the flaws in a suburbia they believed had no soul, a government they believed was growing dangerously powerful, a lifestyle they believed was fundamentally repressed, and a society that continued to be racially segregated.

Nevertheless, the memory of the 1950s as happy days persists. Perhaps when measured against the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the Second World War of the 1940s, the 1950s were indeed a wonderful time.

It was a time when Americans loved sameness. Instilled with the fear of communism, they sought to fit in rather than stand out. America could keep them safe if they simply enjoyed its bounty. In their effort to find material comfort, to live the life they saw on television, to work and play just like their neighbors, Americans sacrificed individuality for conformity.

What do you think? Can we be happy if we're all the same?

# 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

## A BOOMING ECONOMY

The years immediately following World War II witnessed stability and prosperity for many Americans. Increasing numbers of workers enjoyed high wages, larger houses, better schools, more automobiles, and home comforts like vacuum cleaners and washing machines, which made housework easier. Many inventions familiar today made their first appearance during the 1950s.

Driven by a combination of factors, the economy grew dramatically in the years after World War II, expanding at a rate of 3.5% per year between 1945 and 1970. This dramatic growth was fueled in part by massive government spending on Cold War defense industries, but was also a result of increased consumer spending and homebuilding. During this period, many incomes doubled in a generation; a phenomenon that economist Frank Levy described as “upward mobility on a rocket ship.” The substantial increase in average family income within a generation resulted in millions of office and factory workers being lifted into a growing **middle class**, enabling them to sustain a standard of living once considered reserved for the wealthy.

As noted by economist Deone Zell, assembly line work paid well, while unionized factory jobs served as “stepping-stones to the middle class.” By the end of the 1950s, 87% of all American families owned at least one television, 75% owned automobiles, and 60% owned homes. By then, **blue-collar workers** had become the most prolific buyers of many luxury goods and services. The economy of the 1950s was dramatically different from the economy of the 1930s and early 1940s. Children who saw their parents struggling through the Great Depression and had sacrificed during World War II, found themselves surrounded by modern appliances and living in new homes. Their generation and their parents’ generation could not have lived more different lives.



**Middle Class:** The large group of Americans who are not wealth or poor, but are able to live comfortably on the money they earn from their work.



**Blue-Collar Workers:** Workers who earn a living from their labor. They include custodians, construction workers, and factory workers.

### Primary Source: Photograph

The interchange of I-15 and US 20 Idaho Falls, Idaho before completion in 1964. The interstate highway system in the United States is named after Dwight Eisenhower, who is often credited with implementing this major infrastructure project.

# 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

The booming economy and technological changes brought a growing **corporatization** of the United States and the decline of smaller businesses, which were not as insulated from economic swings as larger corporations that had the resources to endure hard times. Newspapers declined in numbers and consolidated. The railroad industry, once one of the cornerstones of the economy and an immense and often scorned influence on national politics, also suffered from explosive automobile sales and the construction of the **interstate highway system**. By the end of the 1950s, it was well into decline and by the 1970s became bankrupt, necessitating a federal government takeover. Smaller automobile manufacturers such as Nash, Studebaker, and Packard were unable to compete with the Big Three – General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler – in the new post-war world and gradually declined into oblivion.

Technological developments greatly influenced the agricultural sector as well. Ammonia from plants built during World War II to make explosives became available for making fertilizers, leading to a permanent decline in fertilizer prices. The early 1950s was the peak period for tractor sales in the United States, as the few remaining horses and mules were phased out. The horsepower of farm machinery greatly increased. An effective cotton-picking machine was introduced in 1949. Research on plant breeding produced varieties of grain crops that could produce high yields with heavy fertilizer input. These advancements resulted in the **Green Revolution** that began in the 1940s.

In general, farming followed the way of corporations as the industry became more concentrated and less varied. As productivity increased, so did **consolidation**. Small farms sold out to larger ones, leading to a reduction in the overall number of farms. Some of these former farm owners moved to towns or went to work for other farmers.

## MEDICAL ADVANCES

Whereas the late 1800s had seen great works focused on collective health such as the construction of sewer systems, the 1950s was a time when medical advances focused on individual health. For example, penicillin had been used during World War II for the first time on a wide scale, saving thousands of lives from infection.

In 1948, **Dr. Jonas Salk** undertook a project funded by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis to address one of the most tragic diseases present in America at the time. **Polio** is a debilitating disease that induces paralysis, usually in the legs. It can be fatal, and those that do recover often suffer significant loss of mobility. President Franklin D. Roosevelt contracted polio when he was 39 and used a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Tragically, polio usually struck Americans as children or teenagers, just as they were their strongest.



**Corporatization:** The process by which small businesses close during difficult economic times and larger, more financially resilient companies survive and take their place in the economy.



**Interstate Highway System:** A network of limited-access, high-speed roads built to connect major cities beginning in the 1950s.



**Green Revolution:** A change in agriculture in the 1940s and 1950s in which selective breeding, the use of fertilizer, and other scientific advancements led to a tremendous increase in food production.



**Consolidation:** The process of combining small businesses or farms into larger ones.



**Dr. Jonas Salk:** Doctor who discovered a vaccine to prevent Polio.



**Polio:** Debilitating neurological disease that produces paralysis in the legs. A vaccine was discovered by Dr. Jonas Salk.

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Salk saw an opportunity to extend his research project toward developing a polio vaccine and, together with the skilled research team he assembled, devoted himself to this work for the next seven years. Over 1.8 million schoolchildren took part in the trial. When news of the vaccine's success was made public on April 12, 1955, Salk was hailed as a miracle worker and the day nearly became a national holiday. Around the world, an immediate rush to vaccinate began.

New technologies also revolutionized surgical procedures. The first open heart operation was performed on May 6, 1953, at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. The use of immunosuppressant drugs for the first time in the 1950s made organ transplants a viable option for the first time.

Biotechnology also underwent rapid development. The antibiotic **penicillin** had been discovered in England in 1939 and had saved countless lives during World War II. The production of penicillin on a massive scale in the United States transformed the pharmaceutical industry. Instead of many local druggists providing medicines to customers they knew personally, medications were manufactured on a grand scale and then shipped across the country. Another advancement was the development of a simplified and less costly process for synthesizing cortisol, a key ingredient in many medications.

Another important change that developed in the post-war decades was a shift in the way Americans paid for their healthcare. During World War II, the government set restrictions on wages. In order to attract workers, companies started offering incentives such as health insurance, and since that time, most Americans not receive their healthcare coverage from their employers.

## POLITICAL STABILITY

The president during most of the 1950s was war hero **Dwight Eisenhower**. Ike, as he was nicknamed, walked a middle road between the two major parties. Unlike the democrats before him, Eisenhower did not want to increase federal spending by creating more programs. Neither did he want to cut programs that his democratic predecessors had enacted. This strategy, called **Modern Republicanism**, simultaneously restrained Democrats from expanding the New Deal while stopping conservative Republicans from reversing popular programs such as Social Security. As a result, no major reform initiatives emerged from a decade many would describe as politically dead. Perhaps freedom from controversy was the prize most American voters were seeking after World War II and the Korean War.



**Penicillin:** Antibiotic that was discovered in 1939 and prevented tremendous numbers of deaths beginning in World War II.

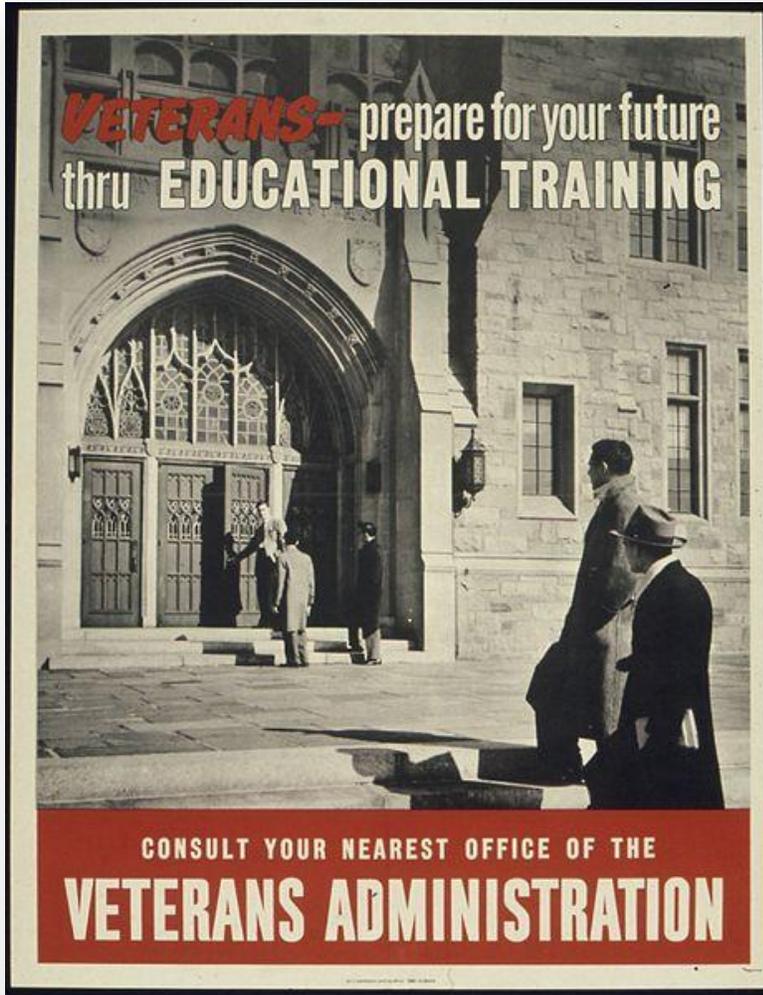


**Dwight Eisenhower:** Republican president during the 1950s. He championed Modern Republicanism. He did not want to increase federal spending but also did not cut New Deal programs. He oversaw the arms race during the Cold War, but his presidency is remembered as a time of peace and economic growth.



**Modern Republicanism:** A political philosophy during the second half of the 1900s in which Republican politicians did not increase government spending, but also did not cut popular New Deal programs such as Social Security.

# 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?



Primary Source: Poster

A government propaganda poster encouraged World War II veterans to take advantage of the G.I. Bill's tuition benefits.

## THE G.I. BILL

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known informally as the **G.I. Bill**, was a law that provided a range of benefits for returning World War II veterans. Benefits included low-cost **mortgages**, low-interest loans to start a business, cash payments of **tuition** and living expenses to attend university, high school, or vocational education, and one year of unemployment compensation. It was available to every veteran who had been on active duty during the war years for at least 90 days and had not been dishonorably discharged.

The G.I. Bill had a tremendous impact on America. Over half of the World War II veterans benefited from educational benefits of the law, and by 1947, nearly half of college enrollments were veterans. All told, 2.2 million veterans had used the G.I. Bill education benefits to enroll in colleges or



**G.I. Bill:** Nickname for the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Passed in 1944 it gave money to veterans to attend college or buy houses. It had a tremendous impact on the education levels of adult Americans and also led to a boom in suburban development.



**Mortgage:** A loan to purchase a house or condominium.



**Tuition:** The cost of a college education.

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universities, and an additional 5.6 million used the benefits for vocational training programs.

Nearly a third of all veterans accessed low-interest loans. With the post-war economic boom and very low unemployment rates, relatively few depended on unemployment benefits. These opportunities allowed many veterans to transition into the middle class and secure economic prosperity.

Veterans also fought for higher education programs more focused on practical needs, which led to increased valuing of more pragmatic programs such as engineering. A college education, and the resultant higher salary, was no longer limited to the wealthy. As more Americans earned more, they also paid more income taxes and all levels of government had more money to spend. Colleges also benefited from the influx of veterans. Increased enrollments meant more money for institutions to operate.

The G.I. Bill, as good as it was for so many people, was not designed to benefit everyone equally. Although the law itself did not specifically prohibit African Americans and other minorities from receiving loans or tuition payments, the law was written so that local governments would implement it. This meant that in the South especially, African Americans were often denied mortgage loans. Traditionally black colleges could not support the massive demands of the thousands of African American veterans and these soldiers-turned-students were rejected from most other universities. The overall effect was that the G.I. Bill helped lift many White Americans into the middle class, but left most African Americans behind.

### THE BABY BOOM

In 1946, live births in the United States surged from 222,721 in January to 339,499 in October. By the end of the 1940s, about 32 million babies had been born, compared with 24 million in the 1930s. In May 1951, Sylvia Porter, a New York Post columnist, first used the term “boom” to refer to the phenomenon of increased births in the post-war United States. Annual births first topped four million in 1954, and did not drop below that figure until 1965, by which time four in 10 Americans were under age 20. The children born during this time are the generation we now call the **Boomers**.

Many factors contributed to the baby boom. Couples who could not afford to raise a family during the Great Depression made up for lost time. Returning veterans married, started families, pursued higher education, and bought their first homes. Marriage rates rose sharply in the 1940s and reached all-time highs for the country. Americans also began to marry at a younger age. The average age at first marriage dropped to 22.5 years for males and 20.1 for females, down from 24.3 for males and 21.5 for females in 1940. Getting married immediately after high school became commonplace and women were increasingly under tremendous pressure to marry by the age of 20. The stereotype developed that women were who



**Baby Boomers:** The largest generation of Americans. They were born between 1945 and 1965. They were the children of the Greatest Generation and grew up during the 1950s, were teenagers and young adults during the 1960s, fought in Vietnam, and are the parents of Generation X. Most of them are now retiring.

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went to college were not going to get an education, but instead to find husbands and earn a M.R.S. (missus) degree.

## THE GROWTH OF THE SUBURBS

For many generations and many decades, the **American Dream** had promised a life in which hard work would be rewarded with material prosperity. For many, however, the notion of prosperity remained just a dream, especially during the hard times of the Great Depression and the sacrifices of the war years. However, for millions of Americans in the 1950s, the American Dream became a reality. Within their reach was the chance to have a house on their own land, a car, a dog, a white picket, and 2.3 children.

A large demand for housing followed from the G.I. Bill's mortgage subsidies, and led to the expansion of **suburbs**. Racial fears and the desire to leave decaying cities were also factors that prompted some White Americans to flee to suburbia, and no individual promoted suburban growth more than **William Levitt**.



Contracted by the federal government during the war to quickly build housing for military personnel, Levitt applied the techniques of mass production to construction of new homes. In 1947, he set out to erect the largest planned-living community in the United States on farmland he purchased on Long Island, New York.

Levitt identified 27 different steps to build a house. Therefore, 27 different teams of builders were hired to construct the homes. Each house had two bedrooms, one bathroom, and no basement. The kitchen was situated near



**American Dream:** Persistent myth in America that hard work and ingenuity will result in upward social mobility. In the 1950s, the goal was a house in the suburbs, a family with children, a car and a dog.



**Suburbs:** The neighborhoods that grow up around a large city. They grew rapidly in the 1950s.



**William Levitt:** Entrepreneur who developed methods for quickly building suburbs with inexpensive housing.

### Primary Source: Photograph

Levittown, Pennsylvania exemplified the suburbs of the 1950s.

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the back of the house so mothers could keep an eye on their children in the backyard. Within one year, Levitt was building 36 houses per day. His assembly-line approach made the houses affordable. At first, the homes were available only to veterans. Eventually, though, **Levittown** was open to others as well. Levitt replicated his original success and there are seven Levittowns in America. Three still bear that name.

Others took Levitt's ideas and copied them. No where was this more pronounced than in California. During the war, tens of thousands of G.I.s had passed through the state on their way to battlefields in the Pacific. They loved the beauty and the weather and moved their young families there. To greet them were opportunistic developers who were blessed with plenty of room. Suburbs exploded around cities such as San Francisco and especially Los Angeles, the American city most famous for its **urban sprawl**.

In one California suburb, Lakewood, developers had perfected Levitt's methods so well that they were building 60 houses per day on average, and topped out at 110 houses completed on a single day. For old residents, bean fields were replaced by subdivisions seemingly overnight. Named for the wild spaces they replaced, these suburbs gave Americans the chance to own land, enjoy the grass of a backyard, and recapture a little slice of Thomas Jefferson's agrarian dream.

With the ability to own a detached home, thousands of Americans soon surpassed the standard of living enjoyed by their parents. Soon, the first **shopping centers** and **fast food restaurants** added to the convenience of suburban life. America and the American Dream would never be the same.



**Levittown:** A suburban city built by William Levitt. The first was in New York. Eventually six more were built.



**Urban Sprawl:** The spread of cities, especially suburbs, into rural areas. This process usually involves wasted land in which large parking lots divide buildings or large yards separate homes. It necessitates a car-based culture in order to get around.



**Shopping Center:** Designations in which many stores are concentrated together in one building, usually around a few department stores. These developed in the suburbs in the 1950s.



**Fast Food Restaurant:** A type of restaurant with a limited, inexpensive menu in which food would always be cooked waiting for customers. They developed during the 1950s as part of the growth of suburbs.

## Primary Source: Photograph

An early MacDonaldd's in Arizona, one of the fast food pioneers that exemplified the suburban, automobile-centered life of the 1950s.

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## AN INCREASE IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

As the birth rate soared, families grew, and more people moved to the suburbs, the United States witnessed a boom in affiliation with organized religion, especially involving various Protestant churches. Between 1950 and 1960, church membership among Americans increased from 49% to 69%. Religious messages began to infiltrate popular culture as religious leaders became famous and numerous religious organizations were formed.

In the southern United States, evangelicals experienced a notable surge. Leaders such as **Billy Graham** displacing the caricature of the pulpit-pounding country preachers of fundamentalism as stereotypes gradually shifted. Graham began the trend of national celebrity ministers who broadcast to megachurches via radio and television. He is also notable for having been a spiritual adviser to several presidents.

Institutionalized religion became such a critical aspect of life that it came to shape major political decisions. In 1954, partly in response to the Cold War idea that communism was a threat to religion, Congress added the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance. Despite being a deeply religious man, President Eisenhower, had never been an active member of any particular church. Sensing the mood of the country, though, he decided to be baptized in the Presbyterian Church to demonstrate his religious credentials. Since the 1950s, the religious beliefs and practices of any candidate for president have been matters of intense public interest and scrutiny in the media.

Although religion may have been an increasingly important factor in political matters, the Supreme Court acted as an important check on excess during the 1950s. A number of landmark Supreme Court cases addressed the issue of separation of church and state during the decade. The First Amendment to the Constitution states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” In their **Everson v. Board of Education** decision the court decided that a New Jersey law allowing government funds to be used to pay for busses carrying students to private religious schools was unconstitutional because taxpayer money should not be used to support religious institutions. Citing Thomas Jefferson, the court concluded that, “The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be kept high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach.”

In 1962, the Supreme Court addressed the issue of officially sponsored prayer in public schools. In **Engel v. Vitale**, the Court deemed it unconstitutional for state officials to compose an official school prayer and require its use in public schools, even when the prayer was non-denominational and students could excuse themselves from participation.



**Billy Graham:** Celebrity Christian minister during the post-World War II era. He broadcast his sermons on television and advised multiple presidents.



**Everson v. Board of Education:** 1947 Supreme Court case in which the Court concluded that taxpayer dollars cannot be spent to support private schools because it violates the First Amendment separation of church and state. In the particular case, public school busses were transporting students to a religious school.



**Engel v. Vitale:** 1962 Supreme Court case in which the Court concluded that public schools may not require students to participate in prayers because it violates the First Amendment separation of church and state.

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## TELEVISION

Perhaps no phenomenon shaped American life in the 1950s more than television. At the end of World War II, the television was a toy for only a few thousand wealthy Americans. Just 10 years later, nearly two-thirds of American households had a television and the biggest-selling periodical of the decade was TV Guide.

Network television programming blurred political, social and regional distinctions and helped forge a national popular culture, and that culture was White, Christian, righteous and centered on a family.

Television's idea of a **perfect family** was a briefcase-toting professional father who left daily for work, and a pearls-wearing, nurturing housewife who raised their mischievous boys and obedient girls. Through shows such as *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*, television created an idyllic view of what the perfect family should look like, though few actual families ever lived up to the ideal.

Americans loved situation comedies — sitcoms. In the 1950s, *I Love Lucy* topped the ratings charts. The show broke new ground by including a Cuban American character, Ricky Ricardo, played by bandleader Desi Arnaz, and dealing with Lucille Ball's pregnancy, though Lucy was never filmed from the waist down while she was pregnant.



**1950s Ideal Family:** Family structure that includes a father who goes to work, a mother who stays home to care for the house and children, and two or three children. This image was perpetuated in early television in shows such as *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*. It is heavily influenced by the Cult of Domesticity.



**I Love Lucy:** Popular 1950s Sitcom starring Lucille Ball.



### Primary Source: Photograph

A typical 1950s family enjoys television while relaxing with a soda in their suburban home. This idealized image even includes a painting of a church hanging on the wall.

# 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

America's fascination with the West was nothing new, but television brought **Western heroes** into American homes and turned that fascination into a love affair. Cowboys and lawmen such as Hopalong Cassidy, Wyatt Earp and the Cisco Kid galloped across televisions every night.

The Roy Rogers Show and Rin Tin Tin brought the West to children on Saturday mornings, and Davy Crockett coonskin caps became popular fashion items. Long running westerns, such as Bonanza and Rawhide, attracted viewers week after week.

One Western, **Gunsmoke**, ran for 20 years, longer than any other prime-time drama in television history. (If the Simpsons continues to be aired, it will break the record in 2019.) At the decade's close, 30 westerns aired on prime time each week, and westerns occupied seven spots in the Nielsen Top-10 television ratings.



**Westerns:** Category of television show that features heavily stereotypical cowboys, outlaws, Hispanics, Native Americans and other characters from the West.



**Gunsmoke:** Television western that ran for 20 years.

## Primary Source: Photograph

James Arness starred on Gunsmoke, which ran for 20 years.



# 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

Westerns reinforced the notion that everything was OK in America. Like *The Lone Ranger* or *Zorro*, most programs of the early 1950s drew a clear line between good guys and bad guys. There was very little danger of injury or death, and good always triumphed in the end. It was a comforting genre for the early years of the Cold War.

Absent from television in the 1950s was any hint of controversy. With rare exceptions such as Desi Arnaz of *I Love Lucy*, minorities rarely appeared on television in the 1950s.

In addition to establishing and reinforcing social norms and creating a national popular culture, television forever changed politics. The first president to be televised was Harry Truman. When Estes Kefauver prosecuted mob boss Frank Costello on television, the Tennessee senator became a national hero and a vice presidential candidate. It did not take long for political advertisers to understand the power of the new medium. Dwight Eisenhower's campaign staff generated sound bites — short, powerful statements from a candidate — rather than air an entire speech. Television has remained an important force in American political debate. In 2016, Donald Trump, a real estate broker and reality television star won the presidency, in part, because of his masterful use of television.

## ROCK AND ROLL

The roots of rock and roll lay in African American blues and gospel that had developed over centuries and became popular in the 1920s. As the Great Migration brought African Americans to the cities of the North, the sounds of **rhythm and blues (R&B)** attracted White suburban teens. Due to segregation and racist attitudes, however, none of the greatest artists of the genre, who were all African American, could get much airplay on the radio.

Disc jockey Alan Freed began a rhythm and blues show on a Cleveland radio station and as his audience grew, he coined the term **rock and roll**. Early attempts by white artists to cover R&B songs resulted in weaker renditions that bled the heart and soul out of the originals. However, record producers saw the market potential and began to search for a white artist who could capture the African American sound.

Sam Phillips, a record producer from Memphis, Tennessee, found the answer in **Elvis Presley**. With a deep Southern sound, pouty lips, and gyrating hips, Elvis took an old style and made it his own. From Memphis, the sound spread to other cities, and demand for Elvis records skyrocketed. Within two years, Elvis was the most popular name in the entertainment business and had earned the nickname the King of Rock and Roll.

After the door to rock and roll acceptance was opened, African American performers such as Chuck Berry, Fats Domino and Little Richard began to enjoy broad success, as well. White performers such as Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Lewis found artistic freedom and commercial success.



**Rhythm and Blues (R&B):** Musical style popularized by African Americans in the cities of the North. It attracted White suburban teenagers and gave rise to rock and roll when White musicians used it as the basis for their own versions.



**Rock and Roll:** Musical style that developed in the 1950s. It was originally based on R&B.



**Elvis Presley:** The “King” of Rock and Roll. As a White musician who had access to radio airtime, he popularized the new musical style in the 1950s when African Americans who had developed it had less public exposure.

## 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

Rock and roll sent shockwaves across America. A generation of young teenagers collectively rebelled against the big band music their parents loved. In general, the older generation loathed rock and roll.



### Primary Source: Photograph

Chuck Berry was one of the pioneers of rock and roll. After Elvis Presley introduced the new form of music to White audiences, musicians like Berry and Fats Domino who had done so much to invent the genera, also found widespread success.

Teenagers found the syncopated backbeat rhythm especially suited to dance, which frightened their parents even more than the sounds emanating from their children's radios and record players. Dance parties became the rage and American teens tuned into **Dick Clark's American Bandstand** to keep up on the latest dance and fashion styles. Appalled by the new dances the movement evoked, churches proclaimed it Satan's music.

Frank Sinatra, a great American singer who had risen to fame during the big band era of the 1940s said that rock and roll was "the most brutal, ugly, degenerate, vicious form of expression — lewd, sly, in plain fact, dirty — a rancid-smelling aphrodisiac and the martial music of every side-burned delinquent on the face of the earth."



**Dick Clark's American Bandstand:**  
Popular television program in the 1950s that promoted new rock and roll acts and dances.

## 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

Because rock and roll had grown out of African American musical styles, many middle-class Whites thought it was tasteless. Rock and roll records were banned from radio stations and hundreds of schools. But the masses spoke louder than the morality police. When Elvis appeared on television on **The Ed Sullivan Show**, the show's ratings soared. America's Baby Boomers loved rock and roll, embraced it as the soundtrack of their generation, and this uniquely American musical creation went on to conquer the world.

### THE EXCLUDED

The new prosperity that was the hallmark of the 1950s did not extend to everyone. Many Americans continued to live in poverty throughout the decade, especially older people and African Americans, the latter of whom continued to earn far less on average than their White counterparts in the two decades after World War II.

Between one-fifth and one-fourth of the overall population could not survive on the income they earned. The older generation of Americans did not benefit as much from the post-war economic boom, especially as many had never recovered financially from the loss of their savings during the Great Depression and were too old to go back to work. Many blue-collar workers continued to live in poverty, with 30% of those employed in industry. Racial differences were staggering. In 1947, 60% of African American families lived below the poverty level, compared with 23% of White families. In 1968, 23% of African American families lived below the poverty level, compared with 9% of White families.

Immediately after the war, 12 million returning veterans were in need of work and many could not find it. In addition, labor strikes rocked the nation; in some cases exacerbated by racial tensions due to African-Americans having taken jobs during the war and now being faced with irate returning veterans who demanded that they step aside. The huge number of women employed in the workforce in the war were also rapidly cleared out to make room for men.

In 1952, **Ralph Ellison** penned **Invisible Man**, which pinpointed American indifference to the plight of African Americans. "I am an invisible man," he wrote. "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me..." Ellison earned the National Book Award for his work and **Invisible Man** continues to be ranked among the greatest novels in American literature.

African Americans were not the only minorities to suffer hardship in the 1950s. Hispanic Americans languished in urban American barrios, and the Eisenhower Administration responded with a program, derisively named **Operation Wetback**, designed to deport millions of Mexican Americans.

Poverty on Native American reservations increased with an Eisenhower policy designed to end federal support for tribes. Incentives such as relocation assistance and job placement were offered to Native Americans



**The Ed Sullivan Show:** Popular television show in the 1950s that featured new musicians. The Beatles famously played this show when they first arrived in the United States.



**Ralph Ellison:** African American author of **Invisible Man**. He won the National Book Award for his writing about indifference toward African Americans.



**Invisible Man:** Ralph Ellison's award winning novel about the plight of African Americans in the 1950s.



**Operation Wetback:** Government program during the 1950s to deport millions of Mexican Americans who had come to the United States, mostly as farmworkers.

