Weapon of all weapons

In 1945, an amazing, destructive weapon awaited deployment. The idea for the weapon was first introduced in 1939 to President Roosevelt in a letter written by Albert Einstein. The energy of a bomb, the topic of the letter, became the focus of the $2 billion Manhattan Project. President Truman authorized the release. A B-29 named Enola Gay, at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, released an atomic bomb, named Little Boy, over the city of Hiroshima. “Fat Man,” a plutonium bomb, fell on Nagasaki on August 9. After Emperor Hirohito had had enough, the U.S. agreed to the Japanese offer of unconditional surrender with the emperor remaining on his throne (Somerville 152-8).

War Toys

An opportunity and a crisis arose for America’s toymakers as America entered the war. Just as the demand for war toys began to grow, the government passed a series of Limitation and Conservation Orders that prohibited the use of traditional toy materials such as steel, tin, rubber, and lead. Some manufacturers, those still in business, began producing lines of toys featuring creative use of materials such as wood and cardboard. A few toymakers deprived of rubber turned to a largely untried new material—plastic. The toys made included wind-up tanks, homemade battleships, wartime coloring books, Patriotic “Poison This Rat” pinball game, “Little Army Nurse” play set, board games with glow-in-the-dark counters, balsa-and-plastic toy trucks, and hollow-case lead parachutists and infantrymen (Somerville 74-5).

1940s Culture

The 1940s experienced more change than any other decade in history:

In 10 years the country went from sleeping giant to superpower, from the simplicity of an agricultural-industrial age to the complexities of the atomic age,
from a country whose army used rifles made in 1917 to the strongest nation the world had ever seen.

As small towns dominated the American landscape, small-town life defined the American character. The United States was still characterized by box lunches at church socials, company picnics and 4-H clubs, hand-cranked wall phones and party lines, iceboxes, radios, clothespins, pincushions, seven o'clock breakfasts with griddle cakes, bacon, eggs, and coffee. Furthermore, most women still sewed. In 1940, a new DeSoto car cost $701, and gas was 19 cents a gallon (Klotzbach 13).

**Pastimes**

In 1940, favorite pastimes included baking cookies in a modern kitchen and playing bingo at the county fair. The general store was still a fixture all across America. Schooldays in the forties were marked by cheerful order in the classroom and joyous release as the end of the day. America built a new middle class during the second half of 1940. Americans had more money to spend, thus Christmastime 1940 was one of the happiest holidays Americans remember. The new affluence created the mass merchandising of a comic book hero, Superman. Many people spent their evenings dancing. During the summer, people would visit amusement parks and beaches (Klotzbach 21-5).

Baseball was such a hit with people that fans flocked to ballparks, and Ted Williams brought grace and intelligence to the game. Athletes were portrayed as persons as well as heroes by sports journalism and broadcasting. The Hollywood boom of the late 1930s continued into the ‘40s (Klotzbach 26-9). Thomas “Fats” Waller produced hundreds of recordings from 1919 to 1943, combined genius and a comical manner, and influenced several generations of jazz musicians. The Glenn Miller
Orchestra exemplified the big band sound which dominated the popular music of the '40s (Klotzbach 30).

**Entering the War**

In 1941, the New Deal was replaced by price controls and gasoline and food rationing, blackouts and air raid drills, limits on travel, censorship, and security clearances. All these things became part of daily life for people. Posters with they saying “Loose lips sink ships” reminded Americans that everyone was involved in winning the war. Children received a sense of self-esteem as they grew up in the midst of World War II as the played small roles to help win the war. Mothers' were involved as well; they both volunteered and performed paid work to contribute to the war effort. In the army, people gained a sense of community. For the first time in their lives, people were learning what it was like to work together for the same goals (Kaledin 5-8).

**War Sacrifices**

At the start of war in December 1941, American citizens were called upon to make sacrifices even the Great Depression generation could hardly imagine. Food was strictly rationed; moreover, almost everything that Americans like to eat, which included meat, coffee, butter, cheese, and sugar, was controlled by a point system. Retailers and consumers were required to juggle a host of stamps, stickers, and coupons. The average driver was limited to only three gallons of gas per week as a result of gasoline rationing, and mileage-ration stickers had to be displayed on their windshields. Worn tires had to be turned in before ration cards could be issued for replacements. Parachutes, glider towropes, and powder bags for artillery were made from reclaimed silk and nylon.
Besides the sacrifices made for food, mobility, and all consumer goods, Americans had to pay the enormous cost of fighting the war (Somerville 85-6).

**Journey Home**

During World War II, over 30 million civilians migrated as part of the largest mass movement of Americans. Between the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and March 1945, 15 million civilians had moved. A loss of local culture and extended family occurred, and important identities derived from place and ethnic connections disappeared. People began to put their Americanism before everything else. Women, without good jobs and without knowledge of birth control, married soldier boyfriends going off to war. Consequently, the baby boom was explosive. (The baby boom began after World War II and expanded into the 1950s.) Labor tensions soon ceased; however, racial and loyalty questions still plagued the United States. Following the war, the ongoing fear of disloyalty grew even stronger (Kaledin 9-12).

