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**History 1302**  
**U.S. From 1877**

Unit 4 Lecture 2

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**Society and Culture**  
**1945 - 1960**

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**Golden Age:**

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  - - 1950 – 6M Refrig / 6M Autos
    - 1952 GNP \$346B / 1945 \$211B
- Booming Growth: 1945 – 60 250%
  - Standard of living increase
  - Management / Labor partnership
    - Union Stagnation ~ teamsters
  - Population growth 20%
- Triumph of Science: “All things open to improvement through Science”
  - Medical
    - Penicillin – antibiotics
    - Vaccinations against Typhus / Polio
  - Agricultural
    - Pesticides – DDT (anti mosquito agent)
    - Fertilizers
  - Electronics
    - Transistor / Integrated Circuitry
    - Commercial Computers – RCA - IBM

Golden Age:

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  - Tupperware
  - Trix (multicolored cereal 1952)
  - Synthetics – Nylon, Dacron, Lycra
- Military:
  - Rockets and Missiles
    - ICBMs – Atlas / Titan delivery of H bombs
    - 1958 – Solid Fuel – Minute Man / Polaris / Saturn
  - Space:
    - 1957 Sputnik
      - Competitive with America
      - Soviet threat for world domination
      - Space Race became a People Race
      - Engineering Race
        - » Transform America with “New Math”
    - Explorer 1958

Prolonged Prosperity:

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  - Consumer Credit
  - Convenience – Dishwasher
  - Entertainment – Stereos
  - Crazes – Hula Hoop
  - Style – Personal and Class/Group
  - Spin-offs – Merchandizing – Mickey Mouse Club
- The Stages of Economic Growth by Walt Rostow
  - Us achieved final stage of Mass Consumption of Mass production
    - 75% of American adults owned cars
    - 80% of all autos were in America
    - 1950s median family income Doubled

Prolonged Prosperity: (p2)

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  - Women “should’ value domesticity and dependence (regardless of financial status)
  - Cooperative parenting
  - Home is focal point of abundance
  - Goals and façade not true of realities
- Corporate America:
  - “The good life delivered” – secure , rising standards of living
  - William Whyte – The Organization Man
    - Careers vs skills & professions
    - Team values versus Individual – “Fitting in”
    - Inner directed versus Other directed – Riesman – Lonely Crowd
    - Group think
    - Believed in order to belong
    - Specialized education lacking in thinking
  - Top 5% of companies 95% of income

Prolonged Prosperity: (p3)

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  - VA mortgages subsidize housing boom
    - 1944 114K new housing starts / 1946 937K /1950 1.6M
  - Gender roles reinforced
  - Individual commute vs. mass transit
  - Race re-segregation / formal or informal restriction
  - Supremacy of children / Dr. Spock
  - Shopping centers
    - 1945 – 8 / 1960 – 3,840
    - Ray Kroc 1954 drive in fast food
  - 800% growth in consumer credit
    - \$200B by 1960
    - Credit Cards 1950
    - Advertising \$12B / yr industry
  - Consumerism plus boredom/isolation – double income
    - 1950 29% women work / 1960 40%
  - 1957 97% of marriageable women were
  - College attendance doubled

Entertainment:

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  - Uni-culture diminishes sectional variance
  - Advertising driven – “Free”
    - Product placement
  - Accelerated the rate of social change
  - Youth Culture
  - Vision of what America is
    - Gender roles
    - Real vs. Projected
      - What is rich?
    - Expectations based on TV
  - Family Vacations
    - Automobile America
    - Outdoor escape
    - Environmental concern
- Movies:
  - Banality / Musicals
  - Noir

American Culture:

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- Definitions of Youth Difference:
  - Beats – Jack Kerouac / Alan Ginsberg
  - Juvenile Delinquent
    - Criminal or Misunderstood?
    - Experts question how to fix?
    - Media “Rebel without a cause” – James Dean
- Rock 'n' Roll:
  - Music defining rebellion against middle-class
    - Presley – White men sounding black
    - Motown
    - Media exploitation (American Bandstand & Movies)
  - Music based Radio
    - Reaction to TV absorption of audience
    - Transistor Radio / portable and affordable

American Culture: (p2)

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- - 1955 Playboy magazine and the airbrushing of reality
  - Kinsey Reports: (Middle class studies)
    - 50% husbands commit adultery (25% of wives)
    - 50% women had sex before marriage (85% of men)
    - 22% of chaste women cite lack of opportunity as major reason
    - 33% of men had some level of homosexual experience
    - Shocked America
  - 2.5% divorce rate
- Undercurrent of Anxiety:
  - Monster movies / Crime
  - “End is nigh” themes in literature and movies
  - Literature weighs in against “success”