## 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

who were willing to venture off the reservations and into the cities. Unfortunately, the government excelled at relocation but struggled with job placement, leading to the creation of Native American ghettos in many western cities.

Other minorities such as Jews, Italians, and Asians also struggled to find their place in the American quilt.

### THE CRITICS

As television and social pressure created an ideal American lifestyle based on White, Christian, suburban families, a vocal minority of social critics registered their dissenting voices in literature, art and action.

Most famous of the dissenters were the **Beatniks**. The Beat Generation developed simultaneously in the East Village in New York City and in North Beach in San Francisco. The Beatniks rejected the idealized image of America presented on television. They eschewed the suits and ties, the happy housewives, rock and roll, and phony purity of suburban life. Instead, they wore black turtleneck sweaters, jeans, sandals or Converse shoes. They wore berets and dark glasses. They frequented coffee houses. They were cool.



**Beatniks:** A group of social critics during the 1950s, based in New York City and San Francisco, or questioned mainstream culture. They embraced jazz rather than rock and roll, wore dark clothes, drank coffee rather than alcohol, and popularized the idea of “cool.”

#### Primary Source: Photograph

One of the pioneers of bebop, a new take on jazz that emerged in the 1950s, Thelonious Monk at the piano.



## 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

While mainstream America seemed to ignore African American culture, the beats celebrated it by frequenting jazz clubs and romanticizing their poverty. In an effort to find a new way of living, they used alcohol and drugs, and experimented with new sexual lifestyles, foreshadowed the counterculture of the following decade.

The Beatniks didn't like rock and roll, but rejected also the big band swing of their parents, which they thought had become too mainstream and too commercialized. They helped popularize bebop jazz, a new art form that was intimate, based on small quartets and quintets. **Bebop** emphasized improvisation and talented soloists such as saxophonists **John Coltrane** and **Charlie Parker**, trumpeter **Dizzy Gillespie**, and pianists **Thelonious Monk** and **Dave Brubeck**.

The Beatniks were not reformers. They believed that mainstream American culture was so corrupt that fixing it would be a lost cause. Like the Transcendentalists of the 1820s and 1830s, they believed that only by separating completely could they find true meaning in life. Beatnik communities thrived in New York and San Francisco, but also sprung up in Venice in Los Angeles and the French Quarter in New Orleans.

The driving force behind the Beat Generation were its writers, and the writer who first defined what it meant to be beat was **Allen Ginsberg**. His poem **Howl**, published in 1956, railed against the conformity of mainstream culture and celebrated the life of the Beatniks who sought to live life as they pleased. Most shockingly, it described drug use and both heterosexual and homosexual sex at a time when homosexual sex was illegal in almost every state.

As a result, the poem became the subject of an important court case. Copies of the poem were seized by authorities and the owner of the bookstore that first sold them was arrested. The **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)** and numerous critics spoke in defense of the poem's literary value and the judge hearing the case ruled that it had "redeeming social importance," setting a precedent for freedom of speech.

Another of the Beat Generation's defining authors was Ginsberg's friend **Jack Kerouac**. His novel **On the Road**, published in 1957, retells the wanderings of a young Beatnik in search of what Kerouac described as IT, the essential meaning of life, stripped of social rules and obligations. The protagonist's journey echoes that of Huckleberry Finn in Mark Twain's classic. Like Twain, and especially like Henry David Thoreau a century before, Kerouac believed that only by cutting oneself off completely from the surrounding mainstream culture could a person truly live a meaningful life.

Other writers of the Beat Generation critiqued specific aspects of mainstream culture. The notion of the white-collar, executive-track, male employee was condemned in fiction in Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and in commentary in William Whyte's *The Organization Man*.



**Bebop:** Form of jazz that developed in the 1950s. Unlike the big band swing of the 1930s and 1940s, this new style was performed by small quartets and quintets and emphasized improvisation.



**John Coltrane:** Great saxophonist of the bebop jazz era. He often recorded with other great musicians of the era.



**Charlie Parker:** Great saxophonist of the bebop jazz era. He was nicknamed "Yardbird" or just the "Bird."



**Dizzy Gillespie:** Great trumpet player of the bebop jazz era.



**Thelonious Monk:** Great pianist and composer of the bebop jazz era.



**Dave Brubeck:** Great pianist of the bebop jazz era. His most famous song was Take Five.



**Allen Ginsberg:** Beat generation author of the poem "Howl."



**Howl:** Allen Ginsberg's famous poem that helped define the Beat Generation. It was the subject of an important freedom of speech court case when authorities tried to confiscate copies from a bookstore due to its homosexual subjects.



**American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU):** Organization that provides lawyers to defend people they believe have had their basic rights violated. For example, they defend freedom of speech cases and in the 1920s, helped defend John Scopes.



**Jack Kerouac:** Beat Generation author of "On the Road"



**On the Road:** Book by Jack Kerouac that helped define what it meant to be Beat during the 1950s.

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Economist John Kenneth Galbraith criticized old values in his book *In The Affluent Society*. Galbraith argued that happiness and education were more important measures of success than the output of goods and services.

In his book *The City in History*, Lewis Mumford described the ideal urban setting in which growth and planning were in harmony with the environment. His critique of the new suburbs and their artificial nature was harsh. He wrote that “the suburb served as an asylum for the preservation of illusion. Here domesticity could prosper, oblivious of the pervasive regimentation beyond. This was not merely a child-centered environment; it was based on a childish view of the world, in which reality was sacrificed to the pleasure principle.”

Even singers tore into the sameness of the suburbs. In her song *Little Boxes*, Malvina Reynolds mocked suburban tract housing as little boxes of different colors “all made out of ticky-tacky,” which all looked “just the same.”

The booming postwar defense industry came under fire in C. Wright Mills’ *The Power Elite*. Mills feared that an alliance between military leaders and munitions manufacturers held an unhealthy proportion of power that could ultimately endanger American democracy, a sentiment echoed by President Eisenhower in his Farewell Address.

Even the life of teenagers growing up in the false happiness of suburbia was skewered in literature by **J.D. Salinger** in his novel **The Catcher in the Rye**.

American painters also took shots at conformity. **Edward Hopper**, who had made a name for himself in earlier decades, combated the blissful images of television by showing an America full of loneliness and alienation.



In New York City, painters broke with the conventions of Western art to create abstract expressionism, widely regarded as the most significant



**J.D. Salinger:** Author of “The Catcher in the Rye” who wrote about false happiness in the suburbs of the 1950s.



**The Catcher in the Rye:** Novel by J.D. Salinger exposing the false happiness of life in the suburbs of the 1950s.



**Edward Hopper:** Artist of the 1950s who painted scenes that challenged the ideal images of life in the 1950s. His painting “Nighthawks” is the most famous.

#### Primary Source: Painting

“Convergence” by Jackson Pollock, exemplifies the abstract expressionism that swept the American art world after World War II.

# 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

artistic movement ever to come out of America. **Abstract expressionists**, such as **Willem de Koonigh**, **Hans Hoffman**, **Mark Rothko**, and **Jackson Pollock**, sought to express their subconscious and their dissatisfaction with postwar life through unique and innovative paintings. For them, the physical act of painting was almost as important as the work itself. Jackson Pollock gained fame through action painting, the act pouring, dripping, and spattering the paint onto the canvas. Rothko covered his canvas with large rectangles, which he said conveyed “basic human emotions.”

While the 1950s cinemas were mostly home to the typical Hollywood fare of Westerns and romances, a handful of films shocked audiences by uncovering the dark side of America’s youth. **Marlon Brando** played the leather-clad leader of a motorcycle gang that ransacked a small town in *The Wild One*. The film terrified adults but fascinated kids, who emulated Brando’s style. 1955 saw the release of *Blackboard Jungle*, a film about juvenile delinquency in an urban high school. It was the first major release to use a rock and roll soundtrack and was banned in many areas both for its violent portrayal of high school life and its use of a multiracial cast of lead actors.

Perhaps the most controversial and influential of these films is 1955’s *Rebel Without a Cause*. Another film about teenage delinquency, *Rebel* was not set amid urban decay, but rather in an affluent suburb. Ironically, the film made it clear that the failure of those very families was to blame for the main characters’ troubles. Once again, parents were outraged, but the message could no longer be ignored. Juvenile delinquency was no longer a problem for the lower classes. It was lurking in the supposedly perfect suburbs. The film earned three Academy Award nominations and propelled **James Dean** to posthumous but eternal stardom.

Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Beatniks and critics of affluence and conformity were the same White middle class Americans who were enjoying the nation’s newfound prosperity the most. Lower classes, blue-collar workers, and minorities who had sacrificed during World War II to demonstrate their patriotism and prove that they deserved a place at America’s table rejected the growing counterculture. For them, prosperity had finally arrived after generations of waiting and they saw no reason not to embrace it.

Although the Beatniks and social critics of the 1950s would pave the way for a much larger counterculture movement in the next decade, they were a tiny fraction Americans overall. Most of the new, prosperous middle class families were content to live out their days in the sameness of their suburban homes, try to enjoy happy days and live up to the models of perfect families found on television.



**Abstract Expressionism:** Art style popularized after World War II. Artists in this style expressed their dissatisfaction with postwar life by making the act of painting more important than the work itself. Jackson Pollock’s wild splashes of paint on large canvasses are the most famous.



**Willem de Koonigh:** Dutch American artist who helped popularize Abstract Impressionism after World War II.



**Hans Hoffman:** German American artist who helped launch the Abstract Impressionist era after World War II.



**Mark Rothko:** American artist of the Abstract Impressionist era who was famous for painting large rectangles he said conveyed “basic human emotions.”



**Jackson Pollock:** Famous artist of the Abstract Impressionist era who is famous for splashing paint wildly over large canvasses. He called it his “drip” technique.



**Marlon Brando:** Movie star of the 1950s. He played a motorcycle gang leader in *The Wild One*, the first major motion picture to feature rock and roll in its soundtrack.



**James Dean:** Academy Award winning actor from the 1950s who portrayed a troubled teenager in *Rebel Without a Cause*, a film that stood in contrast to the utopian image many held of suburban life in the 50s.

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Primary Source: Photograph

James Dean symbolized rejection of the 1950s ideal young man. His performance in “Rebel Without a Cause” shocked parents, inspired teenagers, and won critical acclaim.

### CONCLUSION

Despite what the critics may have said, most Americans were quite happy with their lives during the 1950s. New homes in the suburbs and the roaring economy gave them a chance to enjoy a life that had eluded their parents. For the first time in a long time, the basic needs of nearly every American were being met.

The saying “a rising tide lifts all ships” was true in the 1950s. Although the members of the lower class and minorities were often excluded from the very best opportunities, they were not excluded entirely. Many who had previously only expected a future of poverty were able to join the ranks of the middle class.

At last, happiness seemed to have arrived. The only price to pay for contentment was to leave individuality behind. Those who sought prosperity and bliss had to conform, and conform they did. Millions of Americans bought into the idyllic life they saw on television. They bought the products advertisers told them they had to have and wore the cloths the advertisers told them to wear.

But is this really happiness? Or as the Beatniks and their fellow critics proclaimed, is conformity just a way of hiding from hard truths?

What do you think? Can we be happy if we’re all the same?

# 1 CAN WE BE HAPPY IF WE'RE ALL THE SAME?

## SUMMARY

Most Americans have happy memories of the 1950s. During the 1950s, the economy boomed. Middle class and blue-collar workers all did well. For the first time ever, most Americans could afford houses, cars, and new inventions like televisions. The interstate highway system was built, encouraging automobile purchasing, and the use of fertilizers led to abundant harvests. New advances in medicine helped people live longer.

Politically, the 1950s were stable. Eisenhower was president and he kept the government from spending too much, while also not reducing popular programs like Social Security. Although it was the height of the Cold War arms race, Eisenhower ended the Korean War and kept the nation out of any hot conflicts.

The G.I. Bill helped veterans of World War II buy houses and attend college. For the first time, both became common. Those same veterans came home and started families. Their children, the Baby Boomers, are one of the nation's largest generations ever. To house these families, suburbs were built. Cities grew, shopping malls, and fast food restaurants sprung up. It was a time of huge population growth in California.

People in the 1950s became more religious. More Americans went to church. However, the Supreme Court also limited the influence of religion in schools, banning school prayer for example.

In the 1950s, there was tremendous pressure for people to live up to an ideal. Family were supposed to have married parents, with a dad who worked and mom who stayed home to raise polite children. They were supposed to have a house in the suburbs and a car.

Television was new and promoted this idealized version of family. Sitcoms were popular. Westerns were also popular in which good could always triumph over evil.

Rock and roll was new in the 1950s. Although based on African American traditions like rhythm and blues, it was first popularized by Elvis Presley.

Not everyone enjoyed the prosperity of the 1950s. The elderly, women, African Americans and other minorities did not benefit from the G.I. Bill.

The Beatniks rejected the conformity of the 1950s. Centered in San Francisco and New York City, they preferred a new form of jazz called bebop and criticized mainstream culture. The Beat Generation created some of the best literature of the 1950s. Those who did not want to conform also popularized abstract expressionism, a new style in art. Some movies of the 1950s similarly portrayed the darker side of society.



## KEY IDEAS

**Middle Class:** The large group of Americans who are not wealth or poor, but are able to live comfortably on the money they earn from their work.

**Corporatization:** The process by which small businesses close during difficult economic times and larger, more financially resilient companies survive and take their place in the economy.

**Green Revolution:** A change in agriculture in the 1940s and 1950s in which selective breeding, the use of fertilizer, and other scientific advancements led to a tremendous increase in food production.

**Consolidation:** The process of combining small businesses or farms into larger ones.

**Modern Republicanism:** A political philosophy during the second half of the 1900s in which Republican politicians did not increase government spending, but also did not cut popular New Deal programs such as Social Security.

**Mortgage:** A loan to purchase a house or condominium.

**Tuition:** The cost of a college education.

**American Dream:** Persistent myth in America that hard work and ingenuity will result in upward social mobility. In the 1950s, the goal was a house in the suburbs, a family with children, a car and a dog.

**Urban Sprawl:** The spread of cities, especially suburbs, into rural areas. This process usually involves wasted land in which large parking lots divide buildings or large yards separate homes. It necessitates a car-based culture in order to get around.

**1950s Ideal Family:** Family structure that includes a father who goes to work, a mother who stays home to care for the house and children, and two or three children. This image was perpetuated in early television in shows such as *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*. It is heavily influenced by the *Cult of Domesticity*.



## LAWS & GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

**G.I. Bill:** Nickname for the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Passed in 1944 it gave money to veterans to attend college or buy houses. It had a tremendous impact on the education levels of adult Americans and also led to a boom in suburban development.

**Operation Wetback:** Government program during the 1950s to deport millions of Mexican Americans who had come to the United States, mostly as farmworkers.



## COURT CASES

**Everson v. Board of Education:** 1947 Supreme Court case in which the Court concluded that taxpayer dollars cannot be spent to support private schools because it violates the First Amendment separation of church and state. In the particular case, public school busses were transporting students to a religious school.

**Engel v. Vitale:** 1962 Supreme Court case in which the Court concluded that public schools may not require students to participate in prayers because it violates the First Amendment separation of church and state.



## PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Blue-Collar Workers:** Workers who earn a living from their labor. They include custodians, construction workers, and factory workers.

**Dr. Jonas Salk:** Doctor who discovered a vaccine to prevent Polio.

**Dwight Eisenhower:** Republican president during the 1950s. He championed Modern Republicanism. He did not want to increase federal spending but also did not cut New Deal programs. He oversaw the arms race during the Cold War, but his presidency is remembered as a time of peace and economic growth.

**Baby Boomers:** The largest generation of Americans. They were born between 1945 and 1965. They were the children of the Greatest Generation and grew up during the 1950s, were teenagers and young adults during the 1960s, fought in Vietnam, and are the parents of Generation X. Most of them are now retiring.

**William Levitt:** Entrepreneur who developed methods for quickly building suburbs with inexpensive housing.

**Billy Graham:** Celebrity Christian minister during the post-World War II era. He broadcast his sermons on television and advised multiple presidents.

**Elvis Presley:** The "King" of Rock and Roll. As a White musician who had access to radio airtime, he popularized the new musical style in the 1950s when African Americans who had developed it had less public exposure.

**Ralph Ellison:** African American author of *Invisible Man*. He won the National Book Award for his writing about indifference toward African Americans.

**Beatniks:** A group of social critics during the 1950s, based in New York City and San Francisco, or questioned mainstream culture. They embraced jazz rather than rock and roll, wore dark clothes, drank coffee rather than alcohol, and popularized the idea of "cool."

**John Coltrane:** Great saxophonist of the bebop jazz era. He often recorded with other great musicians of the era.

**Charlie Parker:** Great saxophonist of the bebop jazz era. He was nicknamed "Yardbird" or just the "Bird."

**Dizzy Gillespie:** Great saxophonist of the bebop jazz era.

**Thelonious Monk:** Great pianist and composer of the bebop jazz era.

**Dave Brubeck:** Great pianist of the bebop jazz era. His most famous song was *Take Five*.

**Allen Ginsberg:** Beat generation author of the poem "Howl."

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**Jack Kerouac:** Beat Generation author of "On the Road"

**J.D. Salinger:** Author of "The Catcher in the Rye" who wrote about false happiness in the suburbs of the 1950s.

**Willem de Kooning:** Dutch American artist who helped popularize Abstract Impressionism after World War II.

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**Marlon Brando:** Movie star of the 1950s. He played a motorcycle gang leader in *The Wild One*, the first major motion picture to feature rock and roll in its soundtrack.

**James Dean:** Academy Award winning actor from the 1950s who portrayed a troubled teenager in *Rebel Without a Cause*, a film that stood in contrast to the utopian image many held of suburban life in the 50s.

**Edward Hopper:** Artist of the 1950s who painted scenes that challenged the ideal images of life in the 1950s. His painting "Nighthawks" is the most famous.



## PLACES

**Interstate Highway System:** A network of limited-access, high-speed roads built to connect major cities beginning in the 1950s.

**Suburbs:** The neighborhoods that grow up around a large city. They grew rapidly in the 1950s.

**Levittown:** A suburban city built by William Levitt. The first was in New York. Eventually six more were built.

**Shopping Center:** Designations in which many stores are concentrated together in one building, usually around a few department stores. These developed in the suburbs in the 1950s.

**Fast Food Restaurant:** A type of restaurant with a limited, inexpensive menu in which food would always be cooked waiting for customers. They developed during the 1950s as part of the growth of suburbs.



## SCIENCE

**Polio:** Debilitating neurological disease that produces paralysis in the legs. A vaccine was discovered by Dr. Jonas Salk.

**Penicillin:** Antibiotic that was discovered in 1939 and prevented tremendous numbers of deaths beginning in World War II.



## LITERATURE

**Invisible Man:** Ralph Ellison's award winning novel about the plight of African Americans in the 1950s.

**Howl:** Allen Ginsberg's famous poem that helped define the Beat Generation. It was the subject of an important freedom of speech court case when authorities tried to confiscate copies from a bookstore due to its homosexual subjects.

**On the Road:** Book by Jack Kerouac that helped define what it mean to be Beat during the 1950s.

**The Catcher in the Rye:** Novel by J.D. Salinger exposing the false happiness of life in the suburbs of the 1950s.



## ENTERTAINMENT

**I Love Lucy:** Popular 1950s Sitcom starring Lucille Ball.

**Westerns:** Category of television show that features heavily stereotypical cowboys, outlaws, Hispanics, Native Americans and other characters from the West.

**Gunsmoke:** Television western that ran for 20 years.

**Rhythm and Blues (R&B):** Musical style popularized by African Americans in the cities of the North. It attracted White suburban teenagers and gave rise to rock and roll when White musicians used it as the basis for their own versions.

**Rock and Roll:** Musical style that developed in the 1950s. It was originally based on R&B.

**Dick Clark's American Bandstand:** Popular television program in the 1950s that promoted new rock and roll acts and dances.

**The Ed Sullivan Show:** Popular television show in the 1950s that featured new musicians. The Beatles famously played this show when they first arrived in the United States.

**Bebop:** Form of jazz that developed in the 1950s. Unlike the big band swing of the 1930s and 1940s, this new style was performed by small quartets and quintets and emphasized improvisation.

**Abstract Expressionism:** Art style popularized after World War II. Artists in this style expressed their dissatisfaction with postwar life by making the act of painting more important than the work itself. Jackson Pollock's wild splashes of pain on large canvasses are the most famous.

# 2

## S E C O N D Q U E S T I O N WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE A N T I - A M E R I C A N ?

WAS THE SOCIAL  
R E V O L U T I O N  
A C T U A L L Y  
R E V O L U T I O N A R Y ?

### INTRODUCTION

The Greatest Generation had grown up as children and teenagers in the hardscrabble years of the Great Depression. As young adults they had fought and defeated Hitler and Imperial Japan. Then, after returning to normal life from the war, they set out to build a prosperous and stable life for their children.

These children, the Baby Boomers entered their teenage years in the early 1960s, and in sheer numbers they represented a larger force than any prior generation in the history of the country. But to their parents' dismay, they could not have been more different.

Some of these Baby Boomer teenagers led a social rebellion that helped to define the decade. Never more than a small minority, the counterculture proved to be hugely influential as it offered an alternative to the bland homogeneity of American middle-class life, patriarchal family structures, self-discipline, unquestioning patriotism, and the acquisition of property that had characterized their childhood in the 1950s.

These hippies rejected the conventions of traditional society. Men sported beards and grew their hair long. Both men and women wore clothing from non-Western cultures, defied their parents, rejected social etiquettes and manners, and turned to music as an expression of their sense of self. Casual sex between unmarried men and women was acceptable. Drug use, especially of marijuana and psychedelic drugs like LSD and peyote, was common. They protested America's war in Vietnam and preached a doctrine of personal freedom.

For their parents, the generation who had fought and won World War II, the counterculture was terrifying. These teenagers who they had so carefully raised had turned their back on everything they held dear. The counterculture, as many saw it, was anti-American. They didn't want money. They didn't follow the rules. They were throwing away and turning their backs on America itself.

What do you think? Was the counterculture anti-American?

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

### CONTINUING THE BEATNIK LEGACY

The 1960s counterculture formed both a continuation of earlier alternative movements and was at the same time something new. Like the transcendentalists of the 1840s, they believed that finding truth meant finding new ways of thinking and living. They looked for ideas about truth and pure living outside of the strict Christian teaching they had learned as children in the 1950s and embraced Buddhist and Hindu philosophies. One lasting legacy of their spiritual quests has been the lasting popularity of Eastern traditions like meditation and yoga in America.

Most immediately, the counterculture was an outgrowth of the Beatniks of the 1950s. Like the Beatniks they believed that mainstream society had been corrupted and they sought to separate themselves. Also, like the Beatniks they embraced drugs. The great Beat writer Alan Ginsberg became a mentor to his younger followers. However, in fundamental ways the 1960s were not a pure continuation of the 1950s. The Beat generation was cold, isolated and hard to join. They wore dark clothes and listened to jazz. The **hippies** were easy to copy and welcomed everyone. They embraced rock and roll and bright colors.

Perhaps most importantly, the hippies believed in social change. They joined in a wide variety of social movements including the civil rights movement in the South, the environmental movement, Cesar Chavez's efforts to help Mexican American farm workers, the women's rights movement, and most famously, the anti-war movement.

### HAIGHT-ASHBURY AND THE SUMMER OF LOVE

Most movements need a center – a leader or a place around which people and their beliefs can concentrate. For the counterculture, that center was the **Haight-Ashbury** neighborhood of San Francisco, California.

The residents of Haight-Ashbury did not set out to become home to thousands of hippies. Rather, the counterculture found the neighborhood. San Francisco was already the home of the 1950s counterculture and in Haight-Ashbury rents were inexpensive. What made the neighborhood a real magnet for hippies, however, was drugs.

Ron and Jay Thelin's Psychedelic Shop opened on Haight Street in 1966, offering hippies a spot to purchase marijuana and LSD. The Psychedelic Shop quickly became one of the unofficial community centers for the growing numbers of young people migrating to the neighborhood. Other shops opened up nearby openly selling drugs as well as crystals, tie-died shirts, books and the various other symbols of the counterculture.

Another well-known neighborhood presence was the **Diggers**, a local group known originally for its street theater. The Diggers believed in a free society and the good in human nature. They hated the idea of capitalism and



**Hippies:** Young people during the 1960s who rejected traditional cultural norms and values. They listened to rock and roll, experimented with drugs, broke rules about sexual behavior. They wore bright colors, created communes, supported many of the social movements of the decade, and generally opposed the war in Vietnam.



**Haight-Ashbury:** The neighborhood in San Francisco that became the center of hippie culture, especially during the Summer of Love of 1967.



**Diggers:** A group of hippies in San Francisco who hated capitalism. They opened a store where everything was free and opened a free medical clinic.

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

believed money brought out the worst in people. To express their belief, they established a free store, gave out free meals, and built a free medical clinic, which was the first of its kind, all of which relied on volunteers and donations.

The neighborhood's fame reached its peak when it became the haven for a number of the best-known musicians of the time. The members of Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin all lived there. They not only immortalized the hippie scene in song, but also knew many within the community.



### Primary Source: Photograph

The hippies both defined and symbolized the counterculture of the 1960s. Their unique fashion, music, and social outlook left an enduring mark on American culture.

Newspapers, television and magazines accelerated the concentration of the counterculture in the neighborhood. Time magazine featured a cover story entitled, "The Hippies: The Philosophy of a Subculture." The article described the guidelines of the hippie code: "Do your own thing, wherever you have to do it and whenever you want. Drop out. Leave society as you have known it. Leave it utterly. Blow the mind of every straight person you can reach. Turn them on, if not to drugs, then to beauty, love, honesty, fun." Coverage of hippie life in the Haight-Ashbury in the national media drew the attention of young people from all over America and in the summer of 1967, the neighborhood was overrun.

Remembered as the **Summer of Love**, 1967 attracted a wide range of people: teenagers and college students drawn by their peers and the allure of joining a cultural utopia, middle-class vacationers, and even partying military personnel from bases within driving distance. The Haight-Ashbury could not accommodate this rapid influx of people, and the neighborhood scene quickly deteriorated. Overcrowding, homelessness, hunger, drug problems, and crime skyrocketed. Shop owners capitalized on the crowds and sold

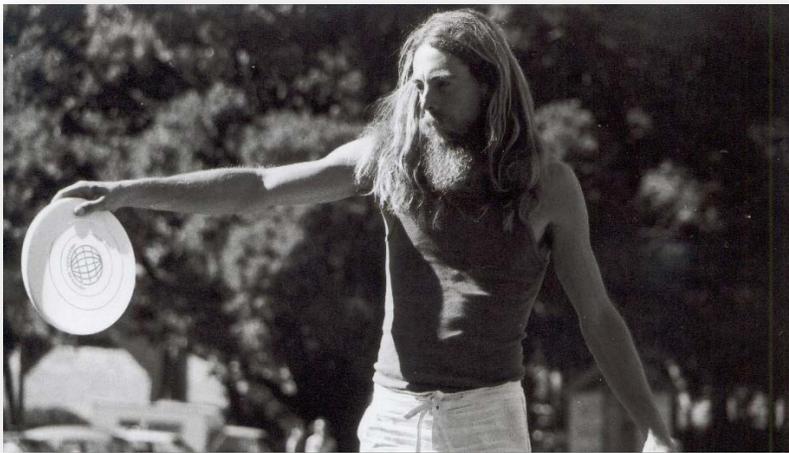


**Summer of Love:** Nickname for the summer of 1967 in San Francisco during which the hippie culture in that city climaxed.

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

clothing at enormous profits. The original residents and hippies who had helped create the movement criticized them for selling out.

In the end, it was too much. By August, most people left to go home to school, but the Summer of Love had changed the neighborhood. What had once been a haven for those who sought to separate themselves from mainstream America had been overrun by the pressures and problems they had hoped to avoid. The neighborhood remained important in the collective conscience, but it had changed. Never again, would there be a place quite like it.