**Enactment of Fear**

Executive Order 9066, signed by Roosevelt on February 18, 1942, aimed to put over 120,000 West Coast Japanese Americans in internment camps. Even though they were hustled onto trucks, they managed to lead dignified, creative lives (Kaledin 25-6). Many of them just had a few days to dispose of their homes, businesses, and possessions. Then, they were taken under military guard by train to internment camps. Families lived in one small room that had only cots and a pot-bellied stove. In 1943, to the surprise of the camp residents, the army announced that it would allow Japanese American recruits. Patriotism was one reason some volunteered; others joined just to have the opportunity to leave the camps (Somerville 55-6).
Women: Outside the Home

The war provided the first chance for a large number of women to earn money outside the home. By 1945, 50% of the work force were women, and three-fourths were also married. Social sanctions against married women in the workforce became more relaxed because they were no longer seen as taking permanent jobs. The number of women labors in factories increased by 460%. Young brides found themselves taking charge of fatherless families. Many of the 671,000 soldiers who returned wounded had married in a state of wartime euphoria. The new young brides were not experienced in dealing with the effects of war on their husbands. Even in the 1940s and after the war, women were not able to enter society as equals with men to fulfill their human potential. Good permanent daycare centers were considered to be a favor, not a right, for women of all classes who worked. Subsidies for daycare disappeared as soon as the war was over, and it seemed that it was essential for women to get bank into the home to use their “talents.” Women went back to doing “women’s work” which was doing the service and clerical and domestic jobs (Kaledin 19-22).

Film and Entertainment

For the entire world, not just for Americans, movies embodied American ideas. The values that the country wanted to honor were reinforced by films. Hollywood was referred to as a “dream factory” by anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker, and historian Robert Sklar defined the country as “movie-made America.” In the 1940s, America’s concern with helping people recognize was worth fighting for was reflected in the social and cultural makeup of the movies. In the 1940s, movie houses, palaces of imagination in the 1930s, were used as community centers. Movie stars helped sell government bonds, and teenagers collected money in movie lobbies to boost the
canteens of the United Service Organizations. Hollywood helped the government by creating training films for the army. Similarly, propagandistic movies were offered to the public. Movies helped Americans dislike Hitler and the Japanese. Writers and artists also became involved in wartime propaganda. Countless Hollywood producers, writers, directors, technicians, and stars joined the country in fighting the war. People were able to escape the tensions of war and the problems of reshaping postwar life through classic musicals as *State Fair* (1945) and *The Harvey Girls* (1945) (Kaledin 31-4).

**The Atomic Bomb**

The large amount of money, $2 billion, spent on the atom bomb made its use almost inevitable. Never before in history had so much brain power been focused on a single problem. It truly was an international effort. Harry Truman believed that the lives of many American soldiers would be saved, and that America would gain a position that would allow us to dictate the terms of peace with not only Japan but also with Russia. Harry S. Truman was named *Time's* Man of the Year for 1945; the world would always remember 1945 for the mushroom clouds over Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Kaledin 47-51). World War II, besides producing the atom bomb, also produced many scientific and technological discoveries with civilian use. Some of the new products, as a result of huge amounts of government spending on technology and research, included frozen foods, synthetic materials, and plastics demanded by both civilians and the military (Kaledin 51).
Atomic Energy Uses and Technological Advances

Two issues of National Geographic in 1945 celebrated discoveries developed during the war. The new discoveries could be used to extend human well-being after the war. Atomic energy was one of these discoveries, and the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was created by the government in 1946. Atomic energy produced new uses that included power plants, radiated agriculture, and medical labs and ships (Kaledin 51-2). National Geographic also promoted the electron microscope. Both the Space Age and the Atomic Age had grown out the research and discoveries of World War II (Kaledin 52).

Betterment of Humankind

In the 1940s, the better health of humankind was a main focus. The massive production of antibiotics was the first focus in this research. Bacitracin, chlormphenicol, polymyxin B, chlortetracycline, and neomycin were other antibiotics produced during the 1940s. All bacterial illness appeared to be under control by the end of the 1940s. One of the most important areas of study to emerge from World War II was perhaps the examination of secondary effects of goal-oriented knowledge. At the same time that antibacterial drugs were being created to be used to end pneumonia and tuberculosis, the use and production of blood plasma became extensive. Mortality from flu and pneumonia fell by 47% because death from infection became so rare between 1945 and 1951. In addition, mortality from diphtheria and syphilis dropped 92% and 78% (Kaledin 52-4).

Consumer Culture Emerges

Unlike most of the world, messes of debris and destruction were not issues for the United States. However, a need for every kind of housing was great. Returning
soldiers found work as the new world of highways and suburbs developed. The world of wartime contribution was replaced by a world of consumer satisfaction. Department store charge cards existed, and people could buy large items on the installment plan (Kaledin 54-5). Americans defined themselves as a car culture as railroads and trolleys were dismantled. Motels and shopping malls sprang up all over America (Kaledin 55).

“Levittown”

Americans who moved during the war or needed a place to put a new family demanded housing. This demand was again eased by financial help from the government. By 1960, 60% of all Americans owned their own homes (Kaledin 55-6). The most famous suburban housing developments were created by Abraham Levitt and his sons, William and Alfred. A large social environment was also provided by Levitt. People who lived in Levittown were more interested in preserving prewar family values than in any politics. At the time, children, unlike their parents who had grown up during the Great Depression, found fewer satisfactions in a home-centered life (Kaledin 61-4).

Post-War Material Abundance

Nylon and Dacron, frozen foods, and plastic wrap were part of the material abundance that began to flood America following the war. In addition, inventive imagination continued to thrive. The amount of consumer goods was very striking, and they defined America between 1945 and 1960. In 1945, only 46% of all Americans had telephones, and in 1960, middle class America appeared to epitomize consumer paradise. There were many things that didn’t exist at all in 1960. They included “...supermarkets, malls, fast-food chains, residential air conditioning, ranch-style
homes, freezers, dishwashers, dryers, detergents, ballpoint pens, electric razors, power mowers, hi-fis, tape recorders, long-playing records, Polaroid cameras, computers, and transistor radios.” Only 10% of all people polled had television sets in 1950, and 38% of them had not even seen a TV program. In fact, 52% of all farms still had no electricity in 1945 (Kaledin 56).

Post-War Social Attitudes

Following the war, people on the home front and the vets felt proud that they had worked together to protect democratic ideals all over the world. Many sustained a commitment to building a better life. Women were committed to making the future better. Society as a whole maintained a commitment that urged all people to work together to share the new prosperity. Americans were asked by Roosevelt to protect the Four Freedoms: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom of fear (Kaledin 59-61).

Higher Education Access

The government, in an effort to help the returning veteran, enacted the GI Bill of Rights. This landmark piece of legislation made it possible for thousands of former servicemen to fashion better lives for themselves and their families by granting loans and providing education. It virtually assured the creation of an educated and productive middle class. Three steps were on the minds of returning veterans who were on the path to civilian success: Go to college on the GI Bill; get a good job; buy a nice house with a GI loan. Women veterans used their GI Bill eligibility for their education, mortgages, and business-loan guarantees (Klotzbach 120-4). Returning soldiers were offered specific entitlements that gave them the choice of a year of monetary benefits while job
hunting or a chance for paid higher education or additional training in skills that postwar America needed. For the most part, many people going to college after the war would become the first person in their family to get a higher degree. Each veteran received $65 a month and $500 a year to cover tuition and books; this was adequate at most colleges at the time. A great sense of need discovered during the war created more possibilities to get an education. America's investment in education was an affirmation of faith in the future. Most importantly, it was acknowledged that women were also entitled to the same educational rewards offered to men (Kaledin 64-6).

**Children's Education**

The government began to take greater responsibility for better education as teachers continued to earn low salaries and society rewarded athletes and media stars with much more money than scientists and scholars earned. A difference between the elementary education offered to the middle class and to the poor emerged dramatically during the war. It was shown that Russia and Great Britain spent more on education than the United States. It was hard to distinguish the separation of church and state, since the G.I. Bill sent people to all sorts of religiously oriented schools and subsidized lunches at every elementary school. Using John Dewey's progressive education movement to define its goals, the postwar commitment to education stressed training in problem solving more than memorizing historical facts and arithmetic. There was a general demand for vocational or functional education; consequently, in 1947, the National Commission of Life Adjustment of Youth created state commissions. Multiple-choice exam questions started to replace essay writing tests. When liberal education became available to everyone after World War II, educators were forced to consider
attitude changes related to who was being educated. What was being taught was no longer the issue at hand (Kaledin 66-8).

**One of the Greatest Celebrations**

The defeat of Japan, V-J Day, triggered one of the greatest celebrations the country had ever seen. Nationwide euphoria, jubilation, exultation resulted at the end of the war. “It’s over” was the collective feeling of all Americans. “Home for Christmas” were the most popular words in the last half of 1945. Happy telegrams and joyful letters were prevalent. In the United States, prosperity from the war had created a new middle class. A nationwide spending spree was about to occur. Assembly lines slowed down, and sometimes they stopped completely due to strikes and shortages during 1946. Necessary items were in short supply, and the supply for goods was less than the demand. The boom finally began in 1947, and it included an array of new items. The purchasing power of the average American family was more than 30 percent higher than it had been in 1939 by the spring of 1947. Many women continued to hold jobs as many other women returned to full-time domesticity. The Soviets exploded their first atomic bomb on August 29, 1949. China fell to the Communists; there were now two superpowers. Much of the nation felt weary, uncertain, fearful at the end of the 1940s. “The planned ‘cities of the future’ were now obsolete, and some wondered if there would ever be a tomorrow in which to build them” (Klotzbach 109-115).

**“Consumer”**

Americans became a nation of big spenders and players after the war. In addition, the greatest jump in fertility occurred among well-educated white women who possessed medium to high incomes. The war not only created new jobs and prosperity,
but it also created the baby boom. Big business resulted from diaper services, baby food, educational toys and playgrounds, and special furniture for children (Kaledin 69-70). The baby boom began as early as 1943 and peaked at 1957, when a record 4.3 million babies were born. Americans were marrying younger and starting families sooner. The population jumped from 151.7 million in 1950 to 180.7 million in 1960; this increase was the largest 10-year increase in American history. Dr. Benjamin Spock’s *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* sold more than one million copies a year and raised the anger of older generations who were accustomed to sterner love (Somerville 28-30). The baby boom was accompanied by the beginning of the Cold War. Following Winston Churchill’s 1946 speech at Fulton, Missouri, recognition of the Cold War developed, and a terrible paranoia replaced the good sense of many Americans. By the beginning of the 1950s, the Cold War had already begun to shape a national mentality of suspicion (Kaledin 70).

**Rise of Communism**

Americans were shocked and outraged by the postwar revelations of Communist spy activities. Within the nation, much to the horror and anger of the Americans, existed a secret netherworld of highly organized and extremely efficient cells of agents determined on the destruction, or domination, of the United States by the Soviet Union. Well-known Hollywood figures flew to Washington to confront, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), while they investigated Communist activities in the US. Americans were resolved not to be intimidated by the Soviet Union. Difficult issues were arising at home in America as well. Real progress in civil rights was slow in coming even though Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball. In American Society, women’s issues were beginning to receive serious attention (Klotzbach 134-9).
New Worlds, New Horizons
Rapid and far-reaching technological advances were part of the postwar economic boom. The language of Americans was being invaded by new words and abbreviations: cybernetics, early-warning radar, intercontinental ballistic missile, UNIVAC, UFO, and DDT. Outer space garnered heightened interest. In addition, at the same time, the atomic age came to the classroom. As Americans were eager to buy luxury items, advertising became more sophisticated. The television industry, still in its infancy, was growing very rapidly. The consumer culture was born when advertising and television met. Business leaders everywhere were impressed with the power of the television to sell anything. Full-body radiation suits and the scantiest of swimwear were inspired by the US atomic bomb tests conducted at Bikini Atoll (Klotzbach 140-5).