### Primary Source: Photograph

As champions of anything alternative, hippies embraced Frisbee as a pastime. Ken Westerfield, pictured here, was especially important in organizing early competitive matches.

### FREE LOVE

The counterculture gave the 1960s its most well remembered catchphrase: sex, drugs, and rock and roll. To understand the counterculture, understanding each of these three aspects is essential.

During the 1960s, especially among the hippies, a culture of **free love** emerged. Beginning in San Francisco in the mid-1960s, this culture of free love was propagated by thousands of hippies who preached the power of love and the beauty of sex. For the hippies and those who tried to copy them, free love had a variety of meanings. Most obviously, it meant that the counterculture was rejecting their parents' moral teachings about sex and marriage. In this case, "free" meant free from the rules.

Sex became more socially acceptable outside of the strict boundaries of marriage. For example, studies show that, between 1965 and 1975, the number of women who had sex before marriage increased dramatically. Birth control became legal in 1965 and abortion in 1973, both as a result of Supreme Court cases. The increased availability of birth control helped reduce the chance that premarital sex would result in unwanted



**Free Love:** Idea popularized by the young people of the counterculture during the 1960s that sex was beautiful and being free included freeing oneself from society's rules about sexual behavior.

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pregnancies, and by the mid-1970s, the majority of newly married American couples had experienced sex before marriage.

Colleges adapted to the changing values of their students. By the 1970s, it was acceptable for colleges to allow co-educational housing where male and female students mingled freely. The days of men's-only, or women's-only dorms were over.

In another sense, free love had nothing to do with sex. The counterculture emerged alongside America's growing involvement in the Vietnam War and by the time the counterculture reached its peak, the prospect of violent death in war was real for many young men. By embracing the idea of love as the opposite of hate, they could reject war. This view of free love is perhaps best captured in the lyrics of Chet Powers' song Let's Get Together. The chorus encourages the listeners "C'mon people now, Smile on your brother, Everybody get together, Try to love one another right now."

The most public demonstration of the concept of free love was a **love-in**. Across the country, hippies gathered in parks and on college campuses to protest, listen to music, sing, meditate, share drugs, and have sex. Naturally, adults at the time were not fond of either the activities at a love-in or the name.

### DRUGS

In addition to changes in sexual attitudes, many members of the counterculture experimented with drugs. **Marijuana** and **LSD** were used most commonly, but experimentation with mushrooms and pills was widespread as well. A Harvard professor named **Timothy Leary** made headlines by openly promoting the use of LSD.

The counterculture was particular about its drugs. They were finding a new way to live and they rejected many of the favorite drugs of their parents. For example, they avoided alcohol and sedatives which believed would deaden their minds. Instead, they embraced hallucinogenic drugs they saw as catalysts for spiritually awakening experiences. For many adherents of the counterculture, smoking marijuana, which they called dope, and using drugs like LSD or acid were part of what made them who they were.

There was a price to be paid for being different. With free love came an upsurge of venereal diseases. With LSD and acid came overdoses, drug addictions, and bad trips when drug-induced hallucinations turned into nightmares. Some of the most talented musicians of the counterculture were lost to drugs including Janice Joplin, Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix.

### STYLE

As with other adolescent, white middle-class movements, deviant behavior of the hippies involved challenging the accepted fashion of their time. Both men and women in the hippie movement wore jeans and let their hair grow



**Love-In:** An event during the counterculture in which hippies gathered together to protest, listen to music, sing, meditate, share drugs and have sex. It was intended to be the opposite of the war in Vietnam.



**Marijuana:** Drug that, like tobacco, is derived from dried leaves that are smoked. It is a mild hallucinogen and was popularized by the hippies of the counterculture. Today it has been legalized for private use in some states.



**LSD:** Powerful hallucinogenic drug popular in the 1960s. Hippies believed it could help a person get in touch with his or her spiritual side.



**Timothy Leary:** Harvard professor in the 1960s who promoted the use of LSD and other drugs.

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

long. Both genders wore sandals, moccasins or went barefoot. Men often wore beards, while women wore little or no makeup. Hippies often chose brightly colored clothing and wore unusual styles, such as bell-bottom pants, vests, tie-dyed garments, dashikis, peasant blouses, and long, full skirts. Clothing inspired by Native American, Asian, African and Latin American motifs were popular. Much hippie clothing was self-made in defiance of corporate culture, and hippies often purchased their clothes from flea markets and second-hand shops. Favored accessories for both men and women included Native American jewelry, headscarves, headbands and long beaded necklaces. Hippies decorated their homes, vehicles and other possessions with **psychedelic art**. The hippies left a profound mark on American fashion. Most iconic elements of the hippie-look have been reincarnated multiple times on the runways of the world's high fashion capitals.



**Psychedelic Art:** Style of art popularized by the hippies that included bold colors and patterns reminiscent of dreams or hallucinations. Tie dyed clothing is an example.

### Primary Source: Photograph

Further, the bus driven by the Merry Pranksters on their trip across the country. Icons from the counterculture such as the Grateful Dead were part of the journey.

### THE MERRY PRANKSTERS

Author Ken Kesey provided an important link between the Beat Generation and the counterculture of the 1960s, as well as one of its most memorable happenings. Along with his friend Neil Cassady, who had been the inspiration for the main character in Jack Kerouac's book *On the Road*, they made their own cross-country journey in 1964.

When Cassady needed to visit New York after the publication of his own second novel, Kesey, Cassady and a group of friends who called themselves the **Merry Pranksters** hatched the idea of reversing the journey of the pioneers and traveling to New York in an old school bus. This trip, described in **The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test** was the group's attempt to create art out



**Merry Pranksters:** Group of hippies led by Ken Kesey and Neil Cassady who travelled across the country in a school bus. They documented their quest to achieve the ideal hippie lifestyle in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

of everyday life, and to experience roadway America while high on LSD. The bus, which they nicknamed Further and decorated inside and out with psychedelic art, carried such cultural icons as the Grateful Dead and Stewart Brand who would go on to write the **Whole Earth Catalogue**, a guide to living a hippie lifestyle.

In an interview after arriving in New York, Kesey is quoted as saying, “The sense of communication in this country has damn near atrophied. But we found as we went along it got easier to make contact with people. If people could just understand it is possible to be different without being a threat.” A huge amount of footage was filmed on 16mm cameras during the trip, which remained largely unseen until the release of Alex Gibney’s documentary film *Magic Trip* in 2011.

After the bus trip, the Pranksters threw parties they called Acid Tests around the San Francisco Bay Area from 1965 to 1966. Many of the Pranksters lived at Kesey’s residence in La Honda. In New York, Cassady introduced Kesey to Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, who then turned them on to Timothy Leary, the Harvard professor and champion of psychedelic drugs. The cross-country trip of Further and the activities of the Merry Pranksters led to a number of psychedelic buses appearing in popular media over the next few years, including in the Beatles’ 1967 film *The Magical Mystery Tour*, the Partridge Family TV show in 1970, *The Muppet Movie* in 1979, and later, *The Magic School Bus* books and TV series.

### COMMUNES

Dropped out of mainstream society altogether was a way some hippies expressed their disillusionment with the cultural and spiritual limitations of American freedom. They joined **communes**, usually in rural areas, to share a desire to live closer to nature, respect the earth, and escape from modern life with its obsession with material goods. Many communes grew their own organic food. Others abolished the concept of private property, and all members shared willingly with one another. Some sought to abolish traditional ideas regarding love and marriage, and free love was practiced openly.

One of the most famous communes was **The Farm**, established in Tennessee in 1971. Residents of The Farm adopted a blend of Christian and Asian beliefs. They shared housing, owned no private property except tools and clothing, advocated nonviolence, and tried to live as one with nature, becoming vegetarians and avoiding the use of animal products. Like the urban hippies, they smoked marijuana in an effort to reach a higher state of consciousness and to achieve a feeling of oneness and harmony.

Most communes, however, faced fates similar to their 19th Century forebears. A charismatic leader would leave or the funds would become exhausted, and the commune would gradually dissolve. In other cases,



**The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test:** Book documenting the journey of the Merry Pranksters as they journeyed across the country during the 1960s.



**Whole Earth Catalogue:** A how-to book for hippies explaining such things as how to live in communes.



**Communes:** Communities formed by hippies during the 1960s in which they sought to implement their philosophy about the ideal ways to live. In some they abolished private property, in others they experimented with free love. The most famous was The Farm. Like the utopian communities of the early 1800s, they usually failed.



**The Farm:** Most famous of the communes of the counterculture. Located in Tennessee, its residents held a blend of Christian and Asian beliefs, rejected private property, and became vegetarians.

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disagreements, rivalries and jealousies destroyed the communes. After all, hippies were human too.

### MUSIC

The common bond among many youths of the time was music. Centered in San Francisco, a new wave of **psychedelic rock** became the music of choice. Bands like the **Grateful Dead**, **Jefferson Airplane** and the **Doors** created new sounds with electrically enhanced guitars, subversive lyrics, and association with drugs. When the **Beatles** went psychedelic with their landmark album Sargent Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, the music of the counterculture became mainstream.



**Folk rock** also became popular. In a rejection of commercialism, some artists of the counterculture turned back to America's musical roots. They popularized old songs and old instruments. Acoustic guitars, harmonicas and simple vocals became hip again. The best-known solo artist of the decade, **Bob Dylan** is remembered as the voice of the generation. His song, *The Times They Are a-Changin'* is an encapsulation of the spirit of the times.

Other folk acts such as **Janice Joplin**, the **Mamas & the Papas**, **Simon & Garfunkel**, **Sonny & Cher**, and **Peter, Paul & Mary** continued the folk rock tradition.

Music, especially rock and folk music, provided the opportunity to form seemingly impromptu communities to celebrate youth, rebellion, and individuality. In mid-August 1969, one such concert near the town of Woodstock, New York became the cultural touchstone of a generation. No other event better symbolized the cultural independence and freedom of Americans coming of age in the counterculture.



**Psychedelic Rock:** A variation of rock and roll music that used electric guitars, subversive lyrics and was played in the 1960s and 1970s by bands who were famous for experimenting with drugs. Some included the Grateful Dead and the Doors.



**Grateful Dead:** Psychedelic rock group formed in the 1960s. They were led by Jerry Garcia and participated in the Merry Pranksters' cross-country road trip.



**Jefferson Airplane:** Psychedelic rock band from San Francisco. They became popular during the Summer of Love.



**The Doors:** Psychedelic rock band led by Jim Morrison.



**The Beatles:** British rock band who formed in the 1950s, then came to the United States and transformed their sound during the 1960s, eventually performing psychedelic rock.

#### Primary Source: Photograph

The members of the Grateful Dead, one of the legendary musical groups of the counterculture.



**Folk Rock:** Variation of music that became popular during the counterculture. It mixed rock and roll with traditional music and instruments. Bob Dylan, Janice Joplin, and Peter, Paul & Mary are a few performers of the genera.



**Bob Dylan:** Folk rock singer after World War II who wrote songs such as *The Times They Are a-Changin'* and is remembered as the storyteller of the generation.



**Janice Joplin:** Folk rock and blues singer who performed *Mercedes Benz*, among other popular songs of the 1960s.



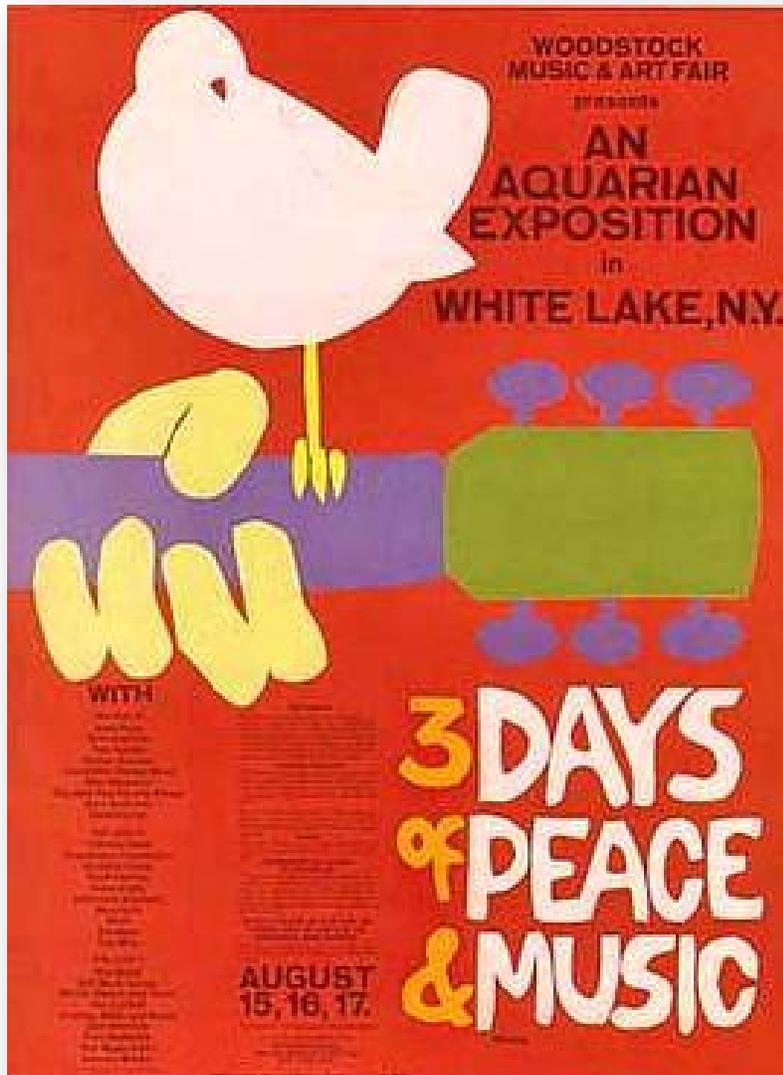
**The Mamas & the Papas:** Folk rock group from the 1960s that performed *California Dreamin'* among other hits.

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# WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION ACTUALLY REVOLUTIONARY?

### WOODSTOCK

The Woodstock Music & Art Fair – or simply **Woodstock** – was a music festival in August 1969 on a dairy farm in the Catskill Mountains of southern New York State. It is widely regarded as a pivotal moment in popular music history, as well as the definitive nexus for the larger counterculture generation.



**Simon & Garfunkel:** Folk rock duo. They performed *Bridge Over Troubled Water* and *Sound of Silence*, among other hits.



**Sonny & Cher:** Folk rock duo formed in the 1960s. After Sonny Bono died, Cher went on to have a long solo career.



**Peter, Paul & Mary:** Folk rock group formed in the 1960s. They performed *Blowin' in the Wind* and other anti-war songs.



**Woodstock:** Major music festival held in New York in 1969. It featured many of the greatest groups of the decade and is sometimes considered the climax of the counterculture.

**Primary Source:** Poster

A poster promoting the music festival at Woodstock.

The festival itself was plagued with challenges. The influx of attendees to the rural concert site created massive traffic jams. The makeshift facilities were not equipped to provide sanitation or first aid for the number of people attending. Hundreds of thousands found themselves in a struggle against

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bad weather, food shortages, and poor sanitation. The weekend was rainy and the concert site was a sea of mud before the event was over.

Guitarist **Jimi Hendrix** was the last act to perform at the festival. Because of the rain delays on Sunday, when Hendrix finally took the stage it was 8:30 Monday morning. The audience, which had peaked at an estimated 400,000 during the festival, had been reduced to about 30,000 by that point. Many of them merely waited to catch a glimpse of Hendrix before leaving during his performance.



**Jimi Hendrix:** Innovative guitarist from the 1960s. His rendition of The Star Spangled Banner at Woodstock is famous.

### Primary Source: Photograph

Jimi Hendrix was one of the great innovative musicians who graced the stages of the counterculture's concerts, and provided its defining anthem: his rendition of The Star Spangled Banner he performed at Woodstock.



Hendrix performed a two-hour set which included a psychedelic rendition of the The Star-Spangled Banner that was captured forever on film. The performance was a unique time capsule for the entire generation. Like the thousands of young Americans who loved their country but wanted it to be different from the way they knew it as children, Hendrix's rendition of the

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song is both the National Anthem and at the same time radically different. His performance at Woodstock that Monday morning in a blue-beaded white leather jacket with fringe and a red head scarf is now regarded as a defining moment of the 1960s.

Despite the weather and hardships, Woodstock satisfied most attendees. There was a sense of social harmony, which, with the quality of music, and the overwhelming mass of people, helped to make it one of the enduring events of the century.

After the concert, Max Yasgur, who owned the farm that had been site of the event, saw it as a victory of peace and love. He spoke of how nearly half a million people filled with spent the three days with music and peace on their minds despite the potential for disaster, riot, looting, and catastrophe. He stated, “If we join them, we can turn those adversities that are the problems of America today into a hope for a brighter and more peaceful future...”

### ALTAMONT

If Woodstock had been a celebration of peace and love, December 6, 1969 showed a darker side of human nature. On that day, approximately 300,000 attended the Altamont Speedway Free Festival in **Altamont**, California. Coming less than four months after the musical, drug-filled and soggy weekend in New York, some anticipated that Altamont would be a Woodstock of the West.

The show featured many of the musical stars of the counterculture, including Santana, Jefferson Airplane, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, and the Rolling Stones. The Grateful Dead were also scheduled to perform but never took the stage.

Rolling Stone magazine wrote that the event was “rock and roll’s all-time worst day, December 6th, a day when everything went perfectly wrong.” Like Woodstock, the event was poorly organized, but unlike Woodstock, the failures led to tragedy.

Perhaps the greatest mistake was the decision to hire the Hell’s Angels motorcycle gang to handle stage security. The bikers were told to keep people off the stage and were paid with \$500 worth of beer. Predictably, as the bikers became increasingly drunk during the event, fights broke out, and tragically one concertgoer, Meredith Hunter, who stormed onto the stage was stabbed to death by the intervening bikers.

There were three accidental deaths as well. Two people died in a hit-and-run car accident, and one by LSD-induced drowning in an irrigation canal. Scores were injured, numerous cars were stolen and then abandoned, and there was extensive property damage.



**Altamont:** Music festival held in California in 1969. It was the opposite of Woodstock in many ways. It was on the opposite end of the country, was violent, and showed the worst of the counterculture.

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

The Altamont concert is often contrasted with Woodstock. While Woodstock represented peace and love, Altamont came to be viewed as the end of the hippie era and the de facto conclusion of 1960s youth culture. Writing for the *New Yorker* in 2015, pop culture critic Richard Brody said what Altamont ended was “the idea that, left to their own inclinations and stripped of the trappings of the wider social order, the young people of the new generation will somehow spontaneously create a higher, gentler, more loving grassroots order. What died at Altamont is the Rousseauian dream itself.”



Primary Source: Photograph

The days of free love, experimental drug use, new age clothing, communes and flowers adorning uncut hair, were fleeting, but have left their mark on America’s identity, and certainly on the generation that grew up in the 1960s.

### LEGACY

The 1960s counterculture left an interesting legacy. It is important to note that the counterculture was probably no more than 10% of the American youth population. Contrary to common belief, most young Americans sought careers and lifestyles similar to their parents. The counterculture was simply so outrageous that the media made their numbers seem larger than reality. Nevertheless, this lifestyle made an indelible cultural impact on America for decades to come.

One lasting change from the countercultural movement was in American diet. Hippies fueled the opening of health food stores that sold wheat germ, yogurt, and granola, products unheard of in 1950s America. Vegetarianism became popular.

The counterculture made drug use more acceptable, broke down cultural norms about relationships and sex, and popularized an entirely new form of music. They lent their powerful energy to the social movements of their time

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

and altered the course of American foreign policy in Vietnam. Changes in fashion proved more fleeting but have returned in various incarnations over time.

On the other hand, the hippie dream of perfecting society by founding communes or opening free stores and of finding the greater meaning of life through drug-induced hallucinogenic experiences seems to have failed entirely. Drugs may have produced fantastical visions in the short term, but ruined lives over time. The hippie utopian experiments ran the same disappointing course as utopian movements from decades past.

So what happened to the hippies? Some grew up, got married, returned to mainstream life, got jobs, had children and left their bohemian past behind. Others never gave up the dream and moved to distant corners of America still searching for something they once felt so close to having. Now retired, the aging hippies offer a perplexing question about the wisdom of perusing eternal youth.

### CONCLUSION

When the Greatest Generation came home from World War II and started their happy families in the happy suburbs of the 1950s, they tried to build a safe, morally upstanding life for their children. They took them to church, added “under God” to the pledge of allegiance, let them watch westerns on television in which the good cowboys won, and taught them to love their country.

But to the dismay of these idealistic parents, their Baby Boomer children grew up and rejected this purified world of backyard barbeques and chaperoned ballroom dances. Instead, they did drugs, listened to rock and roll, had sex before marriage, did yoga, became vegetarians and protested the government.

In the eyes of the Greatest Generation, the children of the counterculture had rejected everything they knew to be American. For the Baby Boomers who were embracing the counterculture, they simply had a very different idea of the type of country they wanted to live in.

What do you think? Was the counterculture anti-American?

## 2 WAS THE COUNTERCULTURE ANTI-AMERICAN?

### SUMMARY

The counterculture refers to a time during the 1960s when many young Americans rebelled against the traditional rules of society. The idea of rebellion was not new. In some way, they were continuing the legacy of the Beat Generation of the 1950s. However, the hippies of the counterculture were much more widely known and far more influential.

Fueled by the emergence of the Baby Boomer generation as teenagers, the counterculture, its music, art, fashion, and political ideas shaped the entire generation.

The counterculture was centered in the Height-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco. The climax of the entire movement was during the summer of 1967.

Hippies rebelled against many social norms. They experimented with new drugs, especially marijuana and LSD.

The hippies broke social rules about sex and marriage. They practiced free love and participated in love-ins.

The Merry Pranksters were a group of hippies who travelled from California to New York in an old school bus. Joined by popular musicians, they tried to demonstrate the ideas of the counterculture and recorded their experience.

Some hippies rejected modern life all together and tried to create perfect societies in communes where they shared property, and sometimes, sexual partners.

Rock and roll changed with the counterculture. Psychedelic rock became popular, as did folk rock. Music was an important part of the identity of the decade and the movement. For some, the climax of the counterculture was the Woodstock Music Festival in 1969.

The Altamont Music Festival in 1969 was the opposite of the Woodstock Festival and showed all of the dark sides of the counterculture. The organizers hired a biker gang to run security, drug use was rampant, and violence ensued.



## PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Hippies:** Young people during the 1960s who rejected traditional cultural norms and values. They listened to rock and roll, experimented with drugs, broke rules about sexual behavior. They wore bright colors, created communes, supported many of the social movements of the decade, and generally opposed the war in Vietnam.

**Diggers:** A group of hippies in San Francisco who hated capitalism. They opened a store where everything was free and opened a free medical clinic.

**Merry Pranksters:** Group of hippies led by Ken Kesey and Neil Cassidy who travelled across the country in a school bus. They documented their quest to achieve the ideal hippie lifestyle in *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

**Timothy Leary:** Harvard professor in the 1960s who promoted the use of LSD and other drugs.

**Grateful Dead:** Psychedelic rock group formed in the 1960s. They were led by Jerry Garcia and participated in the Merry Pranksters' cross-country road trip.

**Jefferson Airplane:** Psychedelic rock band from San Francisco. They became popular during the Summer of Love.

**The Doors:** Psychedelic rock band led by Jim Morrison.

**The Beatles:** British rock band who formed in the 1950s, then came to the United States and transformed their sound during the 1960s, eventually performing psychedelic rock.

**Bob Dylan:** Folk rock singer after World War II who wrote songs such as *The Times They Are a-Changin'* and is remembered as the storyteller of the generation.

**Janice Joplin:** Folk rock and blues singer who performed *Mercedes Benz*, among other popular songs of the 1960s.

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**Jimi Hendrix:** Innovative guitarist from the 1960s. His rendition of *The Star Spangled Banner* at Woodstock is famous.



## KEY IDEAS

**Free Love:** Idea popularized by the young people of the counterculture during the 1960s that sex was beautiful and being free included freeing oneself from society's rules about sexual behavior.



## LOCATIONS

**Haight-Ashbury:** The neighborhood in San Francisco that became the center of hippie culture, especially during the Summer of Love of 1967.

**Communes:** Communities formed by hippies during the 1960s in which they sought to implement their philosophy about the ideal ways to live. In some they abolished private property, in others they experimented with free love. The most famous was *The Farm*. Like the utopian communities of the early 1800s, they usually failed.

**The Farm:** Most famous of the communes of the counterculture. Located in Tennessee, its residents held a blend of Christian and Asian beliefs, rejected private property, and became vegetarians.



## EVENTS

**Summer of Love:** Nickname for the summer of 1967 in San Francisco during which the hippie culture in that city climaxed.

**Love-In:** An event during the counterculture in which hippies gathered together to protest, listen to music, sing, meditate, share drugs and have sex. It was intended to be the opposite of the war in Vietnam.

**Woodstock:** Major music festival held in New York in 1969. It featured many of the greatest groups of the decade and is sometimes considered the climax of the counterculture.

**Altamont:** Music festival held in California in 1969. It was the opposite of Woodstock in many ways. It was on the opposite end of the country, was violent, and showed the worst of the counterculture.



## SCIENCE

**Marijuana:** Drug that, like tobacco, is derived from dried leaves that are smoked. It is a mild hallucinogen and was popularized by the hippies of the counterculture. Today it has been legalized for private use in some states.

**LSD:** Powerful hallucinogenic drug popular in the 1960s. Hippies believed it could help a person get in touch with his or her spiritual side.



## THE ARTS

**Psychedelic Art:** Style of art popularized by the hippies that included bold colors and patterns reminiscent of dreams or hallucinations. Tie died clothing is an example.

**Psychedelic Rock:** A variation of rock and roll music that used electric guitars, subversive lyrics and was played in the 1960s and 1970s by bands who were famous for experimenting with drugs. Some included the Grateful Dead and the Doors.

**Folk Rock:** Variation of music that became popular during the counterculture. It mixed rock and roll with traditional music and instruments. Bob Dylan, Janice Joplin, and Peter, Paul & Mary are a few performers of the genera.



## BOOKS

**The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test:** Book documenting the journey of the Merry Pranksters as they journeyed across the country during the 1960s.

**Whole Earth Catalogue:** A how-to book for hippies explaining such things as how to live in communes.



# 3

## T H I R D Q U E S T I O N CAN WE END POVERTY?

**WAS THE SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION  
ACTUALLY  
REVOLUTIONARY?**

### INTRODUCTION

The price of living in a capitalist society is that there will always be economic winners and losers. While we have the opportunity to become rich, we know that there will also always be poverty. But is this true? Why can't a wealthy nation like ours, rich with natural resources, a stable government, and innovated people find a way to end poverty?

In the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson set out to do just that. After stepping into the presidency when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson described for Americans a Great Society. In this society, there would be no poverty. People would be able to pay for healthcare, have safe food, safe cars, safe homes, access to great art and music, and people from all over the world would be able to come to the United States to join and participate in this utopian nation.

For some it seemed too idealistic, but the 1960s was a time of change and Americans were eager for idealism. Johnson was able to convince Congress to enact his plans, and won the presidency himself in a tremendous landslide victory in 1964.

Of course, there is still poverty today, over half a century later, so we know that Johnson did not succeed in ending poverty. But perhaps that was not the fault of his programs and ideas, but rather other circumstances at the time.

What do you think? Can we end poverty?

THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

Ask any American who was over the age of eight in 1963 the question: “Where were you when President Kennedy was shot?” and a complete detailed story is likely to follow. The death of the young, dynamic president is one of the defining moments of the 1960s, and one that people who lived through it have never forgotten.

Although his public advocacy for civil rights had won him support in the African American community, and his steely performance during the Cuban Missile Crisis had led his overall popularity to surge, Kennedy understood that he had to solidify his base among White Southerners to secure his reelection in 1964. On November 21, 1963, he accompanied Vice President Lyndon Johnson to Texas to rally his supporters in that large state.