Modern Times
Arts were changed very much following the war. Painting was dominated by Abstract Expressionism. Jazz was revolutionized by bebop. As maestros became celebrities known to the ordinary person, enthusiastic expression made its way into classical music. Postwar paranoia and urban muscularity intersected in film. The fashion world felt Christian Dior's New Look, the spirit of modernism (Klotzbach 146-153). He used full skirts, narrow waists, and padded hips and busts to accentuate feminine curves. Accessories, especially hats, often were a bit bizarre. The postwar look was defined by a shapely silhouette and abundant fabric (Somerville 170-3). Dior said, "I turned them into flowers with soft shoulders, blooming bosoms, waists slim as vine stems, and skirts opening up like blossoms." There was also a New Look for men. For both men and women, pink was the color of the '50s (Brash 68).
In the late '40s, European-trained maestros developed great orchestras that furthered public interest in and appreciation of classical music; it would be some time before America produced its own conductors. In regards to choreography, Agnes De Mille set the standard for a distinctively American art form: the musical. Serious theater also began to chart new waters. A new dramatic style, Method acting, appeared. Playwright Arthur Miller, it has been said, elevated American theater to its apex in his 1949 production of *Death of a Salesman*. Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall were illustrative of the '40s couple. Another crisis befell the Americans on the eve of the Fifties; this time the conflict would be on the Korean peninsula. Once again, President Truman had to address the fact that the United States might have to fight overseas (Klotzbach 146-153).

**1940s Arts and Entertainment**

In baseball, Joe DiMaggio broke the record-setting streak of 56 consecutive games. Americans searched high and low for civilian heroes. *Time* magazine named Disney's baby elephant, Dumbo, Mammal of the Year. They called him "the face of a true man of good will among all the grim and forbidding visages of 1941." The movie, *Citizen Kane*, opened to critical raves and proved that America's imagination could be ignited by a ruthless antihero. In the movie *Buck Privates*, the Andrews Sisters sung the patriotic hit "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" (Somerville 53).

In 1943, America's taste in music moved from big-band swing to solo vocalists. The king of crooners was Frank Sinatra. Rodgers and Hammerstein released their groundbreaking musical *Oklahoma!* The face of musical theater was changed forever. *Guadalcanal Diary* was one of the popular books of the year. Another popular book of the time was *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (Somerville 103).
In 1944, films like National Velvet, with Elizabeth Taylor, and Meet Me in St. Louis, with Judy Garland, were nostalgic. At the same time, real women were trying some less-than-traditional roles in professional sports. Women took part in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League in 1943, which was founded by Chicago Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley. Regarding music, swing music was extremely popular in the war years. One of the most popular bandleaders was Glen Miller. Miller, a perfectionist, avoided improvisational, solo-oriented swing for precise arrangements which smoothed out swing's jazzier elements. The distinctive result became known as the Miller sound (Somerville 131-2).

Joe Louis, heavyweight champion from 1937 to 1949, inspired both blacks and whites with his patriotism, he enlisted in the army in January 1942, and calm advocacy of racial equality. In addition, Bess Myerson, the first Jewish Miss America, used her title to speak out against racial intolerance. Performing arts saw revolutions. Using physical tension and abstracted gestures to explore themes of art, mythology, and the human psyche, Martha Graham, considered to be the Picasso of dance by some, gave dance a whole new look and mood (Somerville 161).

In the late 1940s, uplifting movies such as 1947's It's a Wonderful Life, escapist fares such as Hope-Crosby comedies, and Humphrey Bogart tough-guy dramas were extremely popular. Two of the greatest playwrights of the time were Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. Musicals were still big hits, and the team of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein had another success with South Pacific in 1949. Television was beginning to gain momentum. News, sports, and variety shows began to be offered by the three broadcast networks. In late 1947, Buffalo Bob and his marionette
Howdy Doody won raves from both adults and children. Milton Berle, with his extremely popular variety show in 1948, became TV’s first big star (Somerville 183).

1950s: A Working Woman

Expectations

No one was told that Alwayne was pregnant. She did not want people to know that she was pregnant because during her last pregnancy a few neighborhood stories had been started. (A neighbor had told the mailman that Alwayne had given birth to a baby boy. The mailman then congratulated Alwayne’s mother on the birth of her grandson. Alwayne’s mother told the mailman the real story; the baby had been to term three months.) She was almost seven months pregnant when she first began to wear maternity clothes. She was 103 pounds when she was three months pregnant. After one abortion and a miscarriage, she very much wanted this baby. She knew that this could be her last chance for children. She wanted a girl and not a boy. She still thought that men had almost destroyed her, and she wanted to teach her daughter “smarts.” Her daughter would make a fool out of the guys instead of the guys making a fool out of her.

“It’s a boy”

Alwayne was in labor from 7:00 a.m. Saturday, April 1, 1950 to Sunday night, April 2. It was taking so long that the doctor decided to take x-rays. He told her that if things were not right, he would do a C-section. Fortunately, the C-section never had to be performed. The baby was not coming, and the doctor wanted to see where the baby was. Babe told Alwayne that if she had a boy, he wanted it to be raised a Jew, he would learn Hebrew and the Jewish ways, and if it was a girl, she would be allowed to raise her
daughter to be a Gentile. She agreed to those terms. At last, after much pain and struggle, a baby boy, Joseph Calvin Rosenfield, was born.

After Joseph was born and she was home, her mother started acting the same as she did when she was a teenager. She became domineering all over again. She kept telling her that she needed to settle down. She needed a home for her child. Babe had to leave for the carnival and the memorial service for his brother, Joseph. (In the Jewish community, a memorial service was held a year after a person's death. Joe died in 1949, thus the memorial service was held in 1950). After a while, he started to get real sick. She did not believe him because he had already told her so many stories. Her mother hassled her so much about settling down that she agreed to get a divorce. She decided that she would stay home in Canton, raise her son, and divorce Babe. Claudena offered to help raise Alwayne's son, Joe, financially. She simply told Claudena that when he was older, she would get a job.

**Timkens and Hoover Company**

Alwayne and Babe had some disagreements, by mail and phone. She clearly explained to Babe that the baby was hers, and no one else would get him. A divorce was granted in December of 1950. Babe began telling her in 1951 that he was really sick. She decided that she needed to get a job to support her son. She went to work at Timkens, and she stayed there for nine months before she was laid off. For the short time that she was there, she inspected the cones that sat inside rolling bearings. Her next place of employment was Hoover Company. She worked for the Navy Department. Everything was secret, so she was finger printed and had mug pictures taken. It was so secret that she was not allowed to tell anyone what she did. She made the primers for the shells
that were shot from cannons. The materials she helped produced likely aided the war effort in Korea.

Alwayne had no choice about working; she had to work to support her son and parents. Her father only made $98 every two weeks. In August of 1950, her brother, John, came home from Masolyn State, a mental institution located in Masolyn, Ohio. She and her son were now living with her parents and John, who had been a schizophrenic since World War Two. She was the only one in the house working. Her other brother, Ernie, was traveling all over the country working with construction. She continued to live with John and her parents until her next marriage.

**Pastimes**

Although Alwayne was a very hard worker and put in many hours, she still found time to spend with her son. After work, there was not much to do, thus she would watch television with Joseph. A few of the shows she watched included *I Love Lucy*, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Little Rascals*, and *Davy Crockett*. *I Love Lucy* was a show that she absolutely loved. She even watched the birth of little Ricky Ricardo. Alwayne and her family did not have a color television. They had bought their television from Alwayne’s neighbor. Television was not the only activity that she shared with Joseph. In addition, they went fishing, golfing, and bowling. She would also take her son to local amusement parks. Alwayne had to be both a mother and father to Joseph. Another pastime she participated in was music. You could play 5 songs on the juke box for $0.25. Some of the singers she listened to included Perry Como, Patti Page, and Elvis Presley. Two of her favorite singers were Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby. In Canton, a ballroom, the Moonlight, was the place to go if you wanted to hear big bands play music. Alwayne and
her sister-in-law, Sadie Eller, went to hear the bands in the 1950s. The Moonlight was open on Saturday nights and could hold 1,000 couples.

**Diebold's**

Alwayne worked at Hoover Company until she started in March of 1952 at Diebold's. One of her friends convinced her to go work at Diebold's. She did multiple tasks. Her multiple jobs over the years were a punch press operator, an electrician, a packer and receiver in shipping, a brake operator for a twenty-ton machine, and finally a forklift driver. While she worked at Diebold's, she often was hassled because she was woman. Babe died in 1952. After he died, she never dated for five or six years. Her mother always found something wrong with every man she dated.

When she worked at Deibold's, she was part of the company's bowling team. Alwayne took Joseph to the bowling alley with her, and he played with the daughter of Alwayne's friend. Furthermore, Alwayne took Joseph, often accompanied by her mother and brother, John, on family vacations. The main place they visited was Daytona Beach, Florida. During the 1950s, Alwayne owned several cars, which included a 1952 Ford and a 1955 Pontiac. Alwayne later realized that she should have bought a bigger car, such as a station wagon. The 1950s provided Alwayne with some good and bad times.

**1950s Culture**

**Hopeful Beginning**

Although Americans were hopeful, the beginning of the 1950s did not begin well. Some Americans, because of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, considered 1950 to be the darkest time since early World War II. The 1950s were marked by the introduction
of the superbomb, the trial of Alger Hiss, the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and the beginning of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy’s crusade. The beginning of better times came in 1953 when President Eisenhower was inaugurated. People referred to the following years as the nifty ‘50s. Under Ike, the United States became extremely productive; the U.S. turned out two-thirds of all the world’s manufactured goods. People with money in their pockets felt a very strong urge to spend it, thus the consumer culture was born. The first credit card, Diners Club, and installment plans appeared in 1950. The triumph of the American way over Communism was trumpeted to the world through the vast array of consumer goods. Thus, it was appropriate that one of the most memorable peaceful confrontations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union took place in Moscow in a state-of-the-art model kitchen that was at a trade exhibition in 1959 (Brash 24-8). An article in Commentary magazine labeled the 1950s as “the happiest, most rational period the Western world has known since 1914.” Nonetheless, a good number of social critics and historians were concerned with the anxieties of the postwar world. Communism no longer had any appeal, and political theorists of the 1950s wanted to accept the idea that ideological struggles had ended (Kaledin 149-153).

**I Love Lucy: “In the family way”**

On January 19, 1953, some 44 million men, women, and children out of 158 U.S. citizens gathered in front of television sets all across America. Onto the tiny screens flashed the flickering black-and-white images that everyone who loved Lucy had been waiting for: Lucy was having a baby. Lucy was Lucille Ball, the star of *I Love Lucy*, the most popular show on television. Many American viewers felt they knew Lucy and Ricky Ricardo better than they knew their own neighbors. Lucille Ball’s pregnancy came
as no surprise in the spring of 1952. The United States was in the midst of the baby
boom (Brash 22-4).

**McCarthyism**
During the 1940s, irrational fears overwhelmed common sense, and the legal
protection designed to shelter differing opinions began to fade. From 1947 until the
censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy in 1954, America experienced a time of turmoil and
fear as great as any in American history. Previously, Americans had seen Russia as a
wartime partner; suddenly, Soviet Communism was seen as a terrible threat. The U.S.
intervened in Korea under United Nations sponsorship in 1950 to keep the Communists
from taking over the country. It was not overseas confrontations that caused the 1950s
tensions; it was fear of home front enemies (Kaledin 75-6).