President Kennedy’s motorcade route through Dallas on November 22 was planned to give him maximal exposure to Dallas crowds before his arrival at a luncheon with civic and business leaders in the city. The planned motorcade route was widely reported in Dallas newspapers several days before the event for the benefit of people who wished to view the motorcade, but tragically gave Kennedy’s assassin a chance to plan his attack.

At about 11:40am, the presidential motorcade left for the trip through Dallas. By the time the motorcade reached **Dealey Plaza**, Kennedy was only five minutes away from the planned destination. At 12:30 p.m., as Kennedy’s uncovered limousine entered Dealey Plaza, a reported **three shots were fired at Kennedy**. Seriously injured, Kennedy was rushed to Parkland Hospital where he was pronounced dead.



**Dealey Plaza:** The location in Dallas, Texas where President Kennedy was assassinated.



**Assassination of John F. Kennedy:** November 22, 1963 – Dallas, Texas.

Primary Source: Newspaper

The headline of The Boston Globe captured the sentiments of the nation. Kennedy’s death shocked the nation.



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Vice-President Johnson had been riding two cars behind Kennedy in the motorcade and was not injured. He took the oath of office and became president. At his side was a grieving Jaqueline Kennedy. The photograph of the moment is one of the most heart-wrenching in American presidential history.



#### Primary Source: Photograph

The tragic image of Jaqueline Kennedy standing next to Lyndon Johnson as he took the oath of office aboard Air Force One. Johnson refused to leave Dallas until Kennedy's body and the former First Lady were aboard.

The gunfire that killed Kennedy appeared to come from the upper stories of the Texas School Book Depository building. **Lee Harvey Oswald**, an employee at the depository and a trained sniper was charged with the murders of President Kennedy and Dallas police officer J.D. Tippit. Oswald denied shooting anyone, and claimed he was being framed because he had lived in the Soviet Union. Oswald's case never came to trial because he was shot and killed two days later while being escorted from Dallas Police Headquarters to the County Jail by Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby. Arrested immediately after the shooting, Ruby said he had been distraught over the Kennedy assassination and sought to avenge the president's death.

News of the president's death shocked the nation. Men and women wept openly. People gathered in department stores to watch the television coverage, while others prayed. Traffic in some areas came to a halt as the news spread from car to car. Schools across the country dismissed their students early. The state funeral took place in Washington, DC during the three days that followed the assassination. Kennedy's coffin was carried on a horse-drawn caisson to the Capitol to lie in state. Throughout the day and night, hundreds of thousands of people lined up to view the guarded casket. Representatives from over 90 countries attended the state funeral and after the Requiem Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral, the late president was laid to



**Lee Harvey Oswald:** The man who shot and killed President John F. Kennedy. He was killed by Jack Ruby a few days later.

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rest at Arlington National Cemetery across the Potomac River from the capital city. His gravesite is now marked by an eternal flame. In a testament to the slain president's popularity, 50,000 people visited the site each day in the first few years after his death.

President Johnson appointed a special commission to investigate Kennedy's assassination. Headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, and therefore known to history as the **Warren Commission**, they concluded that Oswald was the lone assassin. The ten-month investigation by the Warren Commission concluded that the President was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald acting alone, and that Jack Ruby acted alone when he killed Oswald before he could stand trial. These conclusions were initially supported by the American public. However, polls conducted from 1966 to 2004 found that as many as 80% of Americans have suspected that there was a plot or cover-up. The assassination is still the subject of widespread debate, and has spawned numerous conspiracy theories.

#### LYNDON B. JOHNSON

Born in a farmhouse in Stonewall, Texas, the new president had been a high school teacher and worked as a Congressional aide before winning election to the House of Representatives in 1937. He won election to the Senate in 1948 and rose through the ranks of leadership to become the Senate Majority Leader in 1955. Johnson was a master of convincing others to agree with him and he artfully moved legislation through Congress. A contemporary writes of the famous Johnson Treatment, "It was an incredible blend of badgering, cajolery, reminders of past favors, promises of future favors, predictions of gloom if something doesn't happen. When that man started to work on you, all of a sudden, you just felt that you were standing under a waterfall and the stuff was pouring on you."

Johnson ran for the Democratic nomination in the 1960 presidential election but lost to Kennedy. He did, however, accept Kennedy's invitation to be his running mate in the general election.

After Kennedy's death, Johnson continued both his predecessor's major political initiatives and maintained his team of advisors. Johnson's cabinet included several members of Kennedy's cabinet. Johnson retained Dean Rusk as Secretary of State, Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense, as well as Kennedy's Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, all for the duration of his presidency. Former presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson continued as Johnson's Ambassador to the United Nations until Stevenson's death in 1965. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, the former president's younger brother, with whom Johnson had a notoriously difficult relationship, remained in office for a few months, before leaving in 1964 to run for the Senate.



**Warren Commission:** Group who led the official government investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy. They concluded that Oswald had acted alone.



Primary Source: Photograph

This image captures the infamous Johnson Treatment. The president, on the left, leans in as he makes his case to a reluctant member of congress. Johnson always made sure his chair was higher than those he was meeting with in order to maximize his ability to get the “yes” response he was looking for.

#### THE GREAT SOCIETY

Johnson continued Kennedy’s push to pass a civil rights law. However, Johnson decided to implement some of his own priorities and a few months after taking office, announced his most famous initiative.

In May 1964, in a speech at the University of Michigan, Lyndon Johnson described in detail his vision of the **Great Society** he planned to create. Johnson had been a supporter of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal during the 1930s, but those programs were designed to address an economic crisis. In the 1960s, Johnson wanted to the nation to go a step further and use all the best of its resources, especially human resources, to become truly great.

Addressing the graduates, he recounted the nation’s past challenges and accomplishments. “For a century we labored to settle and to subdue a continent. For half a century we called upon unbounded invention and untiring industry to create an order of plenty for all of our people.” He proceeded to describe what he saw as the challenge they would have to help him solve in the coming years. “The challenge of the next half century is whether we have the wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization. Your imagination, your initiative, and your indignation will determine whether we build a society where progress is the servant of our needs, or a society where old values and new visions are buried under unbridled growth. For in your time we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society. The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all.”



**The Great Society:** Collection of laws and problems implemented by President Lyndon Johnson to improve life in America. They included his War on Poverty as well as programs to protect the environment and Medicare and Medicaid.

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For Johnson, “liberty for all” meant freedom from racial injustice, freedom from poverty, as well as the freedom to live in a nation rich with natural beauty, artistic expression, available healthcare, and a government that watched out for the wellbeing of its citizens.

When Congress convened the following January, he and his supporters began their effort to turn his promise into reality. By combatting racial discrimination and attempting to eliminate poverty, the reforms of the Johnson administration changed the nation.

#### THE WAR ON POVERTY

The centerpiece of Johnson’s plan to create a Great Society was the eradication of poverty in the United States. Johnson had seen poverty up close back in Texas and saw it as a moral issue rather than just a matter of economics. The **War on Poverty**, as he termed it, was fought on many fronts, but the driving idea behind everything was the help people find ways to rise out of poverty, not just to give them relief. In other words, Johnson wanted the government to use taxpayer money to give the poor a chance, rather than just give them money. As he said it, “I want to be the President who helped to feed the hungry and to prepare them to be taxpayers instead of tax-eaters... I want to be the President who helped the poor to find their own way...”

In the 1960s the economy was doing well and there were jobs available, but for many poor Americans they couldn’t apply for these opportunities because they lacked the skills necessary. The Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964 established and funded a variety of programs to assist the poor in finding jobs. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), first administered by President Kennedy’s brother-in-law Sargent Shriver, coordinated programs such as the **Jobs Corps** and the Neighborhood Youth Corps, which provided job training programs and work experience for the disadvantaged.

Volunteers in Service to America recruited people to offer educational programs and other community services in poor areas, just as the Peace Corps did abroad. The Community Action Program, also under the OEO, funded local Community Action Agencies, organizations created and managed by residents of disadvantaged communities to improve their own lives and those of their neighbors. The EOA fought rural poverty by providing low-interest loans to those wishing to improve their farms or start businesses. EOA funds were also used to provide housing and education for migrant farm workers. Other legislation created jobs in Appalachia, one of the poorest regions in the United States, and brought programs to Indian reservations. One of EOA’s successes was the Rough Rock Demonstration School on the Navajo Reservation that, while respecting Navajo traditions and culture, also trained people for careers and jobs outside the reservation.



**War on Poverty:** Name given to the laws promoted by President Lyndon Johnson designed specifically to help the poor. These included the Jobs Corps which provided training, as well as education laws such as Head Start and college financial aide.



**Jobs Corps:** Program that was part of Johnson’s War on Poverty. It provides training so people can learn skills they will need to be hired.

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#### EDUCATION

Johnson, a former teacher, realized that a lack of education was the primary cause of poverty and other social problems. Educational reform was thus an important pillar of the society he hoped to build, and one of the chief pieces of legislation that Congress passed in 1965 was the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**. This law provided increased federal funding to both elementary and secondary schools, allocating more than \$1 billion for the purchase of books and library materials, and the creation of educational programs for disadvantaged children.

The ESEA was not important only because it provided funding for schools, but also because it was the first time the federal government became involved in providing money for the public schools. For most of the nation's history, schools were the responsibility of local governments. However, after Johnson's Great Society, every president and members of congress have promised to improve education and have allocated federal money to do so. Even still, federal funding accounts for only a small fraction of a school's overall budget. Most of a school's budget is still provided by local taxes and decisions about curriculum are made at the state and local level.



 **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):** Law passed in 1965 as part of the Great Society and War on Poverty that greatly increased federal funding for school and made the federal government a major player in funding education.

#### Primary Source: Photograph

Lady Bird Johnson reads to students at a Head Start program. She was a champion of all of her husband's Great Society programs, especially Head Start and his environmental initiatives.

The Higher Education Act, signed into law in 1966, provided scholarships and low-interest loans for the poor, increased federal funding for colleges and universities, and created a corps of teachers to serve schools in impoverished areas. Today, approximately two-thirds of all student financial support comes from the federal government.

When high school seniors complete their Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA), they become eligible for any of three forms of federal funding: Grants, or money given, loans, which have to be repaid after graduation, or

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work-study, which is money that can be earned by working at a job during school.

The planners of education reform that was part of the War on Poverty understood that systemic poverty was generational. That is, being the child of poor parents makes it much more likely that a person will grow up to be poor. One factor in this pattern is the ability to prepare children for kindergarten. While middle and upper class parents can provide books and toys for their young children, take them to museums, zoos, camps or send them to a preschool, poorer parents cannot afford these things, and often gave less time to teach their children because they were working.

To combat this problem, Johnson created **Head Start**, a program that provided government-funded preschool for low-income families. In this way, children from poor families would not start kindergarten already behind their middle and upper class peers. In 2009, David Deming evaluated the program, using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. He compared siblings and found that those who attended Head Start showed stronger academic performance as shown on test scores for years afterward, were less likely to be diagnosed as learning-disabled, less likely to commit crime, more likely to graduate from high school and attend college, and less likely to suffer from poor health as an adult.



**Head Start:** Preschool program for children from low-income families that was instituted as part of the War on Poverty in the 1960s.

#### MEDICARE AND MEDICAID

During the New Deal, President Franklin Roosevelt had enacted Social Security, an important program that provides financial support for America's elderly. Johnson realized that despite Social Security, the nation's elderly were among its poorest and most disadvantaged citizens, and added to the social safety net by enacting a program to provide medical insurance for the elderly. The creation of **Medicare**, a program to pay the medical expenses of those over sixty-five, has, along with Social Security, been one of the most popular and most expensive programs run by the federal government. Initially opposed by the American Medical Association, which feared the creation of a national healthcare system, the new program was supported by most citizens because it would benefit all social classes, not just the poor.



**Medicare:** Program that provides health insurance for the elderly. It is a signature program created as part of the Great Society in the 1960s by President Johnson.

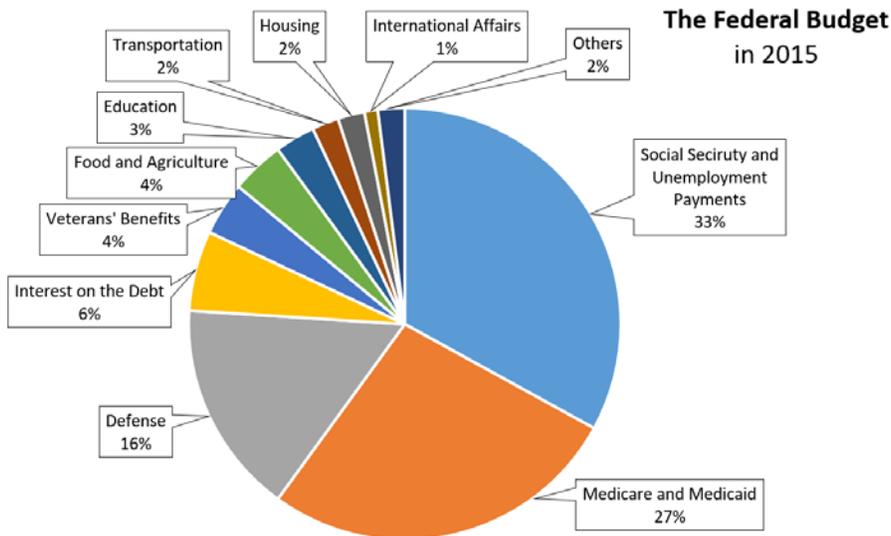
Like Social Security, current workers pay the costs of Medicare. As the Baby Boomers retire, more and more will be taking advantage of Medicare benefits and the government will have to pay for their prescription drugs, doctors' visits, and other treatments. With better healthcare, Americans are living longer. The combined effect of the large number of Baby Boomers and the longer they are all living, the cost of Medicare is rising quickly. Politicians in the coming decades will have to face tough choices. Either they will have to raise taxes on current workers to pay for Medicare's costs, or cut benefits. Since older Americans vote in greater numbers than younger Americans, the outcome seems obvious.

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A year after Medicare was created, a medical program for the poor was enacted entitled **Medicaid**. States use money from the federal government and run the program themselves so Medicaid is known by different names in different places. For example, California calls their program Medi-Cal, in Massachusetts it is known as MassHealth, and Hawaii's version of Medicaid is called Quest. As part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obama Care, passed in 2010, the Medicaid program was greatly expanded by redefining who qualified to receive its benefits.



**Medicaid:** Program that provides health insurance for lower-income Americans. It is run independently by states and goes by different names in the different states.



#### Secondary Source: Chart

A pie chart of the federal budget in 2015 shows the enormous expense of the entitlement safety net programs such as Social Security, unemployment, Medicare and Medicaid, which together account for well over half of all federal spending. As the Baby Boomers live out their long retirements, greater and greater allocations will be needed to support these programs. Either taxes on younger workers will have to go up, or the benefits the elderly receive will have to go down.

### THE ARTS

Perhaps influenced by Kennedy's commitment to the arts, Johnson also signed legislation creating the **National Endowment for the Arts** and the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provided funding for artists and scholars. In September 1965, when he signed the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, Johnson, declared, "the arts and humanities belong to all the people of the United States." Government support for the arts is an assertion that culture is a concern of everyone, not just private citizens.



**National Endowment for the Arts:** Program created in the 1960s as part of the Great Society that uses federal tax dollars to fund art exhibits, performances, and art education.

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 authorized the creation of the private, not-for-profit **Corporation for Public Broadcasting**, which helped launch the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR) in 1970.



**Corporation for Public Broadcasting:** Program created in the 1960s as part of the Great Society that uses federal tax dollars to support public television and public radio programming.

Since its inception, the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities have funded theatrical productions, translations of works of literature, art exhibits, and have made the arts accessible to millions of schoolchildren. Sometimes, people forget that the arts are expensive. However, consider the cost of paying for school busses to transport elementary school students to a theater to watch a play. This is an experience most Americans are familiar with, but do not often realize that

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the cost of those busses was probably paid for with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Another important project these Great Society programs have undertaken is the recognition of America's great artists. The National Medal of Arts, given annually by the president has been awarded to such great contributors as painters Georgia O'Keeffe, Jacob Lawrence, and Andrew Wyeth, musicians Dave Brubeck, Wynton Marsalis, Johnny Cash, and Ray Charles, writers Ralph Ellison, and Beverly Cleary, and dancers Mikhail Baryshnikov and Suzanne Farrell.



Primary Source: Photograph

Sesame Street premiered in 1969, launched with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

In the first decade of the 1900s, muckrakers such as Upton Sinclair made food safety a part of the national conversation with their books. *The Jungle*, for example, helped spur congress to create the Food and Drug Administration. As part of the Great Society, Johnson moved consumer protection a step further.

The Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act of 1965 required packages to carry warning labels. The Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966 set standards through creation of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The Fair Packaging and Labeling Act requires products have a label to identify manufacturer, address, and clearly mark quantity and servings. The Child Safety Act of 1966 prohibited any chemical so dangerous that no warning can make it safe and the Flammable Fabrics Act of 1967 set standards for children's sleepwear. The Wholesome Meat Act of 1967 and Wholesome Poultry Products Act of 1968 improved inspection of the nation's meats. The Truth-in-Lending Act of 1968 required lenders and credit providers to disclose the full cost of finance charges in both dollars and annual percentage rates, on installment loan and sales. The Land Sales Disclosure Act of 1968

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provided safeguards against fraudulent practices in the sale of land. The Radiation Safety Act of 1968 provided standards and recalls for defective electronic products.

We have Johnson to thank for the fact that we can look on the side of a package at the grocery store and know what ingredients it contains, or eat a hamburger without fearing for our health, or ride in a car and know it will protect us in an accident, or rest easy knowing that the things in our house will not poison our children.

#### IMMIGRATION

The United States is a nation of immigrants. However, after World War I, people began to fear the impact that immigrants were having. Communists led by Vladimir Lenin had just taken power in Russia, revolutions were brewing in Europe, and traditional racist fears were brewing. In response, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924, which ended almost legal immigration. It set quotas for how many people could enter the United States from any particular country, favored White Europeans, and ended immigration from Asia all together.

In 1965, the Johnson Administration encouraged Congress to pass the **Immigration and Nationality Act**, which radically changed the nation's immigration policy. The law lifted restrictions on immigration from Asia and gave preference to immigrants with family ties in the United States and immigrants with desirable skills. Although the measure seemed less significant than many of the other legislative victories of the Johnson administration at the time, it opened the door for a new era in immigration. When it was first passed, its advocates believed that the trend of predominantly White immigration would continue, since most Americans at the time were White. However, because it favored families, once one immigrant had moved to the United States, the law made it possible for other family members to obtain visas to immigrant as well. Over the past 50 years, this has made possible the formation of Asian and Latin American immigrant communities.

Between the passage of immigration restrictions in the 1920s and the Great Society in the 1960s, 52% of immigrants were from Europe and only 6% were from Asia. Since the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965, 14% have been from Europe and 33% from Asia. The rebirth of Chinatowns, as well as the establishment of Vietnamese, Thai, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Pakistani, as well as various African ethnic communities in the United States are the effects of the policy change implemented by Johnson.

Immigration from Latin America was not ended in 1924 because of the need farm workers and Hispanic immigrants have accounted for about 45% of the nation's total new arrivals in the past 100 years.



**Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965:** Major revision to immigration law passed in 1965 that eliminated national quotas and instead encouraged family reunification. It led to a tremendous increase in immigration from Asia, Latin America and Africa.

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#### CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The fight for civil rights was an important part of Johnson's quest to create a Great Society. He used his considerable ability to work with Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, both of which we discussed in the preceding unit.

Johnson was also greatly concerned with protecting the environment, which we will discuss at length in our next reading.



Primary Source: Photograph

President Johnson met with Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders in the Oval Office of the White House. His support was an important component of the effort to convince Congress to pass both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

#### THE END OF THE GREAT SOCIETY

Perhaps the greatest casualty of the nation's war in Vietnam during the 1960s and early 1970s was the Great Society. As the war escalated, money spent to fund it also increased, leaving less to pay for the many social programs Johnson had created to lift Americans out of poverty. Johnson knew he could not achieve his Great Society while spending money to wage the war, however he was unwilling to withdraw from Vietnam for fear that the world would perceive this action as evidence of American failure. On balance, he was willing to sacrifice all he could do to end poverty and improve life at home so that the United States could carry out its responsibilities as a superpower in the Cold War.

Vietnam doomed the Great Society in other ways as well. Dreams of racial harmony suffered, as many African Americans, angered by the failure of Johnson's programs to alleviate severe poverty in the inner cities, rioted in frustration. Their anger was heightened by the fact that a disproportionate number of African Americans were fighting and dying in Vietnam. Nearly two-thirds of eligible African Americans were drafted, whereas draft deferments for college, exemptions for skilled workers in the military

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industrial complex, and officer training programs allowed White middle-class youth to either avoid the draft or volunteer for a military branch of their choice. As a result, less than one-third of White men were drafted.

Although the Great Society failed to eliminate suffering or increase civil rights to the extent that Johnson wished, it made a significant difference in people's lives. By the end of Johnson's Administration, the percentage of people living below the poverty line had been cut nearly in half. While more minorities continued to live in poverty, the percentage of poor African Americans had decreased dramatically. The creation of Medicare and Medicaid as well as the expansion of Social Security benefits and welfare payments improved the lives of many, while increased federal funding for education enabled more people to attend college than ever before.

Conservative critics argued that, by expanding the responsibilities of the federal government to care for the poor, Johnson had hurt both taxpayers and the poor themselves. Aid to the poor, many maintained, would not only fail to solve the problem of poverty but would also encourage people to become dependent on the government and lose their desire and ability to care for themselves, an argument that many found intuitively compelling but which lacked conclusive evidence. These same critics also accused Johnson of saddling the United States with a large debt as a result of all the money he borrowed in order to fund both the war in Vietnam and the programs of the Great Society.

#### THE WARREN COURT

**Earl Warren** was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1953 to 1969. His time on the court is remembered as an era in which the Court made numerous progressive decisions that advanced civil rights. During his tenure, Warren wrote the *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Hernandez v. Texas* decisions. He ruled that witnesses did not have to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee that had become infamous during the Red Scare. In *Engel v. Vitale* his court ruled that schools cannot force students to participate in prayers. He was chief justice when President Nixon tried to prevent newspapers from printing stories that contained secrets about the Vietnam War and ruled that the people have the right to know what their government is doing. However, two rulings in particular made by the **Warren Court** are remembered because together they greatly advanced protection of people accused of crimes, especially for those who are poor.

In 1961, a poor man named Clarence Earl Gideon was arrested and put on trial for robbing a pool hall in Florida. When he appeared before the court, Gideon could not afford an attorney to represent him, and the prosecutor easily convinced the jury that Gideon was guilty. However, Gideon was not guilty and believed that he should have been entitled to a government appointed lawyer. **Public defenders**, as they are known, are lawyers paid with tax money who defend people accused of crimes who cannot afford to

 **Earl Warren:** Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the 1950s and 1960s who pushed the Court to rule favorably on numerous cases related to civil rights.

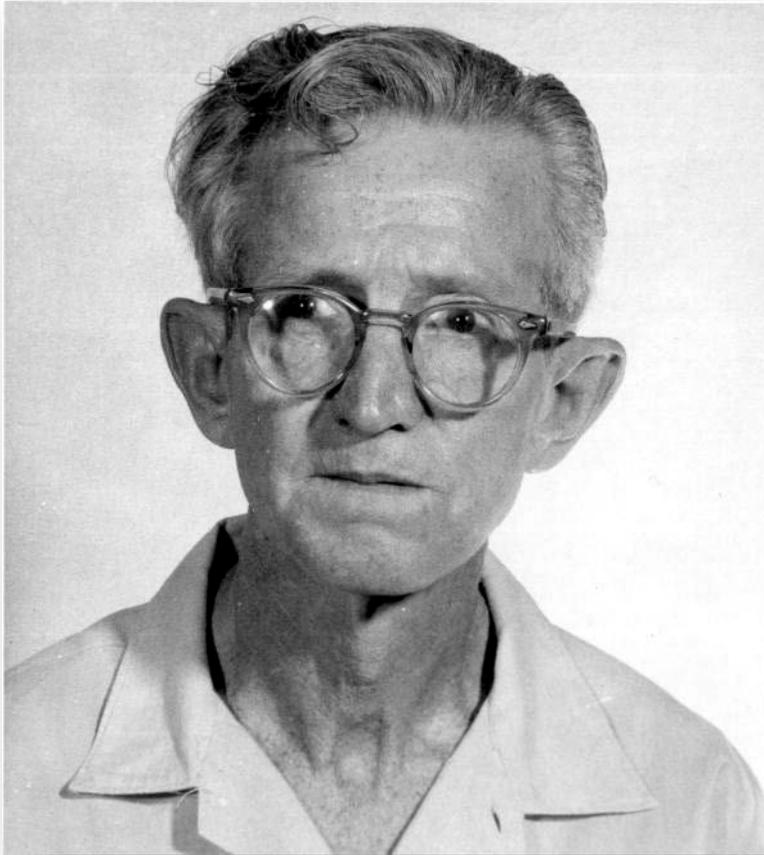
 **The Warren Court:** Nickname for the Supreme Court during the 1950s and 1960s during a period of time when handed down many civil rights and criminal justices rulings that historians view as particularly liberal.

 **Gideon v. Wainwright:** 1963 Supreme Court cases that guaranteed a lawyer to all those accused of a crime.

 **Public Defender:** Lawyer paid by tax dollars who defends people who cannot afford a lawyer of their own.

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hire lawyers of their own. Gideon took his case, **Gideon v. Wainwright**, all the way to the Supreme Court where he won.



Primary Source: Photograph

Clarence Earl Gideon was convicted of a crime although he was too poor to afford a lawyer to help with his defense in court. He took his case to the Supreme Court where he won. Today, everyone accused of a crime has the right to an attorney. Those who cannot afford their own lawyer will be represented by a public defender paid for with tax money.

In 1963, Ernesto Miranda was arrested, by the Phoenix Police Department, based on circumstantial evidence linking him to the kidnapping and rape of an eighteen-year-old woman. After two hours of interrogation by police officers, Miranda signed a written confession. However, at no time was Miranda told of his right to consult with a lawyer. Before being presented with the form on which he was asked to write out the confession he had already given orally, he was not advised of his right to remain silent, nor was he informed that his statements during the interrogation would be used against him. These rights are guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution. At trial, when prosecutors offered Miranda's written confession as evidence, his court-appointed lawyer objected that the confession was not truly voluntary and should be excluded from the trial. Moore's objection was overruled and Miranda was convicted. Like Gideon, Miranda and Moore believed the police and prosecutors should not be able to use a confession unless the person on trial knew that confession might be used in court. The Supreme Court agreed. In **Miranda v. Arizona**, they



**Miranda v. Arizona:** 1966 Supreme Court case which banned the use of confessions or statements made by a defendant before they had been advised of their right to remain silent. This case led to the now-famous Miranda Warnings.

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clarified that statements made by those in police custody can only be used in a trial if the person has clearly been warned that such is the case.

This warning is now known as the **Miranda Warning**, and incorporates both the Gideon case and the Miranda case. The exact wording varies, but could read, “You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can be used against you in court. You have the right to talk to a lawyer for advice before we ask you any questions. You have the right to have a lawyer with you during questioning. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you before any questioning if you wish. If you decide to answer questions now without a lawyer present, you have the right to stop answering at any time.”

While most Americans eventually agreed that the Court’s desegregation decisions were fair and right, disagreement about the “due process revolution” continues. Warren took the lead in criminal justice despite his years as a tough prosecutor. He always insisted that the police must play fair or the accused should go free. Warren was privately outraged at what he considered police abuses that ranged from warrantless searches to forced confessions.

Conservatives angrily denounced the Warren Court’s decisions claiming that they prevented the police from effectively putting criminals behind bars. Violent crime and homicide rates shot up nationwide in the following years. In New York City, for example, after steady to declining trends until the early 1960s, the homicide rate doubled in the period from 1964 to 1974. Controversy exists about the cause, with conservatives blaming the Supreme Court’s decisions, and liberals pointing to increased urbanization and income inequality characteristic of that era. After 1992 the homicide rates fell sharply.

#### CONCLUSION

Many liberals would argue that the failure of the War on Poverty to actually end poverty was the fault of external factors such as the Vietnam War. The programs and ideas President Johnson championed would have worked if other distractions had not interfered.

Conservatives, on the other hand, claim that the War on Poverty, while well-intentioned, would never have undone the natural order of the capitalist economic system, and in some ways might have made poverty worse. People who know the government will rescue them when they fall on hard times are less likely to work their way out of poverty. Or so the argument goes.

What do you think? Can we end poverty?



**Miranda Warning:** Statement made by arresting police officers advising people of their right to remain silent and their right to an attorney.

#### SUMMARY

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald while riding through Dallas, Texas in an open limousine. A man seeking to avenge the president's death killed Oswald a few days later. The Warren Commission investigated the killing and found that Oswald had acted alone, but Kennedy's death remains the subject of conspiracy theories.

The new president was Lyndon Johnson from Texas. Johnson was long-time member of Congress and a master at convincing others to agree with him.

Johnson continued many of Kennedy's programs. He also wanted to improve the nation and believed America should be a Great Society.

Johnson declared a War on Poverty. He signed many laws that were designed to end poverty, mostly by giving people the education or support they needed to find jobs, rather than just by giving away money.

Johnson signed the ESEA, which provided federal funding for education. This was the first time the federal government got involved in funding local schools. He also created Head Start for low-income preschoolers and increased federal scholarships and loans for college.

Johnson created Medicare to cover health insurance for the elderly and Medicaid to provide health insurance for the poor. Both programs remain popular and account for about a quarter of the entire federal budget.

Johnson's Great Society included federal funding for the arts, including funding for public radio and television.

Johnson also passed laws to protect consumers, such as regulations on automobile safety, truth in packaging, and financial disclosures.

Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act, which ended national quotas for immigration and implemented a family reunification policy. This greatly increased immigration from Asia and Africa.

The Great Society and Johnson's War on Poverty were limited because Johnson was also spending money to fight the Vietnam War. Conservatives criticize the Great Society programs as excessive government.

During the 1960s, the Supreme Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren ruled on multiple cases that expanded civil rights, including *Brown v. Board of Education*, and well as cases that led to the creation of the Miranda Warning.



## PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Lee Harvey Oswald:** The man who shot and killed President John F. Kennedy. He was killed by Jack Ruby a few days later.

**Warren Commission:** Group who led the official government investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy. They concluded that Oswald had acted alone.

**Earl Warren:** Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the 1950s and 1960s who pushed the Court to rule favorably on numerous cases related to civil rights.

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**Public Defender:** Lawyer paid by tax dollars who defends people who cannot afford a lawyer of their own.



## GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS & AGENCIES

**The Great Society:** Collection of laws and problems implemented by President Lyndon Johnson to improve life in America. They included his War on Poverty as well as programs to protect the environment and Medicare and Medicaid.

**War on Poverty:** Name given to the laws promoted by President Lyndon Johnson designed specifically to help the poor. These included the Jobs Corps which provided training, as well as education laws such as Head Start and college financial aide.

**Jobs Corps:** Program that was part of Johnson's War on Poverty. It provides training so people can learn skills they will need to be hired.

**Head Start:** Preschool program for children from low-income families that was instituted as part of the War on Poverty in the 1960s.

**Medicare:** Program that provides health insurance for the elderly. It is a signature program created as part of the Great Society in the 1960s by President Johnson.

**Medicaid:** Program that provides health insurance for lower-income Americans. It is run independently by states and goes by different names in the different states.

**National Endowment for the Arts:** Program created in the 1960s as part of the Great Society that uses federal tax dollars to fund art exhibits, performances, and art education.

**Corporation for Public Broadcasting:** Program created in the 1960s as part of the Great Society that uses federal tax dollars to support public television and public radio programming.



## KEY IDEAS

**Miranda Warning:** Statement made by arresting police officers advising people of their right to remain silent and their right to an attorney.



## COURT CASES

**Gideon v. Wainwright:** 1963 Supreme Court cases that guaranteed a lawyer to all those accused of a crime.

**Miranda v. Arizona:** 1966 Supreme Court case which banned the use of confessions or statements made by a defendant before they had been advised of their right to remain silent. This case led to the now-famous Miranda Warnings.



## LAWS

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):**

Law passed in 1965 as part of the Great Society and War on Poverty that greatly increased federal funding for school and made the federal government a major player in funding education.

**Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965:** Major revision to immigration law passed in 1965 that eliminated national quotas and instead encouraged family reunification. It led to a tremendous increase in immigration from Asia, Latin America and Africa.



## EVENTS

**Assassination of John F. Kennedy:** November 22, 1963 – Dallas, Texas.



## LOCATIONS

**Dealey Plaza:** The location in Dallas, Texas where President Kennedy was assassinated.



# 4

## F O U R T H Q U E S T I O N CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

**WAS THE SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION  
ACTUALLY  
REVOLUTIONARY?**

### INTRODUCTION

In their zeal to fix the nation's problems during the 1960s, reformers found a new topic of concern: the environment. Today, caring about our carbon footprint is normal and separating our rubbish and recycling into multiple trashcans is normal, but this was not always the case. Certainly earlier conservationists like Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir had talked about preserving America's wildlands, but those steps were tiny compared to the massive efforts underway today.

Observing Earth Day and talking about saving the whales are things students today grew up with, but where did they come from? When did Americans start to care about saving the Earth? And, what did they think they were saving the Earth from? Why did they care at that time?

Spurred on by their newfound love for nature, the young people of the counterculture took up environmentalism. They found allies in the White House and Congress as part of Johnson's Great Society, and Saving the Earth became part of the national conversation. The environmental movement grew up, just like the hippies that helped launch it, which brings us to an interesting, and more present question: can we save the Earth? Hopefully, by understanding how the environmental movement started and changed over time, we can understand something about our ecological future.

### A HISTORY OF CONSERVATION

Americans have not always been concerned about the environment the way we are today. The modern environmental movement began in the 1960s, but its roots go much farther back.

Conservation first became a national issue during the Progressive Era when outdoorsmen, fishermen, and the great conservationist John Muir began advocating for the protection of America's most beautiful, and unique stretches of wilderness. This conservation movement urged politicians to establish state and national parks and forests, wildlife refuges, and national monuments. It was a time period when settlement had extended fully from sea to sea and the great industrial factories and cities of the East were on the rise. For many, the idea of preserving natural resources made sense. Even within the growing cities, efforts were underway in the form of the City Beautiful Movement to preserve green spaces for humans to enjoy.

It was at this time that President Theodore Roosevelt, an avid hunter and outdoorsman himself, put the issue high on the national agenda. He encouraged the Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902 to promote federal construction of dams to irrigate small farms and placed 360,000 square miles of wilderness under federal protection. Roosevelt set aside more federal land for national parks and nature preserves than all of his predecessors combined and is justifiably considered the nation's first conservation president.

Even at the dawn of the 1900s, however, there were differing views of how to best preserve and use America's wildlands. For Roosevelt, nature was a resource to be used. Rivers could be dammed and used for the production of electricity or for irrigation. Forests were to be preserved from being cut down to be turned into farmland, but not to be left unused. Instead, the government's role, in Roosevelt's eyes, was to protect the forest so that it could be periodically logged for lumber. However, in 1903 Roosevelt toured the Yosemite Valley with John Muir, who had a very different view of conservation, and tried to minimize commercial use of water resources and forests. Working through the Sierra Club he founded, Muir succeeded in 1905 in having Congress transfer the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley to the National Park Service. In short, Muir wanted nature preserved for the sake of pure beauty, and although he succeeded in preserving Yosemite, the debate about how to best use or preserve America's natural resources continues.

During the New Deal, President Franklin Roosevelt used numerous programs to end wasteful land-use. He fought to mitigate the effects of the Dust Bowl, and efficiently develop natural resources in the West. One of the most popular of all New Deal programs was the Civilian Conservation Corps, which sent two million poor young men to work in rural and wilderness areas, primarily on conservation projects.

## 4 CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

After World War II, increasing encroachment on wilderness land in the form of urban sprawl, encouraged by the nation's expanding roadways, evoked the continued resistance of conservationists. They succeeded in blocking a number of projects in the 1950s and 1960s, including the proposed Bridge Canyon Dam that would have backed up the waters of the Colorado River into the Grand Canyon National Park.



### Primary Source: Photograph

The Cuyahoga River on fire in Cleveland, Ohio. Images of the burning river published in Time Magazine helped Americans understand the extent of industrial pollution and the importance of regulations such as the Clean Water Act.

By the 1950s, pollution from decades of production in industrial cities had become a matter of serious concern. Famously pointing out the effects of industrial pollution, the **Cuyahoga River** in Cleveland, Ohio was so contaminated with oil that it caught on fire – more than once! At least 13 fires have been reported on the Cuyahoga River, the first occurring in 1868. The largest river fire in 1952 caused over \$1 million in damage to boats, a bridge, and a riverfront office building. On June 22, 1969, a river fire captured the attention of Time magazine, which described the Cuyahoga as the river that “oozes rather than flows” and in which a person “does not drown but decays”.

However, it was not a river on fire that ignited the modern environmental movement. It was a book.

### RACHEL CARSON AND SILENT SPRING

**Rachel Carson** sent a wake-up call to America with her 1962 book **Silent Spring**. Carson wrote of the horrors of **DDT**, a popular pesticide used on many American farms. DDT wrought havoc on the nation's bird population. The pesticide, when ingested by birds, proved poisonous as it resulted in thin eggshells that could not adequately support the birds before they hatched. Carson wrote compellingly about a spring when birds did not return from their fall migrations, and how the domino effect on the ecosystems resulted



**Cuyahoga River Fires:** Fires that took place when oil and other flammable pollutants in the major river in Cleveland ignited. They occurred multiple times, the largest in 1952. In 1969, it was featured on the cover of Time Magazine and helped focus national attention on the problem of pollution.



**Rachel Carson:** Scientist who wrote *Silent Spring* about the dangers of pesticides and launched the modern environmental movement.



**Silent Spring:** Book written by Rachel Carson about the dangers of pesticides. The book helped launch the modern environmental movement.

## 4 CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

in a spring when the frogs did not croak, crickets did not sing, and all of nature had fallen silent.

Carson's work had a powerful impact. *Silent Spring* became a rallying point for the new social movement in the 1960s. Many students involved in the counterculture, anti-war movement and various civil rights movements of the time embraced the call for environmental awareness. According to environmental engineer and Carson scholar H. Patricia Hynes, "*Silent Spring* altered the balance of power in the world. No one since would be able to sell pollution as the necessary underside of progress so easily or uncritically."



**DDT:** Pesticide that can cause fatal problems in animals, especially birds, after it has been washed into rivers and lakes. It was the subject of Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* and was banned shortly after the book's publication.

### Primary Source: Photograph

Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* is seen as the catalyst for the modern environmental movement.

Carson's most direct legacy in the environmental movement was the campaign to ban the use of DDT in the United States, and related efforts to ban or limit its use throughout the world. The 1967 formation of the Environmental Defense Fund was the first major milestone in the campaign against DDT. The organization brought lawsuits against the government to "establish a citizen's right to a clean environment", and their arguments against DDT largely mirrored Carson's. The urgency of banning DDT was reinforced by a dangerous fall in the population of Bald Eagles, the national bird. For many, it seemed a matter of national pride not to let the eagle go extinct. By 1972, the Environmental Defense Fund and other activist groups had succeeded in securing a phase-out of DDT use in the United States, except in emergency cases.

The creation of the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** by the Nixon Administration in 1970 addressed another concern that Carson had written about. Until then, the Department of Agriculture was responsible both for regulating pesticides and promoting the concerns of the agriculture industry. Carson saw this as a conflict of interest, since the agency was primarily



**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** Government agency responsible for enforcing laws designed to protect the environment.

concerned with the success of the nation's farms, not the effects those farms were having on wildlife. Fifteen years after its creation, one journalist described the EPA as "the extended shadow of Silent Spring."

### PRESIDENT JOHNSON

While Rachel Carson came from the world of science, America's other great environmentalist of the 1960s came from the world of government. Many historians consider Lyndon Johnson the greatest environmental president the nation has ever had. In fact, protection of the environment was an important part of Johnson's overall Great Society program. One of the most vocal supporters of environmental protection during the 1960s was President Johnson's wife, **Lady Bird Johnson**. Remembered for declaring that "where flowers bloom, so does hope," she was instrumental in the passage of the Highway Beautification Act and was a tireless campaigner for her husband's environmental programs.

In describing his vision for environmental protection to Congress, Johnson said, "The air we breathe, our water, our soil and wildlife, are being blighted by poisons and chemicals which are the by-products of technology and industry. The society that receives the rewards of technology, must, as a cooperating whole, take responsibility for [their] control... We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction, we must restore what has been destroyed and salvage the beauty and charm of our cities. Our conservation must be not just the classic conservation of protection [against] development, but a creative conservation of restoration and innovation." In keeping with the Johnson tradition, numerous bills were passed by Congress during his tenure including the **Clean Air Act** which set standards for factory and power plant emissions. He also signed the **Clean Water Act**, Wilderness Act, Endangered Species Preservation Act, National Trails System Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Solid Waste Disposal Act, Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act, and Aircraft Noise Abatement Act, among others.

### A GROWING MOVEMENT

A major milestone in the Environmental Movement was the establishment of **Earth Day**, which was first observed in San Francisco and other cities on March 21, 1970, the first day of spring. It was created to give awareness to environmental issues. On March 21, 1971, United Nations Secretary-General U Thant spoke of a spaceship Earth on Earth Day, hereby referring to the ecosystem services the earth supplies to us, and hence our obligation to protect it.

Concern for the environment proved to be international as well. The United Nations held its first major conference on international environmental issues, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, also known as the Stockholm Conference, in 1972. It marked a turning point in



**Lady Bird Johnson:** First lady and wife of President Lyndon Johnson. She promoted education and environmental legislation. She is famous for declaring "where flowers bloom, so does hope."



**Clean Air Act:** Law passed in the 1960s that regulates air pollution.



**Clean Water Act:** Law passed in the 1960s that regulates water population.



**Earth Day:** March 21. First observed in 1971, it is a day to focus on the environment.

## 4 CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

the development of international environmental politics. The formation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in 1975 is further evidence that people in many nations were concerned about conservation. It is worthwhile to note that this global cooperation coincided with a détente with the Soviet Union and President Nixon's visit to China. Luckily for the world, a thawing in Cold War tensions came at the right time for environmental cooperation.

Meanwhile, back home, young Americans were beginning to learn about conservation in school as science classes adapted to pressing social issues. Elementary curriculum began including a nationwide awareness campaign attempted to raise consciousness and a cute character created by the Forrest Service named **Woodsy Owl** advised youngsters to "Give a hoot—don't pollute!" Thousands felt their heartstrings tugged as they viewed television advertisements depicting mountains of trash culminating with a pensive Native American shedding a single, mournful tear.



 **Woodsy Owl:** Cartoon character created in the 1970s to encourage children not to litter.

### Primary Source: Illustration

Woodsy Owl provided young Americans in the 1970s with a gentle reminder not to pollute. Programs like this brought environmental conscientiousness into the mainstream.

### THE CHAMPIONS OF CONSERVATION

While the government has been involved in passing environmental protection legislation since the 1960s and government funding for scientific research in this area is significant, it is largely the work of non-profit organizations that has maintained public interest in environmental concerns.

**Greenpeace** focuses its campaigning on worldwide issues, such as global warming, deforestation, overfishing, commercial whaling, and anti-nuclear issues. Using direct action, lobbying, and research to achieve its goals, Greenpeace has been described as the most visible environmental organization in the world. Greenpeace has also been a source of controversy. For example, Greenpeace activists have at times interfered

 **Greenpeace:** Environmental organization that is famous for direct action campaigns such as interfering with whaling ships.

## 4 CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

with Japanese whale hunts by sailing their boats in between whaling ships and the whales themselves, putting themselves in harm's way.

Although flashy, Greenpeace is not the largest environmental organization in the world. That distinction belongs to the **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**. WWF is involved in many projects. Recognizing the importance of economic incentives, the WWF raises money to pay governments in developing countries to protect their natural resources. For example, a small nation in Africa might receive debt forgiveness if they create a new national park.

Other major groups include the Nature Conservancy, which raises money to purchase land to protect it from development, John Muir's Sierra Club, and the National Wildlife Fund.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

With major legislation in place to deal with pressing concerns such as burning rivers, pesticides, and protecting endangered species, the focus of the environmental movement shifted around the world to a potentially more destructive, albeit long term problem: **greenhouse gas** emissions. Since the dawn of the industrial revolution, humans had been adding large amounts of greenhouse gasses to the atmosphere, especially carbon, in the form of burning coal, oil, gasoline, and natural gas. The effect has been a slow, but increasing quick **warming of the overall atmosphere**. To be sure, the numbers seem small. However, just a degree or two increase in the world's average temperature could have massive affects in the coming decades. As ice near the poles melts, sea levels will rise, threatening low elevation islands and cities. Some of America's major ports such as New York and New Orleans are at risk. Some island nations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans may disappear altogether.

Recognizing the seriousness of the problem, and the magnitude of the solutions that would have to be put into place to slow, stop, or reverse the warming trend, global leaders met in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC was not a treaty in and of itself, but rather an agreement about how future agreements would be negotiated and structured. The first major agreement about limiting greenhouse gas emissions came five years later in Kyoto, Japan.

The **Kyoto Protocol** sets emissions targets for developed countries which are binding under international law. The Kyoto Protocol has had two commitment periods, the first of which lasted from 2008-2012. The second one runs from 2013-2020. While the Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by all the other major industrial nations of the world, the United States and Canada have not yet signed on. All the major participants in the negotiations, participated in the first Kyoto commitment period by passing laws that reduced emissions in their nations in order to meet their goals. 37 countries and the European Union have agreed to second-round emissions reduction



**World Wildlife Fund (WWF):** Largest non-profit environmental protection organization in the world.



**Greenhouse Gas:** Chemical that prevents solar energy from leaving the atmosphere and consequently leads to a gradual warming of the overall temperature of the planet. Carbon dioxide is the most famous.



**Global Warming:** The slow processes of increasing the Earth's average temperature. It is due to human activity and could lead to major changes in weather, sea level, and other natural processes.



**Kyoto Protocol:** International agreement signed in 1997 that established as framework for future greenhouse gas emissions reduction treaties.

## 4 CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

targets. These countries include Australia, all members of the European Union, Belarus, Croatia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Norway, Switzerland, and Ukraine. Japan, New Zealand, and Russia have participated in Kyoto's first-round but have not taken on new targets in the second commitment period.

A follow-up treaty to set emissions targets for the periods beginning in 2020 was signed in Paris, France, and is creatively known as the **Paris Agreement**. Both the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement face the same problems and criticism.



**Paris Agreement:** Follow-up treaty to the Kyoto Protocol that sets greenhouse gas emissions targets beginning in 2020.

Some argue the treaties do not go far enough to curb greenhouse emissions. Niue, the Cook Islands, and Nauru added notes to this effect when signing the Kyoto Protocol. They are among the island nations most threatened by climate change. Some economists see the economic impacts of meeting of the emissions targets as outweighing the environmental benefits. In contrast, others believing the standards are inequitable will do little to curb greenhouse gas emissions. One such critic said the Kyoto Protocol was doing "too little, too fast," in that it asks for excessively costly short-term reductions in emissions, without determining what should be done over longer timeframes.

Some have heavily criticized the agreements for only setting emission reductions for rich countries, while not setting such commitments for the fast-growing emerging economies. Many critics in the United States fall into this group. They see the agreements as inherently unfair since the United States would have to put into place costly measures to reduce emissions whereas China and India do not. The growing economies, on the other hand, point out that the United States and the Europeans polluted for well over 100 years as they became rich, and for them it seems unfair that just when they are emerging as world powers the United States would want to put on the breaks by implementing environmental regulations. In the end, participation in international environmental treaties has become a political issue in the United States

### CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL

When it appeared the George W. Bush Administration was trying to suppress scientific reporting on climate change in 2006, the progressive-leaning Union of Concerned Scientists surveyed 1,600 climate scientists, asking them about the state of federal climate research. Of those who responded, nearly three in four believed that their research had been subjected to new administrative requirements, and editing to change their conclusions, or pressure not to use terms such as "global warming." Republican politicians, citing the altered reports, argued that there was no unified opinion among members of the scientific community that humans were damaging the climate. This is simply false. Around the world there is a general consensus that global warming is real, caused by human activity, and likely to increase in the coming century and have significant impacts on our way of life.

A closer look at the growth of the resistance to climate science by historians found that the campaign to undermine public trust in climate science is supported by industrial interests opposed to the regulation of carbon emissions. **Climate change denial** has been associated with the fossil fuel industry and conservative think tanks who support business interests. More than 90% of papers skeptical of climate change originate from right-wing think tanks. The total annual income of these climate change counter-movement-organizations is roughly \$900 million, a treasure capable of paying for enough bogus science to perpetuate climate skepticism for many years to come.

Climate change denial groups have been successful in the United States in that they have convinced the Republican Party to champion their cause. Republican Senator Jim Inhofe, who had previously called climate change “the greatest hoax ever perpetrated against the American people,” claimed to have debunked the alleged hoax in February 2015 when he brought a snowball to the Senate chamber and tossed it across the floor claiming that climate change could not be real if it was still snowing. He was succeeded in 2017 by John Barrasso, who similarly said, “The climate is constantly changing. The role human activity plays is not known.” The rest of the world is shocked and terrified that conservatives in the United States have been fooled into promoting the interests of industry over the facts of science.



Countering this rejection of science were the activities of many environmentalists, including **Al Gore**, Clinton’s vice president and Bush’s opponent in the disputed 2000 election. In 2006, a documentary film, **An**



**Climate Skepticism:** The belief that global warming is not happening or that it will not result in significant changes. It is an idea first promoted by businesses that will suffer if limits are placed on greenhouse gas emissions.

**Primary Source: Photograph**

Senator Jim Inhofe holds a snowball during his climate change denial statements in the Senate chamber in 2015.



**Al Gore:** Former Vice President who has dedicated himself to fighting to protect the environment. He wrote *An Inconvenient Truth*.

**Inconvenient Truth**, represented his attempts to educate people about the realities and dangers of global warming, and won the 2007 Academy Award for Best Documentary. Though some of what Gore said was in error, the film's main thrust is in keeping with the weight of scientific evidence. In 2007, as a result of these efforts to "disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change," Gore shared the Nobel Peace Prize with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.



**An Inconvenient Truth:** Book by former Vice President Al Gore about climate change.

### TRUMP'S WAR ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

The Trump Administration has championed industry over climate regulation. In December 2017, a New York Times analysis of EPA enforcement data found that the Trump Administration had adopted a far more lenient approach to enforcing federal pollution laws than the Obama and Bush administrations.

The Trump Administration brought fewer cases against polluters, sought a lower total of civil penalties and made fewer requests of companies to retrofit facilities to curb pollution. In 2018, the Trump Administration referred the lowest number of pollution cases for criminal prosecution in 30 years.

Moments after Trump's inauguration, the White House removed all references to climate change on its website, with the sole exception of mentioning Trump's intention to eliminate the Obama administration's climate change policies. By April, the EPA had removed climate change material on its website, including detailed climate data and scientific information, putting them firmly in the climate change denial camp. Anticipating political interference that could result in loss of government data on climate, scientists had already sourced links and copied the data into independent servers.

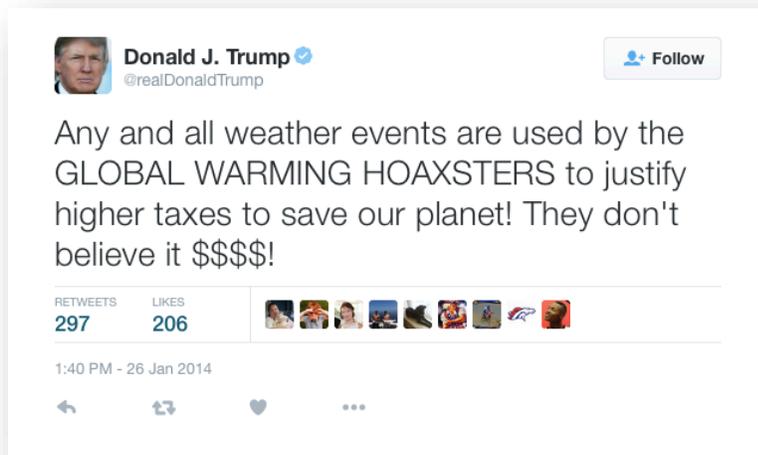
As part of their pro-business position, Trump's administration invalidated the Stream Protection Rule, a regulation intended to prevent coal mining debris from being dumped into nearby streams, and rolled back regulations which limited dumping by power plants of toxic wastewater containing metals like arsenic and mercury into public waterways. In March 2017, Trump issued an executive order reversing multiple Obama Administration policies meant to tackle climate change. Trump said he was "putting an end to the war on coal", removing "job-killing regulations" and "restrictions on American energy."

Under Trump, the EPA rejected a ban on the toxic pesticide chlorpyrifos, which the EPA's own agency staff had recommended banning due to extensive research showing adverse health effects on children. In August 2018, a federal court ordered the EPA to ban the pesticide, because EPA heads had ignored conclusions of its own scientists.

## 4 CAN WE SAVE THE EARTH?

In June 2017, Trump announced U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, a 2015 climate change accord reached by 200 nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions, defying broad global backing for the plan.[331]

The administration suspended a number of large government-funded research programs, such as a study on the public health effects of mountaintop removal coal-mining, and one intended to make offshore drilling safer, as well as funding for a program that distributed grants for research the effects of chemical exposure on children.



### Primary Source: Tweet

Although innovative in his use of Twitter to communicate directly with the nation, President Trump has demonstrated a willingness to promote climate skepticism (among other conspiracy theories) and has actively supported business interests over environmental stewardship.

Trump sharply reduced the size of two national monuments in Utah, making it the largest reduction of public land protections in American history. Shortly afterwards, Interior Secretary Zinke advocated for downsizing four additional national monuments.

Despite all of his efforts to pretend nothing is wrong, Trump has not been able to make climate change go away. The day after Thanksgiving 2018, the administration released the Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4), a long-awaited study conducted by numerous federal agencies that found “the evidence of human-caused climate change is overwhelming and continues to strengthen, that the impacts of climate change are intensifying across the country, and that climate-related threats to Americans’ physical, social, and economic well-being are rising.” Two days earlier, Trump had repeated his many previous assertions that a current cold weather spell calls global warming science into question, a notion that has been repeatedly debunked by climate scientists. Despite the report of the scientists in the government, one Trump official still stated, “We don’t care. In our view, this is made-up hysteria anyway.” He noted that the Administration did not alter the report's findings but rather chose to release it the day after Thanksgiving “on a day when nobody cares, and hope it gets swept away by the next day’s news.”

### CONCLUSION

Some might look at the present Trump Administration and think of it as an abnormality in a decades-long effort to implement regulations that will protect the environment for our future. Others might see it as a more ominous sign that the forces who stand to lose from that regulation are winning a campaign to influence public opinion. Mother Nature does not have a bank account and cannot pay for phony research, but coal mining companies do, after all.

Despite what some may say, we understand the impact humans have had and are having on the environment, and we have seen that government regulation can make a difference. The saving of the Bald Eagle by banning DDT and passing the Endangered Species Act are obvious proof of this. However, can we tackle the much larger problem of dealing with human-induced climate change?

As the Americans who are going to deal with the problems of climate change in the coming decades, it is perhaps much more important for you to ponder this question than it is for the leaders from previous generations.