**Hollywood and McCarthyism**
Under the control of Congressman J. Parnell Thomas, The House Un-American
Activities Committee (HUAC), designed to hunt out Communists in labor unions in the
1930s, became an invigorated source of terror. “The Hollywood Ten” were all indicted
for contempt of Congress. Richard Nixon demanded that new movies be made to spell
out “the methods and evils of totalitarian Communism.” A national blacklist was set up
after the trial not only to deny future employment to the Hollywood Ten but also to keep
anyone with questionable political allegiances from working in the media (Kaledin 76-8).

**Education and McCarthyism**
A great number of professors were interrogated for “free thinking” during 1948.
Sixteen professors lost their jobs as so-called subversives without tenure. Like most
great American academic institutions, Harvard was committed to the protection of freedom of speech. At one point, even Harvard refused to hire or retain a small group of nontenured teachers because they had previously been Communists. In the late '40s and early '50s, scholars became afraid even to teach about what Marxism stood for. Fear could be found at every level of education. The National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators not only pledged to create a new Cold War education program designed to stress loyalty but also barred Communists from faculties (Kaledin 78-80).

**Trial of Alger Hiss**
The trial of Alger Hiss, begun in 1948, was perhaps the most famous case during the epidemic of suspicion. Alger Hiss was accused of having given State Department documents to Communist connections by an unpleasant writer at *Time* magazine, Whittaker Chambers. Hiss was eventually indicted for perjury (Kaledin 82-3). At first, McCarthy boasted a list of 205 State Department spies; after being challenged, he lowered the number to 57. Many believed that ridding America of Communists at home would alleviate world tension and purify democracy. A tour of United States Information Services abroad ended with the banning of “books, music, painting and the like” of any Communist or fellow traveler. Custodians burned books, and many librarians lost their jobs. McCarthy became out of control; he made outrageous accusations and bullied innocent people. In 1954, McCarthy was condemned by the Senate for misconduct. McCarthy died three years later of acute hepatitis (Kaledin 83-6).
Trial of the Rosenbergs

The trial of the Rosenbergs was the final significant Communist trial. The Rosenbergs, because anti-Communist fervor had become so fierce, were executed (Kaledin 86). From this period of fear and persecution emerged peculiar strengths and remarkable literary talents. By 1957, blacklisted writers were once again working under their own names. In 1953, Arthur Miller’s play The Crucible appeared on stage. At once, audiences realized that Miller was using the hysteria of the Salem witch hunts to represent the time’s irrationalities. The present anxieties were just as complex as the past (Kaledin 88).

Social Upheaval: Search for Rights

Charles Dickens’ description of the French Revolution has been used to describe the 1950s: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” At the time, social upheaval was very real. New definitions of human rights began to expand. Furthermore, a more complex vision of moral progress began to take hold in post-World War II America. African Americans could not easily go back to defining themselves as second class citizens. After the war, every class had great expectations. Most white people did not even notice the vast racial discrepancies. The idea of a stable community where neighbors knew each other and grew old together was more like what happened on television (Kaledin 91-3). Even though it had been a century since slavery had been abolished, the entire United States, especially the South, saw the persistence of racial discrimination. Jim Crow laws, in place since 1896, segregated the blacks from the whites in many aspects. As segregation began to lose its hold, as a result of successful legal assaults on the Jim Crow decision, southern whites unleashed their anger (Brash 108). The Civil Rights Movement strongly began after Rosa Parks was arrested because
she had refused to give up her seat for a white passenger (Brash 115). Black students were not allowed to enroll in white schools. In other states, only minor progress had been achieved (Brash 119). The biggest crisis occurred in Little Rock, Arkansas when nine black students were not permitted to enroll. Eventually, with assistance from the Arkansas National Guard, the students were allowed to attend Little Rock Central High School (Brash 120).

**Beginning of the Civil Rights Movement**

Few people noticed the tremendous number of African Americans flooding into most large cities because they had been denied work in the South by new agricultural machines. In 1954, the Supreme Court established that separate was not equal with the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision; the obvious action commenced. The 1955 refusal of Rosa Parks to give up her seat on an overcrowded bus in Montgomery, Alabama turned everything upside down in the South. Rosa Parks became a heroine, and a boycott resulted. Inspired by the eloquence of a young Martin Luther King and Bayard Rustin, an experienced lawyer, the boycott was a success (Kaledin 93-7).

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

When Martin Luther King was pushed onto the broad public screen as the head of the nonviolent Montgomery Involvement Association, King was recognized as a remarkable new leader. Under the guidance of King and the talented black lawyers Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Botley, the African American community made its demands with dignity. Outside of the South, most Americans believed integration would improve racial understanding (Kaledin 93-7).
**Battle for Human Rights**

The 1950s was clearly a time of emerging awareness of human rights. After World War II, America opened its gates to her allies: Chinese, Filipinos, and Asian Indians. "Gender" was not used in the 1950s to help women define their rights even though "race" had emerged from the war as a clear category. Women accepted old-fashioned roles for a time. Many women kept working after the war; they did so not just to help pay the mortgage, but because work outside the home was satisfying. Women and blacks were denied access to equal professional education and equal salaries in the 1950s (Kaledin 98-106).