What do you think? Can we save the Earth?

### SUMMARY

Americans have been concerned with preserving the environment since the Progressive Era when President Theodore Roosevelt launched the National Park Service and John Muir founded the Sierra Club.

During the Great Depression FDR implemented the CCC and dealt with the Dust Bowl and during the 1950s people worked to stop construction of a dam that would have partially filled in the Grand Canyon.

The modern environmental movement started when Rachel Carson wrote *Silent Spring* and helped Americans become aware of the dangers of the pesticide DDT. Her work led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency.

President Johnson and his wife Lady Bird Johnson both cared about the environment and the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts were part of Johnson's Great Society.

During the 1960s and 1970s the environmental movement grew. Earth Day was started and new non-governmental organizations were founded to fight for conservation.

In modern times, climate change is the most pressing concern. International agreements such as the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement have implemented goals for carbon emission reduction. The United States has not participated in these treaties.

Some people reject the overwhelming science that supports human-induced climate change. These climate skeptics were originally funded by business groups who will lose money if carbon emissions are reduced. Republican politicians, including President Trump, promote the ideas of climate skeptics and work to block environmental regulation. Most Democrats, like former Vice President Al Gore, advocate for regulations to limit climate change.



## PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Rachel Carson:** Scientist who wrote *Silent Spring* about the dangers of pesticides and launched the modern environmental movement.

**Lady Bird Johnson:** First lady and wife of President Lyndon Johnson. She promoted education and environmental legislation. She is famous for declaring “where flowers bloom, so does hope.”

**Woodsy Owl:** Cartoon character created in the 1970s to encourage children not to litter.

**Greenpeace:** Environmental organization that is famous for direct action campaigns such as interfering with whaling ships.

**World Wildlife Fund (WWF):** Largest non-profit environmental protection organization in the world.

**Al Gore:** Former Vice President who has dedicated himself to fighting to protect the environment. He wrote *An Inconvenient Truth*.



## SCIENCE

**DDT:** Pesticide that can cause fatal problems in animals, especially birds, after it has been washed into rivers and lakes. It was the subject of Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* and was banned shortly after the book’s publication.

**Greenhouse Gas:** Chemical that prevents solar energy from leaving the atmosphere and consequently leads to a gradual warming of the overall temperature of the planet. Carbon dioxide is the most famous.

**Global Warming:** The slow processes of increasing the Earth’s average temperature. It is due to human activity and could lead to major changes in weather, sea level, and other natural processes.

**Climate Skepticism:** The belief that global warming is not happening or that it will not result in significant changes. It is an idea first promoted by businesses that will suffer if limits are placed on greenhouse gas emissions.



## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** Government agency responsible for enforcing laws designed to protect the environment.



## LAWS & TREATIES

**Clean Air Act:** Law passed in the 1960s that regulates air pollution.

**Clean Water Act:** Law passed in the 1960s that regulates water pollution.

**Kyoto Protocol:** International agreement signed in 1997 that established a framework for future greenhouse gas emissions reduction treaties.

**Paris Agreement:** Follow-up treaty to the Kyoto Protocol that sets greenhouse gas emissions targets beginning in 2020.



## EVENTS

**Cuyahoga River Fires:** Fires that took place when oil and other flammable pollutants in the major river in Cleveland ignited. They occurred multiple times, the largest in 1952. In 1969, it was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* and helped focus national attention on the problem of pollution.

**Earth Day:** March 21. First observed in 1971, it is a day to focus on the environment.



## BOOKS

***Silent Spring*:** Book written by Rachel Carson about the dangers of pesticides. The book helped launch the modern environmental movement.

***An Inconvenient Truth*:** Book by former Vice President Al Gore about climate change.

# 5

## F I F T H Q U E S T I O N CAN MEN AND WOMEN BE EQUAL?

**WAS THE SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION  
ACTUALLY  
REVOLUTIONARY?**

### INTRODUCTION

A shift toward more equality between men and women has been underway since the nation's founding. Sometimes progress has leapt forward, and sometimes seems to have come to a near standstill. The 1960s and 1970s were one of these periods of rapid change for women. In the 1800s and early 1900s, the women's movements focused primarily on overturning legal obstacles to gender equality, such as voting rights and property rights. In contrast, the second wave of feminism in the 1960 and 1970s, inspired and galvanized by the Civil Rights Movement of the same era, broadened the debate of women's rights to encompass a wider range of issues, including sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, and legal and traditional inequalities.

We could look back over the shift toward more equality between men and women in American history and reasonably predict that the change will continue and that women and men will someday be treated equally in law, politics, work, sports, and society at large. But we must be careful not to assume that the past is destiny.

What do you think? Can men and women be equal?

### A LONG HISTORY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In this question, we are focusing on the women's rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s, but there is a danger that this might give the impression that women were not interested in gaining equality before this time. In fact, women have been working to earn equal rights for America's entire history.

When the Declaration of Independence was being drafted, for example, **Abigail Adams**, the wife of John Adams the great agitator for independence, wrote and asked that the Founding Fathers "**remember the ladies.**" Alas, her request fell on deaf ears, and political and economic power remained firmly in the hands of men. In the early 1800s, women organized around religious, abolitionist and temperance movements and at the **Seneca Falls Convention** in 1848, formally launched the women's suffrage movement. When the Civil War ended in 1865, women thought that they might be included in the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. To their dismay, supporters of suffrage for African Americans left women out, fearing that too few men would support the amendment if they were included. It was not until 1920, with the ratification of the **19<sup>th</sup> Amendment** that women finally won the right to vote.

Women were not only concerned with voting. The **Cult of Domesticity** – the idea that women belonged at home with children while men worked – emerged along with the Industrial Revolution in the early 1800s. The myth of the happy housewife persisted and was glorified in television sitcoms in the 1950s. But, just as social reform movements made 19<sup>th</sup> Century women more aware of their lack of power and encouraged them to form the first women's rights movement, the civil rights movements of the 1960s inspired many white and middle-class women to create their own organized movement for greater rights. Unlike the counterculture or the anti-war movements that were dominated by young people, many of the feminist activists were older, married women who found the traditional roles of mother and housewife unfulfilling.

It was a group of women writers who ignited the movement. In 1963, **Betty Friedan** published **The Feminine Mystique** in which she contested the post-World War II belief that it was women's destiny to marry and bear children. The perfect nuclear family image depicted and strongly marketed at the time, she wrote, did not reflect happiness and was rather degrading for women. Friedan's book was a best-seller and began to raise the consciousness of many women who agreed that homemaking in the suburbs sapped them of their individualism and left them unsatisfied.

It was at this time that the word **sexism** entered the American vocabulary, as women became categorized as a target group for discrimination. Single and married women adopted the title Ms for both married and unmarried women as an alternative to Miss or Mrs to avoid changing their identities based upon their relationships with men. In 1972, **Gloria Steinem** founded a feminist magazine of that name.



**Abigail Adams:** Wife of the second president. She is remembered as an early champion for women's rights.



**"Remember the Ladies!"** Quote from one of Abigail Adams' letters to John Adams during the debate over the Declaration of Independence in which she urged him to consider women's rights in the establishment of the nation.



**Seneca Falls Convention:** The first major meeting of women's rights advocates in America, which occurred in New York in 1848.



**19<sup>th</sup> Amendment:** Constitutional amendment ratified in 1920 granting women the right to vote.



**Cult of Domesticity:** Idea popularized in the early 1800s with the onset of the Industrial Revolution that certain tasks and issues were appropriate for women. These did not include work outside the home or politics. This has also been called the Women's Sphere.



**Betty Friedan:** Feminist in the 1960s who wrote *The Feminine Mystique* criticizing the traditional role of women. Her book launched the feminist movement of the 1970s. She founded NOW.



**The Feminine Mystique:** Book by Betty Friedan critical of the role of women in society. The book helped spark the feminist movement of the 1970s.



**Sexism:** Prejudice or discrimination against a person because of his or her gender. It was a word that first became common during the feminist movement of the 1970s.



**Gloria Steinem:** Feminist who founded *Ms Magazine* in 1972.

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Authors such as the feminist **Germaine Greer** impelled many women to confront social, political, and economic barriers. In 1960, women comprised less than 40% of the nation's undergraduate college classes, and far fewer women were candidates for advanced degrees. Despite voting for four decades, there were only 19 women serving in Congress in 1961. For every dollar that was earned by an American male, each working American female earned 59¢. By raising a collective consciousness, these women writers helped launch a movement. Historians have since called this period of change **second wave feminism**.



**Germaine Greer:** Australian professor who wrote about the traditional role of women in society.

Instead of celebrating motherhood and femininity, she portrayed these roles as traps women were forced into.



**Second Wave Feminism:** A time period in the 1970s when women were actively promoting their rights.

The time period included the Roe v. Wade case, legalization of birth control, as well as failed push to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

### Primary Source: Photograph

Betty Friedan ignited the modern feminist movement with the publication of her book *The Feminine Mystique*

### THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Feminist activists demanded equal pay for equal work and pressured the government to support and enforce legislation that prohibited gender discrimination. While the **Equal Pay Act of 1964** had promised women that they would earn the same pay as men for the same work, the first major legislation that protected women in all of public life was the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. The Civil Rights Act is usually remembered as the law that ended Jim Crow segregation in the South, but it also protects women from the same discrimination. Ironically, protection for women had been included at the suggestion of a conservative Virginia congressman in an attempt to prevent the act's passage. He believed that while White men might accept that



**Equal Pay Act of 1964:** Law passed in 1964 which promised women the same pay men received for the same work.



**Civil Rights Act of 1964:** Law passed in 1964 that was designed to provide equal rights for African Americans (and all races) in public places. It also included protection for women.

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African Americans needed and deserved protection from discrimination, the idea that women deserved equality with men would be far too radical for any of his male colleagues to contemplate. However, this strategy backfired and the measure was signed into law, granting protection to both ethnic minorities and women.

In 1966, two years after the Civil Rights Act's passage, 28 women, including the author Betty Friedan, formed the **National Organization for Women (NOW)**. They wanted to preserve their newly won rights and NOW served as the de facto leader of the new feminist movement. Friedan, the organization's first president proclaimed that NOW's goal would be to make possible women's participation in all aspects of American life and to gain for them all the rights enjoyed by men. Among the specific goals was the passage of an Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution that would guarantee the protections women had won in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Through the 1960s, 1970s and beyond, NOW set the agenda for the women's movement by organizing protests, lobbying for legislative action and fighting in court.

### EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

In 1963, a government commission released a detailed report describing discrimination against women in every aspect of American life and outlining plans to achieve equality. Specific recommendations for women in the workplace included fair hiring practices, paid **maternity leave**, and affordable childcare. The Equal Pay Act that Congress passed a year later made progress on some of these fronts, but the law provided no way of enforcing equal pay for men and women performing equal work. In addition, it did not cover domestic workers, agricultural workers, executives, administrators, or professionals.

What activists really wanted, was an amendment to the Constitution that would guarantee gender equality. An **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** was not a new idea. In fact, **Alice Paul**, who had worked so hard to pass the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and win suffrage for women as leader of the National Women's Party, had first introduced it to Congress in 1923. Paul continued to work for passage of the ERA until her death in 1977.

Changing the Constitution is not easy, which is a good thing since it promotes stability in government and helps make sure bad ideas stay out. First, Congress must pass the amendment with a two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate. Then, it must be ratified by three-fourths of the state legislatures. Since such majorities in both Congress and of the states must approve an amendment, there is very little chance that a proposal supported by just one political party or region of the country would ever be ratified. NOW and the other women's rights organizations began a hard push for the ERA in 1970.



**National Organization for Women (NOW):** Organization founded by Betty Friedan to promote women's rights.



**Maternity Leave:** Paid time off from work for women in order to care for newborn children.



**Equal Rights Amendment (ERA):** Constitutional amendment that would guarantee equal treatment under the law for women. It was passed by Congress and multiple states in the 1970s, but never ratified by enough states to become law.



**Alice Paul:** Advocate for women's suffrage in the early 1900s. She founded the National Women's Party and used more aggressive tactics to publicize the movement. In her later life she promoted the Equal Rights Amendment.

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Leaders such as Gloria Steinem addressed Congress and provided argument after argument in support of the ERA. The House approved the measure in 1970, and the Senate did likewise in 1972. Supporters seemed to have momentum and public opinion polls showed strong support. By 1973, 30 of the necessary 38 states ratified the amendment.

Then the tide turned. A highly organized, determined opposition emerged that suggested that ratification of the ERA would lead to the complete unraveling of traditional American society. The leader of the STOP ERA campaign was a career woman named **Phyllis Schlafly**. Schlafly frustrated activists like Friedan, Steinem and Paul by glorifying the traditional roles of American women. She heckled feminists by opening her speaking engagements with quips such as, “I’d like to thank my husband for letting me be here tonight.” Schlafly argued that the ERA would bring undesirable changes to American women.



In the end, the fight over the Equal Rights Amendment did not pit women against men. Instead, it pitted women against each other fighting about how much they wanted the genders to be equal, and how much they believed men and women were and should be different. Schlafly pointed out that protective laws like sexual assault and alimony would be swept away. The tendency of courts to award custody of children to mothers in divorce cases would be eliminated. The all-male military draft would become immediately unconstitutional. Those opposed to the ERA even suggested that single-sex restrooms might be banished by future courts. While many women were in favor of equality when they saw obvious ways in which men were favored in society, they were less inclined to support it when they thought about the ways laws advantaged them.

 **Phyllis Schlafly:** Women who worked against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. She argued that the law would result in undesirable changes for women.

### Primary Source: Photograph

Phyllis Schlafly at a rally in opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Her highly organized campaign stalled support for the amendment and it was never ratified.

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STOP ERA campaigned to prevent more state legislatures from ratifying the amendment. Advocates baked apple pies for the Illinois legislature while they debated the amendment. They hung “Don’t draft me” signs on baby girls at protest marches. The strategy worked. After 1973, the number of ratifying states slowed to a trickle. By 1982, only 35 states had voted in favor of the ERA, three states shy of the necessary total.

Despite early gains by the feminist movement, Schlafly’s campaign and the general rise in social conservatism in the 1970s and 1980s led Americans of both genders to turn away from a constitutional guarantee of gender equality. Feminist groups continue to believe that the ERA campaign in the 1970s was a tragically lost opportunity to advance women’s rights and some still yearn to make it reality. When Hillary Clinton ran for president in 2016, she championed a renewed push for passage of the ERA. The idea of amending the Constitution to guarantee gender equality is a century old and perhaps someday the ERA will become law. But for now, while the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment guarantees equality between races, nowhere in the Constitution can a guarantee of equality for women be found.

### RADICAL FEMINISM

Second wave feminism was initiated by thoughtful writers and propelled forward by activists who focused on basic economic inequality and legal rights. More radical feminists, like their colleagues in other movements, were dissatisfied with merely redressing these issues and devised their own brand of consciousness-raising events and symbolic attacks on oppression.

The most famous of these was an event staged in September 1968, by New York Radical Women. Protesting stereotypical notions of femininity and rejecting traditional gender expectations, the group demonstrated at the **Miss America Pageant** in Atlantic City, New Jersey, to bring attention to society’s exploitation of women, which they believed was on display at the pageant. The protestors crowned a sheep Miss America and then tossed instruments of what they believed was women’s oppression, including high-heeled shoes, curlers, girdles, and bras, into a “freedom trash can.” News accounts famously, and incorrectly, described the protest as a “**bra burning**.” In fact, no one burned any bras.

Despite the flashy nature of such protests, real change for women came through hard-won legislation and legal battles.

### BIRTH CONTROL

For thousands of years, the impact of sex had been different for men and women. For women, sex could result in pregnancy and motherhood. This biological fact was part of what defined the roles of men and women in American society. There were times when women were allowed to work outside the home, but the possibility of motherhood presented restrictions. For example, in the early 1900s, women could serve as school teachers, but



**Miss America Pageant:** Beauty contest that became the target of feminist protesters in the 1970s who argued that it, and other contests like it, promoted the objectification of women. They crowned a sheep in protest.



**Bra Burning:** Form of protest popularized by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s who wanted to demonstrate their rejection of traditional gender rules.

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they would lose their jobs if they were married. Society believed that a married woman belonged at home taking care of her husband and children.

In the early 1900s, one woman believed the status quo needed to change. **Margaret Sanger** was a pioneer in the struggle for a woman's right to **birth control**. She famously said that, "no woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother." In an era when it was illegal to discuss the topic, she was arrested or charged with lawlessness many times for both her publications and her New York City clinics. Additionally, organized religions such as the Roman Catholic Church stood firm on their principles that artificial contraceptives were sinful. Despite Sanger's effort, and the fact that women won the right to vote in 1919, birth control in any form, remained illegal in most states, even for married couples.

In the 1950s, philanthropist Katherine McCormick provided the funding for biologists to develop a **birth control pill**, a drug that women could take that would prevent pregnancy. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the birth control pill for general use in 1960. For the first time, women could control the possibility of pregnancy on their own without relying on their partners. Within five years of the pill's approval, some six million women were using it.

Despite the pill's obvious popularity, as a form of contraception it remained illegal in many states. In a landmark decision, **Griswold v. Connecticut** in 1965, the Supreme Court ruled such laws unconstitutional. Setting a precedent, the Court determined that a fundamental right to privacy exists between the lines of the Constitution. Laws prohibiting contraceptive choice violated this sacred right. The ban of prohibitive laws was extended to unmarried couples in **Eisenstadt v. Baird** in 1972, and a federal judge imparted the right to purchase contraceptives to unmarried minors in 1974.

Equality, many feminists of the 1960s and 1970s believed, extended beyond the workplace, but to the bedroom as well and women's rights movements heralded the availability of birth control as a method of granting women liberation. After all, if women were going to have the same rights as men in the workplace, they should be able to enjoy sex without fear of pregnancy just as much as men.

The new contraceptive technology had a major impact on American life. Being able to avoid pregnancy meant that women could be sexually active and remain unmarried. In earlier times, sex usually led to pregnancy and then quickly to marriage. Birth control therefore, indirectly prolonging the age at which many women first married. This allowed women to invest in education and become more career-oriented, and after the pill was legalized, there was a sharp increase in college attendance and graduation rates for women.



**Margaret Sanger:** Champion of birth control in the early 1900s.



**Birth Control:** Any form of contraception. The term was coined by Margaret Sanger.



**Birth Control Pill:** Oral form of contraception first approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1960. The widespread availability of this form of contraception helped fuel the sexual revolution in the 1960s.



**Griswold v. Connecticut:** 1965 Supreme Court case legalizing birth control.



**Eisenstadt v. Baird:** 1972 Supreme Court case that made it legal for unmarried minors to purchase birth control.

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Birth control in general, and the pill in particular were seen as excellent, inexpensive ways to combat poverty. Women could finish school, earn college degrees, and work before having children. A new mother at age 26 with a degree and a few years of savings already put away is in a much better position financially than a new mother at age 19, who has only finished high school. As a result, the pill was endorsed by many government officials, including President Johnson, and was distributed by doctors who could see the benefits it had for their patients.

The pill was not without its detractors. In fact, it became a controversial subject as Americans struggled with their thoughts on sexual morality, controlling population growth, and women's control of their reproductive rights. Never before had sexual activity been so separated from reproduction. For a heterosexual couple using the pill, intercourse became purely an expression of love, a means of physical pleasure, or both. While this was true of previous contraceptives, their relatively high failure rates and their less widespread use failed to have the social impact of the pill.

The spread of oral contraceptive use led many religious figures and institutions to debate the proper role of sex in society. The Roman Catholic Church in particular reiterated its teaching that artificial contraception distorts nature and the purpose of sex. Opponents of the pill, and the sexual freedom it provided to women, cited the increase in children born to unmarried mothers, sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy, and divorce rates as evidence that the decline in traditional gender roles, brought about in part by the availability of birth control, was bad for America.

Despite opposition, the use of the oral contraceptive pill continues to be widespread. As of 2010, 80% of sexually active women had used the pill at some point in their lives. Today, women have other options for birth control that do not involve their partners, including implants and patches, but the pill remains the most popular, and its effect on society is undeniable.

### ABORTION

No topic related to the feminist movement has aroused such passion and controversy as much as the right to an **abortion**, a medical procedure that ends a pregnancy. In the 1960s, there was no federal law regulating abortions, and many states had banned the practice entirely, except when the life of the mother was endangered. Women's groups argued that illegality led many women to seek black market abortions by unlicensed physicians or to perform the procedure on themselves. As a result, several states such as California and New York began to legalize abortions. With no definitive ruling from the federal government, women's groups sought the opinion of the Supreme Court.

The battle began in Texas, which outlawed any type of abortion unless a doctor determined that the mother's life was in danger. A woman challenged the law banning abortion. As the case slowly made its way up



**Abortion:** Medical procedure to end a pregnancy by choice.

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from the lower courts to the Supreme Court, she was referred to in court documents only as Jane Roe in order to protect her privacy. Defending the law was the Dallas District Attorney, Henry Wade. Thus, the case became known as *Roe v. Wade*.

In 1973, the Supreme Court invalidated the Texas law by a 7-2 vote. The majority of the justices maintained that although the Constitution never mentions abortion, a woman's right to abortion is implied by the Constitution's guarantee of privacy. Because of the **Roe v. Wade** decision, no state could restrict abortions during the first three months, or trimester, of a pregnancy. States were permitted to adopt restrictive laws in accordance with respecting the mother's health during the second trimester. The practice could be banned outright during the third trimester. Any state law that conflicted with this ruling was automatically overturned.



Women's groups were ecstatic, but immediately an opposition emerged. The Roman Catholic Church had long criticized abortion as a form of infanticide and many fundamentalist Protestant ministers joined the outcry. The **National Right to Life Committee** formed with the explicit goal of reversing *Roe v. Wade*.

The question of abortion is fundamentally thorny because it involves basic beliefs about life, and often those beliefs are based on religion. Those who believe life begins at conception feel that the unborn child deserves the same legal protections as an adult. Ending such a life is equivalent to murder to those who subscribe to this belief. They believe that the government has a responsibility to protect all people, including those who have not yet been born. Opponents of abortion use the label **pro-life** to define their cause.

Others argue that life begins at birth, and that laws restricting abortion interfere with the right of a woman to decide what is in her own best interests. They believe that the government has no business telling women



**Roe v. Wade:** 1973 Supreme Court case that legalized abortion in the first trimester of a pregnancy, and permitted some restrictions on abortions in the second and third trimesters. It remains one of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions.

### Primary Source: Photograph

A pro-life rally. One of the signs directly references the day the *Roe v. Wade* decision was handed down by the Supreme Court.



**National Right to Life Committee:** Organization dedicated to reversing the *Roe v. Wade* decision and making abortion illegal.



**Pro-Life:** Being opposed to abortion.



**Pro-Choice:** Being in favor of legalized abortion.

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what to do with their bodies. Some argue that opponents of abortion are trying to impose their religious beliefs on others. Supporters of *Roe v. Wade* identify themselves as **pro-choice**.

Since 1973, the battle has raged. Pro-life groups began to lobby their senators and representatives to propose a **Right-to-Life Amendment** to the Constitution. Although introduced in Congress, the measure has never received the necessary support. Pro-choice groups such as the **National Abortion Rights Action League** fear that a slow erosion of abortion rights has taken place since *Roe v. Wade* as states pass laws that make it harder to gain access to an abortion.

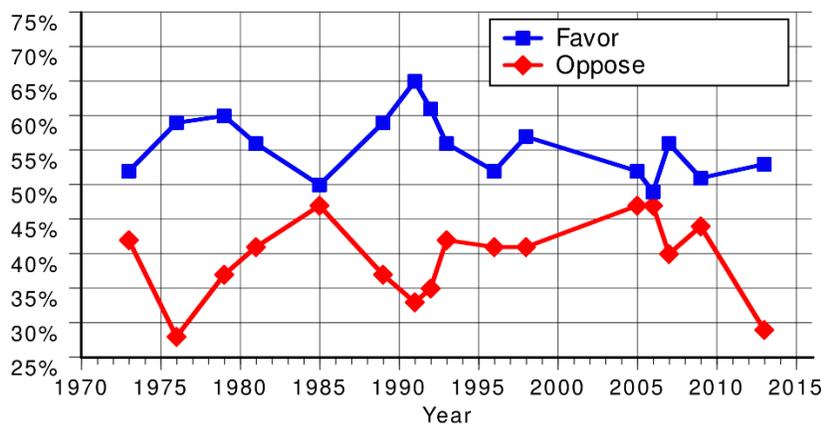


**Right-to-Life Amendment:** Proposed constitutional amendment that would make abortion illegal. The proposal has not passed in Congress.



**National Abortion Rights Action League:** Organization dedicated to making sure abortion remains legal.

Public Support for *Roe v. Wade*



Secondary Source: Chart

Support for the *Roe v. Wade* decision (and legalized abortion by extension) has wavered over time, but has remained positive since the decision was made.

The **Hyde Amendment** of 1976 prohibits the use of federal Medicaid funds for abortions. The idea behind the law was that because Medicaid is funded by taxes, people who believe abortion is wrong should not be forced to pay for it, even in a roundabout way.



**Hyde Amendment:** 1976 law that prohibits the use of tax money to pay for abortion. This means that Medicaid cannot cover abortions.

Since the Supreme Court ruled that women have a fundamental right to abortion, that right has been limited by a long string of laws and court cases. For example, in the 1992 case *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Supreme Court ruled that states have the right to impose waiting periods and parental notification requirements so girls under the age of 18 cannot have an abortion without their parent's knowledge. In 2014, the Texas legislature passed a law that set new guidelines for operating abortion clinics. The law was so strict that half of all clinics could not meet the new standards closed. In some areas, abortion was legal, but women had to travel hundreds of miles to find a doctor willing and able to carry out the procedure. The Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* in 2016. The Court upheld this ruling in 2019 when it blocked implementation of a similar law in Louisiana. However, it will take many years to open new clinics to replace those that had to close. Pro-life advocates may have lost in court, but won in practical terms.

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**Planned Parenthood** is an organization that provides women with healthcare and advice about contraception, cancer screening and many other issues. However, since they pride themselves on providing safe, inexpensive abortions, protesters regularly picket outside their offices. Several Planned Parenthood sites have even been bombed and doctors who perform abortions murdered by anti-abortion extremists.

While the fight goes on in state capitals and in protest marches, the real fate of *Roe v. Wade* continues to lie with the Supreme Court. Although every ruling since 1973 upheld the fundamental decision that women have a right to abortion, the composition of the Court changes with every retirement. Activists on each side demand a **litmus test** for any justice named to the federal courts. Republicans have tended to appoint pro-life judges, and Democrats have selected pro-choice nominees. If Republican presidents were someday able to appoint enough conservative justices to significantly alter the balance of the Court, opponents of *Roe v. Wade* might have a chance of succeeding. For now, the battle remains as fierce as ever.

### DIVORCE

For most of America's history, it was difficult for couples to divorce. Marriage was an institution that was dominated by organized religions, and they were loath to grant divorces. Even well into the 1900s, divorces were granted only in cases of abuse or infidelity. Many Americans believed this was good for society. However, in the 1970s things began to change.

In 1967, California passed the nation's first **no-fault divorce** law. With this change, couples could divorce for any reason, or no reason at all. Within a few years, many other states followed California's lead and passed no-fault divorce laws of their own. The impact was dramatic. In the 1960s, there were 9.2 divorces per 1,000 married women. Just 20 years later in 1980, that number had more than doubled to 22.6 divorces per 1,000 married women. Less than 20% of marriages in 1950 ended in divorce, but roughly 50% of all couples who married in 1970 eventually divorced.

Before the advent of no-fault divorce, social pressure and the authority of religious leaders convinced many couples to stay together, even when relationships had frayed. Sometimes it was challenging to prove that a spouse had been unfaithful and people were trapped in broken marriages. A change in the law gave legitimacy to divorce and began to erode the moral authority of churches. Eventually, many churches bent to the times. For example, the United Methodist Church, the largest mainline Protestant denomination in America announced in 1976 that they would be accommodating of divorced and remarried congregants.

As the rate of divorce grew, Americans began to worry about the effect divorce was having on children. On one hand, single parents usually have less time to spend with their children because they are working and are often more stressed since they have to bear the entire responsibility of raising



**Planned Parenthood:** Organization that provides healthcare services to women including abortions. They are often the focus of anti-abortion protests.



**Litmus Test:** A position that a candidate must take in order to receive support from a group of voters. A candidate's position on abortion is often a make-or-break factor in American politics.



**No-Fault Divorce:** A law that allows couples to file for divorce without giving a reason. First passed in 1967, these laws make divorce much easier to obtain and consequently, more common.

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children. On the other hand, it is perhaps equally stressful for children to be raised in homes filled with conflict.

In the long term, as marriage has lost its importance in the minds of young people, more and more have chosen to live together without being married. Now about 40% of all American children will live in a home with unmarried parents. Since these relationships are less stable, the vast majority of children born to unmarried couples see their parents separate by the time they turn 15.

Since the 1980s, divorce rates have come down somewhat, but they are still far higher than they were before no-fault divorce laws were enacted.

Another major change that happened to divorce law in the 1970s related to the disposition of property. In many states, head and master laws gave husbands final say over all property. Men could make financial decisions without consulting their wives. This meant that in cases of divorce, husbands could take property and savings and leave their ex-wives with nothing. In 1981, the Supreme Court ruled such laws unconstitutional in the case **Kirchberg v. Feenstra**. Citing the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protect under the law, they ruled that head of mastery laws unfairly favored men over women.

Although the rise in divorce rates since the passage of no-fault laws in the 1970s has resulted in social problems that were rare beforehand, the ability of women to obtain a divorce and protection of property has allowed women to escape abusive and unhappy marriages.

### TITLE IX

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a major step forward in protecting women from discrimination, but it was written to protect people from discrimination in public places such as stores and bus stations. Many activists wanted a law specifically designed to protect the rights of female students, and so **Title IX** was enacted as a follow-up to the Civil Rights Act. While Title IX is best known for its impact on high school and collegiate athletics, the original statute made no explicit mention of sports. However, coverage of sports was implied.

The impact of the law on female athletics has been enormous. One study, completed in 2006, pointed to a large increase in the number of women participating in athletics at both the high school and college level. For every one girl involved in high school sports before Title IX was enacted, there are nine now, and the number of women in college sports had increased by more than 450%. A 2008 study of intercollegiate athletics showed that women's collegiate sports has grown to 9,101 teams, or 8.65 per school.

Some critics of the law contend that Title IX has resulted in the dismantling of men's sports programs. For example, though interest in the sport of wrestling has consistently increased at the high school level since 1990,



**Kirchberg v. Feenstra:** 1981 Supreme Court case that outlawed masterly laws which had granted all joint property to husbands in divorce.



**Title IX:** Addition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act that guaranteed equal access for girls. One major consequence has been the funding of girls athletics in high schools and colleges.

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scores of colleges have dropped their wrestling programs during that same period. In order to offer equal opportunities, some schools have chosen to reduce the options for men rather than increase them for women. Men's sports such as golf, tennis, rowing, track, swimming, as well as wrestling have all been abandoned by schools trying to comply with Title IX.

Most of these sports are money losers for colleges. That is, the cost of equipment and coaches exceeds what the sports earn in ticket sales. Athletic directors are forced to make hard choices when money is short and although many would love to offer every sport for both male and female students, the law's requirements make cutting legacy men's programs a necessity. Critics of Title IX believe this is unfair. There are currently 1.3 million more boys participating in high school sports than girls. Since colleges are forced to offer equal opportunities, some of those boys will simply have no teams to play for.

Despite such arguments, women's athletic programs are still far from equal to men's programs. The Women's Sports Foundation reported in a 2007 study of NCAA institutions that men's athletics receive the lion's share of athletic department budgets for operating expenses, recruiting, scholarships, and coaches' salaries.

Title IX applies to all educational programs and all aspects of a school, not only to athletics. One of the important other areas the law has affected, is the way schools have dealt with sexual harassment against female students. The Supreme Court ruled that when school administrators fail to protect students from harassment, they are denying girls equal access to education. As a result, the law has been used multiple times to force school leaders to address claims of sexual abuse and harassment and to institute programs to protect female students.

In 2006, for example, a federal court found that there was sufficient evidence that the University of Colorado acted with "deliberate indifference" toward students Lisa Simpson and Anne Gilmore, who were sexually assaulted by student football players. The university settled the case, promising to change its policies and pay \$2.5 million in damages. In 2008, Arizona State University was the subject of a lawsuit that alleged violations of rights guaranteed by Title IX. In that case, the university expelled a football player for multiple instances of severe sexual harassment, but readmitted him and he went on to rape a student in her dorm room. Despite its claim that it bore no responsibility, the school settled the lawsuit, agreeing to revise and improve its official response to sexual misconduct and to pay the plaintiff \$850,000 in damages and fees.

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Between 2010 and 2016, the Department of Education under President Obama announced that transgender students are also protected from discrimination under Title IX. It instructed public schools to treat transgender students consistent with their gender identity in academic life. A student who identifies as a transgender boy, for instance, is allowed entry to a boys-only class, and a student who identifies as a transgender girl is allowed entry to a girls-only class. This change in policy, is currently in flux. In February 2017, the Departments of Justice and Education under the Trump Administration withdrew the guidance on gender identity issued by the Obama administration and in 2018, the Department of Education announced that Title IX did not allow transgender students to use the bathroom of their gender identities. This is an issue that seems likely to be destined for the Supreme Court sometime in the coming years.



### Primary Source: Photograph

Hillary Clinton speaking during the presidential campaign of 2016. Clinton was a former first lady, senator and secretary of state. She was the first woman to win the nomination of either the Democratic or Republican Party, but lost her general election bid to Donald Trump.

### THE GLASS CEILING

In 1978, American writer Marilyn Loden described an invisible barrier that limited the ability of women to raise in organizations to high positions of power. This was nothing new. Women were keenly aware that men dominated leadership positions in politics, business, education and the military. In her speech, Loden coined the term the **glass ceiling** to describe this reality.

Despite major changes over the past few decades, the glass ceiling has persisted. As of 2014, only 5% of major companies were led by female CEOs. This trend persists in lower ranks as well. Far more men serve as directors and managers in American companies. In general in the workforce, women are at a disadvantage. In 2018 women earned 78¢ for every \$1.00 earned by men. In identical jobs, women earned 98¢ for every \$1.00 earned by men.



**Glass Ceiling:** Idea that women can be promoted in business, the military, or politics but can never rise to the highest levels. The phrase was first coined in 1978.

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Part of the reason for this is the penalty people pay for gaps in work. For both men and women, not working for periods of time, even for a few months, usually means starting again at a lower pay scale. However, since women are much more likely to have gaps in their working life to take care of children or aging parents, they disproportionately pay this penalty.

In politics, women are still underrepresented as well. Although **Hillary Clinton** won the democratic primary in 2016 and became the first woman to head a major party ticket, she lost to Donald Trump in the general election. Unlike many of the world's other advanced nations, the United States has never had a female president. In Congress in 2018, 23% of senators are women and in the House of Representatives, only 19% are women. On the Supreme Court, there are currently three women out of nine. For 192 years, a Supreme Court that was made up exclusively of men made the most important judicial decisions in America. Finally in 1981, **Sandra Day O'Connor** was appointed by President Reagan. Since then, three other women have served on the Court.



**Hillary Clinton:** Former senator, secretary of state and first lady who ran for president in 2008 and 2016. She lost the primary in 2008 and the general election in 2016, but was the first woman to be nominated for president by one of the two major political parties.

**Sandra Day O'Connor:** First woman to serve on the Supreme Court.

### Primary Source: Photograph

From left to right: Sandra Day O'Connor, Sonia Sotomayor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Elena Kagan, the four women to serve as justices on the Supreme Court.

### WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

The role that women have played in the armed forces has changed over America's history, most rapidly in the past few decades. For most of America's history, combat was a role reserved for men. There were a few notable exceptions. The first female American soldier was Deborah Sampson of Massachusetts who enlisted as a Continental Army under the name of Robert Shurtliff. She served for three years in the Revolutionary War and was wounded twice, and cut a musket ball out of her own thigh so no doctor would find out she was a woman. In another case of hidden identity, Sarah Rosetta Wakeman enlisted under the alias Lyons Wakeman in the Civil War. These women, brave as they might have been, did not significantly change the role women played in the armed forces. Generally,

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women served as cooks, cleaners and nurses who followed the armies, but did not see combat.

Perhaps the first time that a woman openly advocated for the chance to go into combat, was in 1898 at the cusp of the Spanish-American War. Annie Oakley, the hero of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show wrote a letter to President McKinley in which she offered "the government the services of a company of 50 'lady sharpshooters' who would provide their own arms and ammunition should war break out with Spain." The Spanish-American War did occur, but Oakley's offer was not accepted.

Women began taking on roles traditionally held by men for the first time during World War I. The first American women enlisted into the regular armed forces were 13,000 women admitted into active duty in the Navy and Marines, and a much smaller number admitted into the Coast Guard. The Yeoman recruits and women Marines primarily served in clerical positions, but they received the same benefits as men, including identical pay, and were considered veterans after the war.

In 1941, women again found that opportunities were opening up that had been closed before. There were 350,000 American women who served during World War II in the army and navy, as well as countless women who served in civilian capacities replacing men who were in uniform. During the war, women served in separate, female-only units, but in 1948, President Truman signed the Women's Armed Services Act, allowing women to serve in the armed forces in fully integrated units during peacetime.

Women again served in Korea and Vietnam, but as before, they were only allowed to play supporting roles. Women were nurses, clerks, telephone operators and sometimes transport pilots, but were never assigned to jobs in which combat was an expectation, and they had few opportunities to advance into the upper ranks.

That began to change in the 1970s. In 1976, the United States Air Force Academy, United States Coast Guard Academy, United States Military Academy at West Point and the United States Naval Academy became coeducational and women were able to join the same pathway as their male peers toward becoming officers. In 1996, women won admission to the Virginia Military Institute when the Supreme Court declared in *United States v. Virginia* that the school could not discriminate against women if it wanted to maintain its status as a premier military academy with direct connections to the army. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, wrote in the court's opinion that VMI could not deny "to women, simply because they are women, full citizenship stature—equal opportunity to aspire, achieve, participate in and contribute to society."

Prohibitions against women in combat also began to crumble. The 1991 Persian Gulf War proved to be the pivotal time for the role of women in the armed forces. Over 40,000 women served in almost every role the armed

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forces had to offer. However, while many came under fire, they were not permitted to participate in deliberate ground engagements. Despite this, there are many reports of women engaging enemy forces during the conflict.

During the Iraq War and the Afghanistan War of the 2000s, more than two hundred thousand women served, of which 152 lost their lives. Finally, women had the opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism, valor and abilities and in 2008, Ann Dunwoody became the first female four-star general in the Army. In 2012, Janet Wolfenbarger became the first female four-star general in the Air Force and Michelle Howard began her assignment as the Navy's first female, and first African American female, four-star admiral in 2014.



Primary Source: Photograph

Female pilots in the Air Force behind the F-15 fighter jets that they fly. As of 2015, women are permitted in all roles within the armed forces.

In December 2015, Defense Secretary Ash Carter stated that beginning in 2016 all combat jobs would open to women. Thus, 241 years after the outbreak of the American Revolution, women had finally gained full access to the armed forces.

It is hard to make the argument that new wave feminism was responsible for changing the role of women in the military since this was an evolution rather than a revolution. Additionally, full inclusion did not occur until decades after the protests of the 1960s and 1970, so it is a stretch to claim some direct cause and effect relationship between new wave feminism and gender parity in the armed forces. However, it is significant to note that the 1970s marked the turning point in which women began to take on combat and leadership positions. It might not have been the work of the feminist activists themselves that caused this change, but the evidence does show that changing attitudes in society were reflected in military policy.

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### CONCLUSION

New wave feminism radically changed the face of American culture, leading to major shifts in public acceptance of birth control, the availability of abortion, divorce law, and widespread integration of women into sports activities, the military and the workplace.

The advocates of women's rights in the 1970s did not gain all that they had hoped for. They tried and failed to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution. But, like the many feminists who worked in the centuries before them and persisted in the face of disappointments, they have pressed on. Due to their continued efforts, it is no longer inconceivable that a woman might lead a major corporation, play professional sports or be elected president.

Since the history of inequality between genders in America is long and continues to evolve, the end of this chapter remains unwritten.

What do you think? Can men and women ever be equal?

## 5 CAN MEN AND WOMEN BE EQUAL?

### SUMMARY

Women have been fighting for equal rights since before the United States existed. In the early 1800s, women met at the Seneca Falls Convention and started working for the right to vote. However, at the same time the industrial revolution gave rise to the Cult of Domesticity, which established different roles for men and women in society. Women were supposed to stay at home to cook, clean, and care for children. Women finally won the right to vote in 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment.

In the 1960s, Second Wave Feminism started with the publication of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique*. She criticized the Cult of Domesticity and challenged the idea that women should be happy as homemakers and mothers.

Laws such as the Civil Rights Act and Equal Pay Act gave women more rights. The National Organization for Women (NOW) started working to pass a constitutional amendment to guarantee women equal rights. The Equal Rights Act (ERA) was never ratified because Phyllis Schlafly organized a movement to stop it. She argued that equal rights would hurt women.

Some radical feminists demonstrated by burning bras or protesting at the Miss America Pageant.

A major change for women in the 1950s was the legalization of birth control. This helped contribute to the sexual revolution of the counterculture and made sex outside of marriage much more common.

The legalization of abortion with the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling in 1973 was another major turning point for women. Abortion is still controversial and pro-life and pro-choice organizations and politicians continue to fight about it.

In the 1960s and 1970s, divorce laws changed so that women could divorce and maintain control of property and child custody. This greatly increased the rates of divorce since women could escape bad relationships and not have to leave their children or be cast into poverty.

Title IX guaranteed equal opportunities for girls in schools that received federal funding. This led to an increase in school sports for girls.

The glass ceiling is an imaginary boundary women cannot pass in government and politics. So far, no woman has ever been president, only four have been on the Supreme Court, and few have ever been company CEOs.

Women can now serve in any role in the armed forces, but this is a recent change. The role women played in the 1991 Persian Gulf War helped break down these barriers.



## KEY IDEAS

**Cult of Domesticity:** Idea popularized in the early 1800s with the onset of the Industrial Revolution that certain tasks and issues were appropriate for women. These did not include work outside the home or politics. This has also been called the Women's Sphere.

**Sexism:** Prejudice or discrimination against a person because of his or her gender. It was a word that first became common during the feminist movement of the 1970s.

**Pro-Life:** Being opposed to abortion.

**Pro-Choice:** Being in favor of legalized abortion.

**Litmus Test:** A position that a candidate must take in order to receive support from a group of voters. A candidate's position on abortion is often a make-or-break factor in American politics.

**Glass Ceiling:** Idea that women can be promoted in business, the military, or politics but can never rise to the highest levels. The phrase was first coined in 1978.



## LAWS & POLICIES

**19th Amendment:** Constitutional amendment ratified in 1920 granting women the right to vote.

**Equal Pay Act of 1964:** Law passed in 1964 which promised women the same pay men received for the same work.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964:** Law passed in 1964 that was designed to provide equal rights for African Americans (and all races) in public places. It also included protection for women.

**Maternity Leave:** Paid time off from work for women in order to care for newborn children.

**Equal Rights Amendment (ERA):** Constitutional amendment that would guarantee equal treatment under the law for women. It was passed by Congress and multiple states in the 1970s, but never ratified by enough states to become law.

**Right-to-Life Amendment:** Proposed constitutional amendment that would make abortion illegal. The proposal has not passed in Congress.

**Hyde Amendment:** 1976 law that prohibits the use of tax money to pay for abortion. This means that Medicaid cannot cover abortions.

**No-Fault Divorce:** A law that allows couples to file for divorce without giving a reason. First passed in 1967, these laws make divorce much easier to obtain and consequently, more common.

**Title IX:** Addition to the 1964 Civil Rights Act that guaranteed equal access for girls. One major consequence has been the funding of girls athletics in high schools and colleges.



## PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Abigail Adams:** Wife of the second president. She is remembered as an early champion for women's rights.

**Betty Friedan:** Feminist in the 1960s who wrote *The Feminine Mystique* criticizing the traditional role of women. Her book launched the feminist movement of the 1970s. She founded NOW.

**Gloria Steinem:** Feminist who founded *Ms Magazine* in 1972.

**Germaine Greer:** Australian professor who wrote about the traditional role of women in society. Instead of celebrating motherhood and femininity, she portrayed these roles as traps women were forced into.

**National Organization for Women (NOW):** Organization founded by Betty Friedan to promote women's rights.

**Alice Paul:** Advocate for women's suffrage in the early 1900s. She founded the National Women's Party and used more aggressive tactics to publicize the movement. In her later life she promoted the Equal Rights Amendment.

**Phyllis Schlafly:** Women who worked against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. She argued that the law would result in undesirable changes for women.

**Margaret Sanger:** Champion of birth control in the early 1900s.

**National Right to Life Committee:** Organization dedicated to reversing the *Roe v. Wade* decision and making abortion illegal.

**National Abortion Rights Action League:** Organization dedicated to making sure abortion remains legal.

**Planned Parenthood:** Organization that provides healthcare services to women including abortions. They are often the focus of anti-abortion protests.

**Hillary Clinton:** Former senator, secretary of state and first lady who ran for president in 2008 and 2016. She lost the primary in 2008 and the general election in 2016, but was the first woman to be nominated for president by one of the two major political parties.

**Sandra Day O'Connor:** First woman to serve on the Supreme Court.



## EVENTS

**Seneca Falls Convention:** The first major meeting of women's rights advocates in America, which occurred in New York in 1848.

**Second Wave Feminism:** A time period in the 1970s when women were actively promoting their rights. The time period included the *Roe v. Wade* case, legalization of birth control, as

well as failed push to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.

**Miss America Pageant:** Beauty contest that become the target of feminist protesters in the 1970s who argued that it, and other contests like it, promoted the objectification of women. They crowned a sheep in protest.

**Bra Burning:** Form of protest popularized by feminists in the 1960s and 1970s who wanted to demonstrate their rejection of traditional gender rules.



## COURT CASES

**Griswold v. Connecticut:** 1965 Supreme Court case legalizing birth control.

**Eisenstadt v. Baird:** 1972 Supreme Court case that made it legal for unmarried minors to purchase birth control.

**Roe v. Wade:** 1973 Supreme Court case that legalized abortion in the first trimester of a pregnancy, and permitted some restrictions on abortions in the second and third trimesters. It remains one of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions.

**Kirchberg v. Feenstra:** 1981 Supreme Court case that outlawed masterly laws which had granted all joint property to husbands in divorce.



## SCIENCE

**Birth Control:** Any form of contraception. The term was coined by Margaret Sanger.

**Birth Control Pill:** Oral form of contraception first approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1960. The widespread availability of this form of contraception helped fuel the sexual revolution in the 1960s.

**Abortion:** Medical procedure to end a pregnancy by choice.



## LETTERS & BOOKS

**"Remember the Ladies!":** Quote from one of Abigail Adams' letters to John Adams during the debate over the Declaration of Independence in which she urged him to consider women's rights in the establishment of the nation.

**The Feminine Mystique:** Book by Betty Friedan critical of the role of women in society. The book helped spark the feminist movement of the 1970s.

# 6

## S I X T H Q U E S T I O N WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

**WAS THE SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION  
ACTUALLY  
REVOLUTIONARY?**

### INTRODUCTION

In 1980, confidence in the American economy and government hit rock bottom. Looking for a change and the promise of a better future, voters turned to Ronald Reagan for answers. Reagan was a good communicator. He was funny and offered an optimistic vision for America. However, his election was a result of more than just his engaging personality and outlook.

Reagan was the first president who was supported by what became known as the New Right, a group of people who had very different beliefs about America and its government. Their message was clear. Government had become too big. Taxes were high and needed to be cut to stimulate growth and investment. Government programs that had been part of the New Deal and Great Society needed to be trimmed down to size. Hippies, women's rights advocates, teenagers engaged in premarital sex, lewd music and abortion rights supporters were ruining America's moral character. Military spending needed to be increased to fix the degenerating state of the American war machine. The United States was still the largest superpower in the world with the best system of government and it was time to go back to the days when America was respected in the world and Americans showed some respect for themselves.

These sentiments were felt by many in 1980. But what gave them the power to override older ideas? The New Deal and Great Society had been enormously popular. Programs like Social Security, Medicare and Welfare were all popular. People had been enthusiastic about the Civil Rights Movement and had wanted change during the 1960s and 1970s. Why did they turn their back on those feelings?

Could it have been the economy? Perhaps it was that reformers had tried to make too many changes too quickly. Or, perhaps Reagan and his supporters were simply better leaders and did a better job of selling their point of view in the marketplace of ideas.

What do you think? Why did America turn away from liberalism?

### THE NEW RIGHT

To understand the move from liberalism to conservatism it is important to understand what these two terms mean and the other names people use to describe them.

When looking at the world, and government especially, some people see problems and think that everyone should join together to use their collective power to make change. These people are **liberals**, and in their view, the best way to join together is through the power of government. For example, President Lyndon B. Johnson decided that poverty was a problem Americans could solve. To do this, he increased taxes and then used the money for programs like college loans and welfare. By paying taxes, everyone contributed to working toward a solution that no one could have solved individually. Because these ideas require the government to be involved in people's lives and to take more of Americans' money, the liberal approach is called **big government**. In the past century, Democrats have been the liberal party. Another way to describe them is to say that they are on the **left**. Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and Barack Obama's stimulus are two other examples of liberal, big government, left wing solutions in action.

An entirely different approach is conservatism. **Conservatives** think that people know best what to do with their money and that they will make good choices about saving and spending because the money is their own. When government takes their money in taxes, politicians and bureaucrats have less incentive to spend wisely because the money is not really theirs. Conservatives fear that America's wealth is wasted by big government schemes. They want fewer taxes and less regulation of business. Big government takes away their freedom by taking away the fruits of their labor. Why should a person work hard, they ask, if politicians are going to force them to give away their profits in high taxes? For this reason, conservatives believe in **small government**, and are on the **right** politically. Republicans have been the conservative party in the past century. Some examples were presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover in the 1920s, as well as Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush and his son George W. Bush.

Liberals tend to embrace change in society. Social movements like the Civil Rights Movements, the women's movements, campaigns to fight poverty, and so on are often supported by liberals. Conservatives usually prefer less change, especially when government is involved in forcing people to accept change such as in the case of affirmative action or Title IX.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt won the presidency and initiated the New Deal in 1932, American as a whole embraced liberalism. They wanted change and wanted government to make that change happen. Since then, Democrats had been in the White House for 22 years, and Republicans for only 16. And those Republicans – Eisenhower, Nixon and Ford – were not particularly conservative.

✓ **Liberal:** People who see change as a positive and like the idea of using the government as a way to implement large-scale changes. In modern times, the Democrats represent this political idea.

✓ **Big Government:** The idea that the government should collect more taxes and do many things. This is a liberal idea.

✓ **Left:** In terms of politics, being on this side means a person is liberal.

✓ **Conservative:** People who are skeptical of change. They do not want government to be involved in peoples' lives any more than necessary. In modern times, the Republicans represent this political idea.

✓ **Small Government:** The idea that the government should only do what people cannot do on their own. This is a conservative idea.

✓ **Right:** In terms of politics, being on this side means a person is conservative.

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But in the 1960s and 1970s liberals seemed to have gone too far. Americans were getting fed up with high taxes. Some people were frightened by how fast the world around them was changing. As the Silent Majority had shown in 1968, most Americans did not like the excesses on the left. Hippies, peace marchers, strikers, and bra burners seemed like troublemakers more than problem solvers.

The first Republican to forcefully advocate for a shift back to conservative government was Senator **Barry Goldwater**. He based his 1964 presidential campaign on the premise that the New Deal should be reversed. He declared that big government was the greatest threat to American liberty. Social spending and welfare, he said, needed to be cut to reduce the tax burden on individuals and families. Government regulations were inhibiting economic growth and personal freedoms. Of course, 1964 was only a year after John F. Kennedy had been assassinated. Lyndon Johnson was riding a wave of popularity and had just initiated his War on Poverty. Americans were still excited about change in 1964 and Johnson won the election easily. Goldwater was too soon.

When foreign competition made inroads against American corporations in the 1970s, some people began to believe Goldwater had been right. Leaders of big business began wielding their financial resources to support politicians in the **New Right**.



### THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Launched in 1973 with a contribution from Joseph Coors of Coors Brewing Company and support from a variety of corporations and conservative foundations, the **Heritage Foundation** sought to counteract what conservatives believed to be Richard Nixon's acceptance of a liberal consensus on too many issues. In producing its policy position papers and



**Barry Goldwater:** Republican senator from Arizona who ran for president in 1964 but lost. He was the first to promote conservative principles that would become known as the New Right.



**New Right:** A shift in the Republican Party that occurred between the 1960s and 1980s. It promoted strict conservative ideas and was a reaction to the strong liberal political atmosphere of the Great Society.

#### Primary Source: Photograph

William Buckley and President Ronald Reagan in the Oval Office of the White House. Buckley was a strong advocate for conservative ideas and as one of the Right's intellectuals and editor of the magazine *National Review*, helped define what it meant to be a conservative in the 1980s.



**Heritage Foundation:** Think tank that promotes conservative policies and laws.

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political recommendations to Republican candidates and politicians, it helped contribute to a change in the way Americans thought about conservatism. Adding to the chorus of new conservative thinkers was **William Buckley** who edited National Review, a magazine that championed conservative ideas.

Part of their work was to glorify what it deemed to be traditional values, seemingly threatened by the expansion of political and personal freedoms. A criticism of their work is that they sanitized the negative aspects of the past. By ignoring problems like Jim Crow racism, they were able to make people more nostalgic for the good old days of the 1920s and 1950s when government was small, life was pure and simple, and business was booming.

When Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, his administration looked favorably on the recommendations made by the Heritage Foundation and recruited several of its thinkers to serve in the White House. The Foundation continues to advocate for conservative ideas today.

### THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT

In the 1970s, the conservative movement was joined by another powerful force in American society, the **religious right**. Religious leaders had long been involved in politics. Most notably, fundamentalists had worked to keep the teachings of Charles Darwin out of public schools. The Scopes Trial of 1925 sensationalized their efforts, and now they flexed their political muscle again.

The Christian Right had many faces. Fundamentalists such as Jerry Falwell believed in a literal interpretation of the Bible the same way that William Jennings Bryan had. Pentacostalists such as Pat Robertson claimed the Holy Spirit communicated directly with people on a regular basis.

Despite theological divisions, all evangelical leaders agreed that America was experiencing a moral decline. They preached that homosexuality was a crime against God, and that a woman's place was in the home in support of her family. They criticized what they believed was a **liberal media** such as newspapers, television companies and recording studios for corrupting America's youth by glorifying drug use, premarital sex, and radicalism. They chided the courts for taking religion out of the public schools and supported private Christian academies and homeschooling as alternatives.

Many Catholic Americans agreed with the sentiments of the New Right. A reforming spirit had also swept through the Catholic Church during the 1960s and reached its high water mark at a convention called **Vatican II**. At that meeting of the world's Catholic leaders, Latin was dropped as a requirement for the mass. Lay people were given a greater role in Church services. Support was given for outreach to other Christian denominations and Jewish synagogues. Conservatives worried that Catholic traditions that had been



**William Buckley:** Founder and editor of National Review. He and his magazine championed conservative ideas.



**Religious Right:** A coalition of Christian religious organizations begun in the 1970s that promote conservative ideas and candidates.