**Education**

Only 37% of the women who attended college stayed to graduate, and the number going on for higher degrees was smaller than in the 1920s and 1930s. This occurred even though larger numbers of women had begun to go to college in the 1950s. White men kept women undereducated in the 1950s by maintaining quotas for the young and denying older women. Women were kept of competition with men for professional jobs. "Sex-directed," gender-focused education was also an issue. In addition, Cold War concerns sprung up. America was concerned that we had fallen behind the Russians. Congress was inspired to pass the National Defense Education Act in 1958; $900 million was allotted for scholarships and loans to encourage the study of science, math, and foreign languages. The large number of new learners, a result of the G.I. bill, did not diminish academic standards, and the presence on campus of older students able to make mature judgments also worked to erode sophomoric customs like fraternity hazings and wearing freshman beanies (Kaledin 106-8).
**Sex Revolution**

A great revolution occurred during the '50s. A shift in attitudes toward sex was the supreme revolution. By the end of the decade, institutional control over individual sexual behavior seemed to disappear. The nation's morals were turned upside-down within two decades because of Alfred Kinsey's reports describing *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948 and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* in 1953. Even Hollywood became involved; it modified its restrictive sexual codes by the end of the decade. After the Food and Drug Administration's marketing approval of the birth control bill in 1960, Claire Booth Luce made the following statement: modern woman became as “free as a man is free to dispose of her own body” (Kaledin 109-110).

**Religious Revolution**

Religious establishments were also a place of notable change. Americans felt as though that they needed to protect their children from “Godless Communism.” Church membership rose during the 1950s. Eisenhower even had himself baptized in the White House during his administration. In 1954, “under God” was added to the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States. In addition, beginning in 1955, “In God We Trust” was engraved on all U.S. currency. A new arena for evangelism was provided by television. The turn to religion was more than just social or material because of the memories of the Great Depression and World War II and nightmares of the Holocaust and the H-bomb (Kaledin 111-3).

**Shelter from the “Bomb”**

During the 1950s, seeking safety from an atom bomb attacked, school children learned to dive under desks at the sound or sirens. Students, on command, were taught to crouch, shield their eyes, and seek cover under any available shelter, which included
their desks (Brash 86). In addition, the government published pamphlets, with titles such as *The Family Fallout Shelter* and *Education for National Survival*, on the necessary items citizens should include in home shelters. Fear spread over America because the Russians possessed an H-bomb (Kaledin 117-8). In 1950, President Truman launched the Civil Defense Administration (Brash 86).

**Red Threat: Cold War and the “Bomb”**

The United States exploded the world’s first hydrogen bomb. The superbomb was developed as a result of the Cold War. The dread of nuclear war now was an additional fear. As the United States attempted to alleviate Communism abroad, at home, a crusade began to destroy it. During the summer of 1953, the Soviets proved President Truman’s advisers correct by exploding a hydrogen bomb. Americans scrambled to keep up with the Soviet Union (Brash 75-9).

**Suburbia and New Technology**

The “typical” American lived in suburbia. The American Dream of family security was not available to everyone. For the great number of people with good jobs, the escape into different levels of consumerism was real in postwar America. The appliances created for the American home included washing machines, blenders, toasters, electric razors, dishwashers, power mowers, and even television sets. Americans moved as often as every year. Pushbutton products were part of a new life for Americans by the end of the decade. “Labor-saving” devices actually led to more labor in the home. Fulfillment was promised to women (Kaledin 121-3).
**Car Craze**

Like women, men were also being promised fulfillment with the new car model they would buy. Families began to buy second cars as long as parking places were available downtown. In new suburbs, workers were not accommodated by public transportation. To connect with relatives often miles away, large families wanted reasonable and comfortable means. Big cars became a way of life and status symbols, and the car began to represent a lonely danger (Kaledin 124-5).

**“Fabulous” Era**

The mass production and efficiency Americans have always admired most likely inspired many to view the '50s as being “fabulous.” The pursuit of happiness made many forget the Cold War. People were eager to travel to faraway places and try new leisure activities. Americans spent more time watching television than they did working for pay by 1956. People considered themselves to be “average Americans” if they drove their own cars. During the 1950s, America demonstrated to the rest of the world that its form of government was the most productive on a material level (Kaledin 125-7). People needed more basic material goods as the country’s population increase by one-third between 1940 and 1960. Economists argued that technology would create many new jobs even if many unskilled workers did lose their jobs to machines. The government remained one of the decade’s largest employers because of the new construction of the interstate highway system. Between 1950 and 1970, jobs in the public sector doubled. An expanded middle class also was created. During the 1950s, the gap between the rich and poor actually increased. It was a paradox that many unlikely people seemed to have more material goods (Kaledin 127-130).
**Television and Postwar America**

**Popular Sitcoms**

People, before World War II, shaped their views from the newspapers or what they heard on the street. Television took over as the main medium of communication (Kaledin 133). Almost all the earliest TV sitcoms focused on marriage or the traditional family. *The Honeymooners* was quite successful the 39 weeks it aired. Stories and sets that focused on the affluent suburban family would replace the working class sitcoms of the early ‘50s. Some of the sitcoms include *Father Knows Best, The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Leave It To Beaver*; these sitcoms focused on family “togetherness,” idyllic settings, and minor domestic problems (Kaledin 133-7).

**Serious Drama**

Television experienced its Golden Age during its early years. The American public was offered a good number of original dramas. In the early years of TV, commercials were few. Sponsors, not yet dictating what should be in the productions, often chose to be identified with one kind of spectacle. Certain kinds of productions were identified with the Kraft Television Theater, Texaco Theater, Colgate Hour, Alcoa Hour, and General Electric Hour. Quality was the main focus of dramas (Kaledin 137).