**Liberal Media:** The idea that the news media, including television, newspaper, and radio news outlets promote liberal ideas. A few news outlets have been established to provide a conservative alternative to this supposed bias. A reasonable reader of the news can see that some different outlets have a conservative or liberal bias.



**Vatican II:** Meeting of Catholic leaders between 1962 and 1965. It resulted in major changes to Catholic practice including changing the language of daily mass from Latin to local languages.

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around for centuries were being swept away by liberals who did not care about biblical truths or morality.

New Right leaders were highly organized and understood the potential of mass telecommunications. Although they were conservative, they were not old fashioned. **Pat Robertson** formed the Christian Broadcasting Network to send his message. Like the traveling preachers of the Second Great Awakening in the early 1800s, the Praise the Lord Club led by Jim Bakker transmitted faith healing and raucous religious revival to the largest viewing audience of any daily program in the world. They built massive databases containing the names and addresses of potential financial contributors and regularly solicited funds. In 1979, **Jerry Falwell** formed the **Moral Majority**. This group and hundreds of others raised money to defeat liberal senators, representatives, and governors. They sought to control school boards on the local level to advance their conservative agenda. Ronald Reagan freely accepted contributions from the New Right on his way to the Presidency in 1980. The voters who followed the lead of Robertson and Falwell and based their decisions on election day on which candidate best represented their beliefs about morality came to be known as **values voters**. For them, a candidate's views on social issues were more important than his or her economic or foreign policy ideas.



**Pat Robertson:** Founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network and champion of the Religious Right.



**Jerry Falwell:** Champion of the Religious Right who founded the Moral Majority in 1979 to promote conservative candidates.



**Moral Majority:** Organization founded in 1979 by Jerry Falwell to promote conservative candidates and policies.



**Values Voters:** People who make decisions about who they will vote for based on the candidates' positions on social issues such as abortion or prayer in schools.

### Primary Source: Voter's Guide

This voter's guide from the 2012 election was produced by South Dakota Right to Life, and anti-abortion group, and mailed to registered voters. It is a good example of how organizations have sought to activate values voters to go to the polls on election day with specific moral concerns in mind.

 <p><b>Barack Obama (D-I)</b>          •"I am pro-choice. I believe in <i>Roe v. Wade</i>."          •"With one more vacancy on the court, we could be looking at a majority hostile to a woman's right to choose for the first time since <i>Roe v. Wade</i>, and that is what is at stake in this election."</p>	<b>U.S. President</b>	 <p><b>Mitt Romney (R)</b>          •"I support the reversal of <i>Roe v. Wade</i> because it is bad law and bad medicine."          •"I will support efforts to prohibit federal funding for any organization like Planned Parenthood, which primarily performs abortions or offers abortion-related services."</p>
<p>•Three days into office he nullified the pro-life "Mexico City Policy," which banned federal funding of abortions through foreign aid.</p> <p>•The White House issued a statement attacking the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act (H.R. 3): "If the President is presented with H.R. 3, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill."</p> <p>•On March 23, 2010, he signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare) into law, which will provide funding for health plans that pay for abortion on demand, and will lead to the rationing of lifesaving medical treatments.</p> <p>•The Obama Administration issued a "final rule" mandating that religious schools and hospitals provide health insurance that covers certain drugs or procedures, even if it violates their religious and moral convictions.</p>	<p>•"I support the Hyde Amendment, which broadly bars the use of federal funds for abortions."</p> <p>•"Obamacare will violate that crucial first principle of medicine: 'do no harm.'"</p> <p>•"... on day one I will eliminate the Obama Administration rule that compels religious institutions to violate the tenets of their own faith. Such rules don't belong in the America that I believe in."</p> <p>"On pro-life issues, Mitt Romney and Barack Obama provide a stark contrast. As the country's most pro-abortion president, Barack Obama has pursued a radical pro-abortion agenda. It is now time for pro-life Americans to unite behind Mitt Romney. For the sake of unborn children, the disabled, and the elderly, we must win." -National Right to Life President Carol Tobias</p>	
 <p><b>Matt Varilek (D)</b>          •"I believe that in early stages of pregnancy this painful decision should remain with a woman and her family."          •First read: His rhetoric seems similar to Sandlin's. If elected, he would likely be in the pocket of the abortion industry just as much as she was.</p>	<b>U.S. Rep.</b>	 <p><b>Kristi Noem (R-I)</b>          •"I am, and always have been, pro-life. From the miracle of conception to a dignified death, life is precious and should be protected. The federal government has no business forcing taxpayers to pay for abortions. I'll maintain a 100% pro-life voting record."</p>

### THE REAGAN COALITION

Ronald Reagan was able to put together a new coalition of voters, many of whom had never supported a republican for president.

Working Americans were frightened by unemployment rates nearing double digits. Inflation was pushing the middle class into tax brackets previously reserved for the affluent classes. Simply having more dollars did not make them richer since inflation also was decreasing the buying power of those dollars. Reagan promised to reduce their level of misery with sound fiscal policy and a tax cut.

Southerners disgruntled by affirmative action and busing found friendly ears in the Reagan campaign and he effectively continued the Nixon Southern Strategy and courted White Southerners.

For decades, Catholics had been the targets of discrimination but were protected by democratic mayors and New Dealers. Ultimately, their place in the Democratic Party was cemented when John F. Kennedy, the nation's first (and so far only) Catholic president was elected in 1960. However, in 1980, many Catholics started voting Republican when Reagan promised to oppose abortion and promote family values.

Although the women's movement was in full swing in the 1970s and it would seem odd for women to support a conservative for president, Reagan also won their support. Reagan believed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution was sufficient protection for women against discrimination. Once in office as governor of California, he had taken a mostly neutral position, neither supporting nor working against the ERA. This middle position did not appear to hurt him at the polls. He attracted a significant number of votes from women in 1980, and in 1984, he polled 56% of the women's vote compared to 44% for the Democratic ticket of Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro, the first female candidate for vice president from a major party.

City dwellers concerned with rising crime looked to Reagan for comfort as he portrayed himself as the **law and order candidate**. Americans across demographic lines were warmed by his promises for a stronger America domestically and overseas.

Perhaps most surprising of all, some former members of the counterculture who were now young adults with careers and growing families supported Reagan. The 1960s and 1970s had been the era of the hippie, but Newsweek magazine declared 1984 the "year of the Yuppie." **Yuppies**, whose name derived from young, urban professionals, were akin to hippies in being young people whose interests, values, and lifestyle influenced American culture, economy, and politics, just as the hippies had done. Unlike hippies, however, yuppies were materialistic and obsessed with image, comfort, and economic



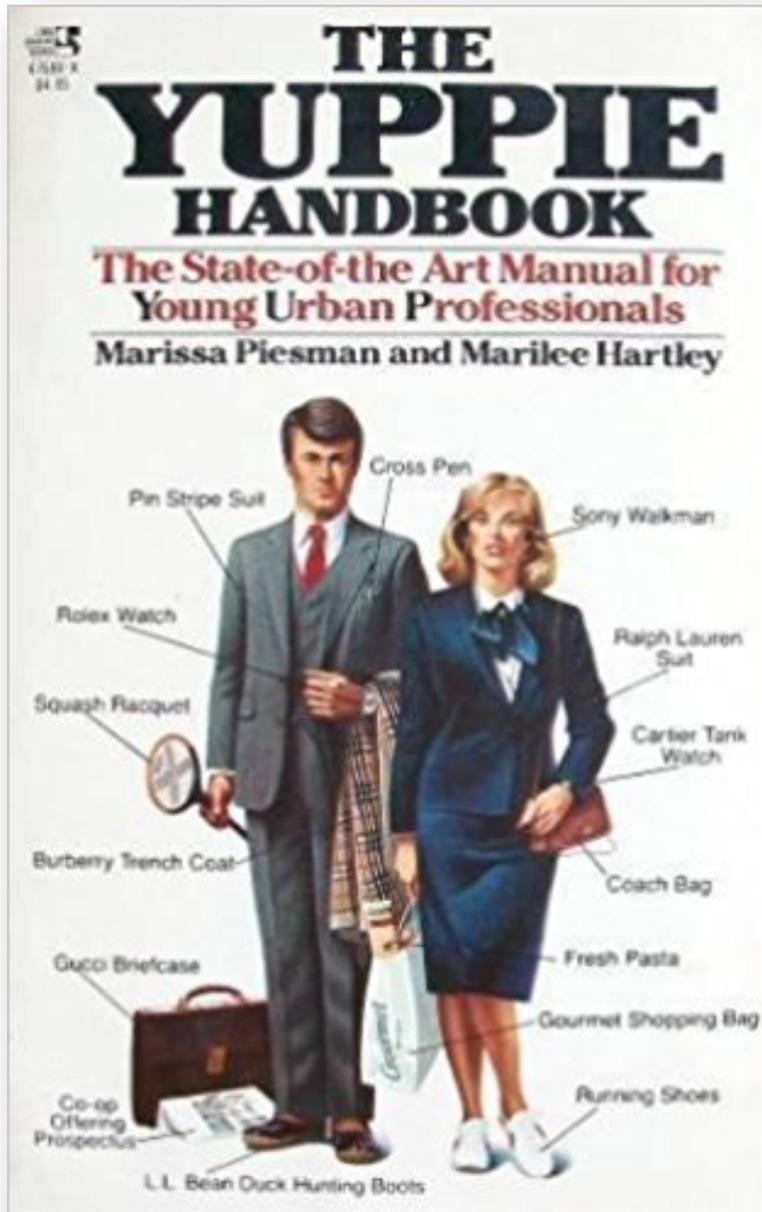
**Law and Order Candidate:** A candidate who promotes strict law enforcement and promises lower crime rates.



**Yuppie:** Young materialist people obsessed with their image, comfort and economic prosperity during the 1980s. The name is short for young, urban professional.

## 6 WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

prosperity. Although liberal on some social issues, economically they were conservative.



Primary Source: Book Cover

It's hard to know whether or not this book was meant to be taken seriously or as satire. In either case, it gives us the historians a good description of the Yuppie of the 1980s. These members of the Baby Boomer Generation had grown up, started families, and started voting for Republicans.

By taking traditional republican voters and adding these former democratic groups, Reagan formed a potent new coalition. The so-called **Reagan Democrats** crumbled the old alignment. Jimmy Carter, his opponent in the 1980 election, never stood a chance.



**Reagan Democrats:** Voters who had supported Democrats in the 1960s and 1970s but chose to vote for Ronald Reagan in 1980. Some of these voters included Catholics, values voters, and White working-class voters.

## 6 WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

Voter turnout reflected this new conservative swing, which not only swept Reagan into the White House but created a Republican majority in the Senate. Only 52 percent of eligible voters went to the polls in 1980, the lowest turnout for a presidential election since 1948. Those who did cast a ballot were older, whiter, and wealthier than those who did not. Strong support among White voters, those over forty-five years of age, and voters with incomes over \$50,000 proved crucial for Reagan's victory. Since 1980, Republicans have relied on this same coalition.

### REAGANOMICS

Reagan's primary goal upon taking office was to stimulate the sagging economy while simultaneously cutting both government programs and taxes. In an easy-to-remember phrase, he said during his first inaugural address, "**government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.**"

His economic policies, called **Reaganomics** by the press, were based on a theory called **supply-side economics**, about which many economists were skeptical. Influenced by economist Arthur Laffer of the University of Southern California, Reagan cut income taxes for those at the top of the economic ladder, which they expected to motivate the rich to invest in businesses, factories, and the stock market in anticipation of high returns. According to Laffer's argument, this would eventually translate into more jobs further down the socioeconomic ladder. Economic growth would also increase the total tax revenue, even at a lower tax rate. In other words, proponents of **trickledown economics** promised to cut taxes and balance the budget at the same time. Reaganomics also included the deregulation of industry to encourage growth and higher interest rates to control inflation, which were already underway when Reagan took office.

Many politicians, including Republicans, were wary of Reagan's economic program. Even his eventual vice president, George H. W. Bush, had referred to it as **voodoo economics** when competing with him for the Republican presidential nomination. When Reagan proposed a 30% cut in taxes to be phased in over his first term in office, Congress balked. Opponents argued that the tax cuts would benefit the rich and not the poor, who needed help the most. In response, Reagan presented his plan directly to the people.

Often called **The Great Communicator**, he was noted for his ability, honed through years as an actor and spokesperson, to convey a mixture of folksy wisdom, empathy, and concern while taking humorous digs at his opponents. Indeed, listening to Reagan speak often felt like hearing a favorite uncle recall stories about the good old days before big government, expensive social programs, and greedy politicians destroyed the country. Americans found this rhetorical style extremely compelling. Public support for Reagan's plans, combined with a surge in the president's popularity after he survived an assassination attempt in March 1981, gave Reagan the



**Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem:**

Famous quote from Ronald Reagan's inaugural address that captures his ideas about the size of government.



**Reaganomics**: Nickname for President Reagan's economic policies. He wanted lower taxes on the wealthy and lower regulations on business.



**Supply-side Economics**: Idea that the best way to promote economic growth is to lower taxes and reduce regulations on business so that business will produce more.



**Trickledown Economics**: The idea that reducing taxes on the wealthy would eventually benefit everyone since the upper classes would use the extra money to hire workers or make purchases that would pass the money down through the economy.



**Voodoo Economics**: Nickname for Ronald Reagan's economic policies. Coined by George H. W. Bush, it criticized the idea that tax breaks for the wealthy would every benefit the middle or lower classes.



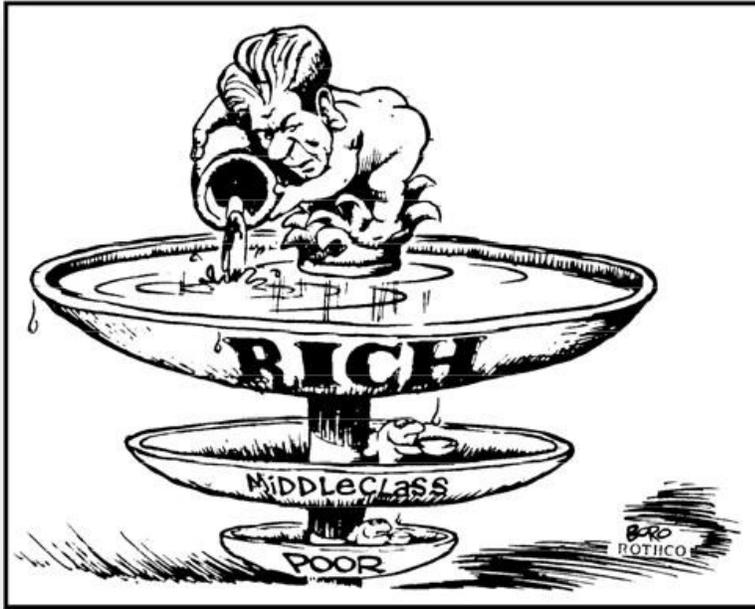
**The Great Communicator**: Nickname for Ronald Reagan that referenced his easygoing manner and ability to share his ideas. He was good at jokes and had been an actor and spokesman for General Electric before becoming president.



**Economic Recovery Tax Act**: 1981 law that reduced the overall tax rate to 25% over three years. It was the centerpiece of Ronald Reagan's economic policy.

## 6 WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

support he needed to enact his conservative agenda into law. On July 29, 1981, Congress passed the **Economic Recovery Tax Act**, which phased in a 25% overall reduction in taxes over three years.



Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

This cartoon criticizes Ronald Reagan's economic policies by emphasizing the idea that tax breaks for the rich will not trickle down to the middle and lower classes as he had promised.

### SPENDING

Reagan was successful at cutting taxes, but he failed to reduce government spending. Although he had long warned about the dangers of big government, he created a new cabinet-level agency, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the number of federal employees increased during his time in office. He allocated a smaller share of the federal budget to antipoverty programs like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (welfare), food stamps, rent subsidies, job training programs, and Medicaid, but Social Security and Medicare entitlements, which benefited his supporters, were left largely untouched. Indeed, in 1983, Reagan agreed to a compromise with Democrats in Congress on an injection of funds to save Social Security, which included a payroll tax increase.

### DEREGULATION

Reagan was less flexible when it came to **deregulating** industry and weakening the power of labor unions. Banks and savings and loan associations were deregulated. Pollution control was enforced less strictly by the Environmental Protection Agency, and restrictions on logging and drilling for oil on public lands were relaxed. Proponents of the environmental movement were incensed and the position of the two parties in terms of environmental protection was further entrenched.



**Deregulation:** The process of reducing laws and rules on business. In theory, the cost of complying with such rules slows down business, so reducing them will improve the economy.

## 6 WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

Believing the free market was self-regulating, the Reagan administration had little use for labor unions, and in 1981 the president **fired twelve thousand federal air traffic controllers** who had gone on strike to secure better working conditions. His action effectively destroyed the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization and ushered in a new era of labor relations in which, following his example, employers simply replaced striking workers. The weakening of unions contributed to the leveling off of wages for the average American family during the 1980s.

### THE CULTURE WARS

The social and religious conservatives who supported Reagan felt emboldened during the 1980s and pressed their agenda. The resulting **culture wars**, have been raging since.



Perhaps no one has articulated this view quite as well as **Pat Buchanan**, a speechwriter for Nixon and later presidential candidate. In 1992, he told the Republican National Convention that, “There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself.” In addition to criticizing environmentalists and feminism, he portrayed public morality as a defining issue. “The agenda [Bill] Clinton and [Hillary] Clinton would impose on America – abortion on demand, a litmus test for the Supreme Court, homosexual rights, discrimination against religious schools, women in combat units - that’s change, all right. But it is not the kind of change America wants. It is not the kind of change America needs. And it is not the kind of change we can tolerate in a nation that we still call God’s country.”



**Firing of the Air Traffic Controllers:** 1981 action by Ronald Reagan that demonstrated a weakness of labor unions in the era of the New Right.



**Culture Wars:** Conflicts in the 1980s between social conservatives and liberals. They focused on such things as school prayer, women in the military, and explicit lyrics in music.

#### Primary Source: Photograph

Bands like Motley Crue were the focus of social conservatives such as Pat Buchanan who feared they were harming America’s children with both their lyrics and their lifestyle.



**Pat Buchanan:** Republican politician who championed conservative ideas. He had been a speechwriter for Richard Nixon and later ran in the Republican presidential primary in 1992.

## 6 WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

Buchanan's speech encapsulates the conservative view that preserving traditional values was synonymous with preserving America's greatness.

President Reagan was never a great social warrior the way Buchanan might have hoped, but during his presidency, concern over a decline in the country's moral values welled up on both sides of the political aisle. One battlefield of the conflict was the entertainment industry. In 1985, anxiety over the messages in popular music led to the founding of the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC), a bipartisan group formed by the wives of prominent Washington politicians including Susan Baker, the wife of Reagan's treasury secretary and Tipper Gore, the wife of then-senator Al Gore, who later became vice president under Bill Clinton. The goal of the PMRC was to limit the ability of children to listen to music with sexual or violent content. Its strategy was to convince the recording industry to adopt a voluntary rating system for music and recordings, similar to the Motion Picture Association of America's system for movies.

The organization also produced a list of particularly offensive recordings known as the filthy fifteen. By August 1985, nearly twenty record companies had agreed to put **labels on their recordings indicating explicit lyrics**, but the Senate took up the issue anyway. While many parents and a number of witnesses advocated labeling records, most of the music industry rejected them as censorship. Twisted Sister's Dee Snider and folk musician John Denver both advised Congress against the restrictions. In the end, the recording industry suggested a voluntary generic label, which is still in use today.

### JUDICIARY

Presidents have a great deal of power to influence the courts because they have the authority to appoint new federal judges, including members of the Supreme Court. Ronald Reagan generally advanced conservatism with his appointments. In his eight years as president, he was able to choose three Supreme Court justices, including the appointment of **William Rehnquist** as Chief Justice. By applying the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which reserves powers to the states that are not explicitly granted in the Constitution, he led to the Court in striking down laws that, in his interpretation of the Constitution, were examples of the government taking too much control away from the states.

Reagan also appointed **Antonin Scalia**, a strong advocate for a conservative interpretation of the Constitution. Scalia served for 30 years served as the anchor of the right wing of the Court. However, Reagan was not entirely opposed to making change. He appointed Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to the Supreme Court. O'Connor was a moderate who sometimes served as the Court's swing vote. Like O'Connor, Reagan's fourth appointment to the Court, **Anthony Kennedy** was often the deciding vote between the Court's four conservative and four liberal justices. When



#### Explicit Lyrics Warning Labels:

Warnings on music indicating that the lyrics contain profanity. They were first used in the 1980 as a result of the culture wars.



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## 6 WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

Kennedy retired in 2018, Republican President Trump nominated a conservative, Brett Kavanaugh to replace him, again shifting the Court to the right.

### CONCLUSION

A liberal approach to governing and solving society's problems prevailed in America from the days of the New Deal in the 1930s through the 1970s. By comparison, modern America is quite conservative. In the past few decades, fundamentalist Christians have exercised a powerful influence on elected officials, especially Republicans. Access to abortion has been limited. The Supreme Court dismantled major portions of the Voting Rights Act and a succession of Republican presidents have kept taxes low. Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 marked the point when Americans turned away from liberalism and embraced this more conservative outlook. But why did this happen?

Perhaps people blamed the struggling economy of the 1970s on liberals and decided to try conservative ideas instead. Maybe taxes had gotten too high. Perhaps it was because some liberals went too far and had tried to change society too radically with the counterculture, new wave feminism, and Great Society. Perhaps teenagers smoking marijuana were getting too high! Perhaps it was simply a matter of America correcting itself by moving to the right like a pendulum on a clock swinging back toward the center after decades of liberal leadership.

What do you think? Why did America turn away from liberalism?

## 6 WHY DID AMERICA TURN AWAY FROM LIBERALISM?

**WAS THE SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION  
ACTUALLY  
REVOLUTIONARY?**

### SUMMARY

The Great Society programs were examples of the liberal idea that government should do a lot to fix problems in society. Also during the 1960s, the counterculture was challenging traditional social norms. In the 1970s, Americans turned away from these liberal extremes and embraced ideas that are more conservative. This was the Conservative Revolution.

The first champions of conservative ideas were academics and Senator Barry Goldwater who lost his campaign for president in 1964. They started the New Right. In 1980, Ronald Reagan won the presidency. He was a champion of conservative ideas about taxes, government spending, and social norms.

Reagan was supported by traditional Republican voters as well as some former Democrats who were upset about high crime, the poor economy, and the counterculture.

Reagan promoted trickle-down economics. He wanted tax breaks for the wealthy and businesses. He believed this would create economic growth because businesses would have more to spend to hire workers and that eventually everyone would benefit. Reagan also cut government spending and regulation.

In the 1980s, culture wars raged. Social conservatives tried to censor music and promoted conservative candidates in elections.

Reagan nominated conservatives to the Supreme Court.



## KEY IDEAS

**Liberal:** People who see change as a positive and like the idea of using the government as a way to implement large-scale changes. In modern times, the Democrats represent this political idea.

**Big Government:** The idea that the government should collect more taxes and do many things. This is a liberal idea.

**Left:** In terms of politics, being on this side means a person is liberal.

**Conservative:** People who are skeptical of change. They do not want government to be involved in peoples' lives any more than necessary. In modern times, the Republicans represent this political idea.

**Small Government:** The idea that the government should only do what people cannot do on their own. This is a conservative idea.

**Right:** In terms of politics, being on this side means a person is conservative.

**New Right:** A shift in the Republican Party that occurred between the 1960s and 1980s. It promoted strict conservative ideas and was a reaction to the strong liberal political atmosphere of the Great Society.

**Religious Right:** A coalition of Christian religious organizations begun in the 1970s that promote conservative ideas and candidates.

**Liberal Media:** The idea that the news media, including television, newspaper, and radio news outlets promote liberal ideas. A few news outlets have been established to provide a conservative alternative to this supposed bias. A reasonable reader of the news can see that some different outlets have a conservative or liberal bias.



## THE ARTS

**Explicit Lyrics Warning Labels:** Warnings on music indicating that the lyrics contain profanity. They were first used in the 1980 as a result of the culture wars.



## SPEECHES

**Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem:** Famous quote from Ronald Reagan's inaugural address that captures his ideas about the size of government.



## ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

**Reaganomics:** Nickname for President Reagan's economic policies. He wanted lower taxes on the wealthy and lower regulations on business.

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## LAWS

**Economic Recovery Tax Act:** 1981 law that reduced the overall tax rate to 25% over three years. It was the centerpiece of Ronald Reagan's economic policy.



## EVENTS

**Vatican II:** Meeting of Catholic leaders between 1962 and 1965. It resulted in major changes to Catholic practice including changing the language of daily mass from Latin to local languages.

**Culture Wars:** Conflicts in the 1980s between social conservatives and liberals. They focused on such things as school prayer, women in the military, and explicit lyrics in music.

**Firing of the Air Traffic Controllers:** 1981 action by Ronald Reagan that demonstrated a weakness of labor unions in the era of the New Right.



## PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Barry Goldwater:** Republican senator from Arizona who ran for president in 1964 but lost. He was the first to promote conservative principles that would become known as the New Right.

**Heritage Foundation:** Think tank that promotes conservative policies and laws.

**William Buckley:** Founder and editor of National Review. He and his magazine championed conservative ideas.

**Pat Robertson:** Founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network and champion of the Religious Right.

**Jerry Falwell:** Champion of the Religious Right who founded the Moral Majority in 1979 to promote conservative candidates.

**Moral Majority:** Organization founded in 1979 by Jerry Falwell to promote conservative candidates and policies.

**Values Voters:** People who make decisions about who they will vote for based on the candidates' positions on social issues such as abortion or prayer in schools.

**Law and Order Candidate:** A candidate who promotes strict law enforcement and promises lower crime rates.

**Yuppie:** Young materialist people obsessed with their image, comfort and economic prosperity during the 1980s. The name is short for young, urban professional.

**Reagan Democrats:** Voters who had supported Democrats in the 1960s and 1970s but chose to vote for Ronald Reagan in 1980. Some of these voters included Catholics, values voters, and White working-class voters.

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## QUESTION SEVENTEEN

# WAS THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

# ACTUALLY REVOLUTIONARY?

The 1950s are remembered as one of the most conservative decades in the past century. A republican was in the White House. Conformity was the norm. Underneath the veneer of peaceful sameness, however, an eagerness for change was brewing, and by the time the Baby Boomers who had behaved so nicely as schoolchildren in the 50s left home for college in the 60s, Americans were falling over themselves to remake their nation. The Civil Rights Movement was making headlines. Democratic presidents were expanding government in an effort to go to the Moon, create a Great Society and save the Earth. As the Social Revolution unfolded, liberals broke down rules about music, marriage, sex, gender, and drugs.

By the end of the 60s, they had gone too far. Musical innovators overdosed on drugs. Government had grown too much. High taxes and the war in Vietnam combined with economic problems in the 70s and dampened everyone's spirits. The psychedelic excitement of the earlier decade faded as the Baby Boomers grew up, had children, looked for jobs and became Yuppies.

In the 1970s, conservatives asserted themselves and offered a different path. They lowered taxes and promoted traditional social values. They implemented a war on drugs and put labels on vulgar music.

What do we as historians make of this social seesaw? A revolution is a change that cannot be undone. Can we call the changes of the 1960s a Social Revolution if we also call the changes that followed them a Conservative Revolution?

Perhaps the Social Revolution was just an anomaly. Maybe it was just a brief moment of heady liberalism. A freak accident, perhaps, when too many teenagers became young adults all at the same time and everyone suddenly thought they could fix every problem.

Alternatively, perhaps the true nature of America is one of change. If that is true, the conservatism of the 50s and 80s were a natural reaction of fear and trepidation, but they were the exception, not the rule. This would explain why the Beat Generation existed even when so many people were trying to fit in during the 50s, and also why the conservatives of the 70s and 80s weren't able to undo so many of the

changes the Social Revolution inspired. After all, if America is a nation of change, you cannot stand still for too long, and you certainly cannot go backwards.

What do you think? Was the Social Revolution really revolutionary?



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