**Variety Shows**

Real humor on TV could be seen in the earliest years of the 1950s. Milton Berle played Uncle Miltie, and he made every generation laugh. *You Bet Your Life* was a quiz show conducted by Groucho Marx. Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows* kept America laughing with jokes from 1954 to 1957. A range of new talent not trained for radio or vaudeville was represented by *Your Show of Shows*. In their shows, comedy team Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin introduced much more action (Kaledin 138).
Elvis Presley and Ed Sullivan

Jackie Gleason should be credited with pushing Elvis Presley's talents on the 1956 Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey Show in spite of them protesting. Elvis managed to step forward to send rock 'n' roll music into prosperous suburban America. Elvis's ability to attract huge audiences suddenly put him in great demand, even though Dick Clark was on American Bandstand with well-groomed youth and modest songs. Elvis Presley became a symbol of youthful independence, and in 1957, on America's most popular variety show, The Toast of the Town, host Ed Sullivan defended Elvis as “a real decent, fine boy.” Elvis Presley's country music offered America continued to celebrate traditions people were losing following the war (Kaledin 138-9).

In the 1950s, Ed Sullivan offered the public a variety of artists from the violin prodigy Itzhak Perlman to the great black musical performers Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, and Lena Horne. Sullivan made a vast audience aware that talent had nothing to do with race or ethnicity, and, as the nation's leading TV impresario for 23 years, he shaped American values and taste. Sullivan's Sunday night show was able to bring families and neighbors together in living rooms to watch and discuss new talents. Television allowed numerous Americans for the first time to appreciate the best of the national pastime as big league baseball appeared on the screen (Kaledin 140).

Talk Shows and Politics

As television sets were bought by more and more people, Americans turned from twice a day newspapers and current events magazine like the Saturday Evening Post and Life to the more immediate journalism of the television screen. However, more controversial opinions were in print, and television sponsors were reluctant to deal with controversy. Enormously popular since his broadcasts from the bombing scenes of
London during World War II, Ed Murrow bravely continued to pursue controversial issues. Murrow's program on Senator McCarthy made him and his news partner Fred Friendly heroes. By the end of the century, many public political events would appear on television, and television took on the role of helping Americans weigh their political judgments (Kaledin 140-2).

**Moral Education**

The quiz show scandals ended the Golden Age of television (Kaledin 142). It was challenging to remain loyal and an American in the 1950s. From 1951 to 1958, the presence of Edward R. Murrow on TV redeemed the medium from general accusations of narrow mindedness. A variety of religious leaders were introduced through television. In the 1950s, big time televangelism commenced. Billy Graham, Norman Vincent Peale, and Fulton J. Sheen all began programs (Kaledin 142-3).

**Children and Television**

Young children's programs, with the exception of cartoons, were mild, educational, and adapted to growing minds. Gentle programs for preschoolers like *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*, *Ding Dong School*, and *Captain Kangaroo* counteracted the violence of Saturday morning cartoons. For older children, there were educational programs about zoo animals and space travel. It became an ongoing debate whether excessive exposure to murder, rape, and bizarre horrors of all sorts could create generations of criminals. When children turned on the set, they could almost see anything. Hopalong Cassidy items boomed as children became the most promising group of consumers for televised products. Furthermore, a freckled clown, Howdy Doody, inspired quantities of consumer toys at the time. It seemed that Davy Crockett was capable of putting coonskin caps on every small head in America before
overproduction led to warehouse surpluses. *Davy Crockett*, a one-hour prime time Western series, was sponsored by Walt Disney and garnered the highest ratings of the decade. In the early '50s, the television show *Disneyland* tested on air all the American themes that would be included during the next decade into the sparkling California amusement park. The kind of entertainment the theme park offered fit perfectly with the togetherness of the car-centered suburban family (Kaledin 143-6).

**Television’s Impact**

Even before the term “couch potato” became part of the American language, people were nervous about what television might do to the mind. Americans, for the most part, agreed that television was simply for entertainment. The art of conversation was seen by some to be disappearing. One sarcastic young German commented that Americans no longer had opinions, they had refrigerators. Not only did people in America need to consider what television was doing to the American mind, but they also needed to be concerned about the impact the new technology would have on the rest of the world (Kaledin 146).

**Television’s “Golden Age”**

Bob Hope called the television “that piece of furniture that stares back at you.” Around 1950, only 9 percent of American households, about a million, owned a TV. The four networks, NBC, CBS, ABC, and Du Mont, scheduled programming only in the evening. A test pattern was all viewers could see during the rest of the day. The networks began competing to entertain Americans as thousands of television sets were purchased. A golden age resulted. When the popular show, *I Love Lucy*, was not on, in 1951, the networks presented more live dramas than Broadway and invested in expensive, one-time-only specials. The year 1956 saw the beginning of soap operas; they
were named so because their sponsors were makers of soaps and detergents. As the decade came to a close, average Americans were watching TV almost six hours a day (Brash 148-151). Television looked back in time and found a gold time: the theatrical variety show. Ozzie and Harriet Nelson, already known from radio as “America’s favorite couple,” headed up America’s favorite family after their debut on television in 1952. The Nelsons’ formula was borrowed from several programs, including *Make Room for Daddy*, *Leave It to Beaver*, and *Father Knows Best* (Brash 160.) In the early years of television, broadcasters faced a dilemma; they had more time to fill than programming to fill it. Networks were forced to create their own plays, turned to novels for stories and to the theater in New York for playwrights and actors. The resulting shows were the brightest moments of television’s golden age, but they didn’t shine for long (Brash 162). Furthermore, crime and mystery stories became the “backbone of broadcasting” (Brash 164). *The $64,000 Question*, a game show, inspired similar big-money shows, including *Tic Tac Dough*, *Beat the Jackpot*, and NBC’s *Twenty-One* (Brash 166). Popular kid shows of the time included *The Howdy Doody Show; Captain Kangaroo; Kukla, Fran, and Ollie;* and *The Mickey Mouse Club*. There were also heroes like Lassie and Mighty Mouse (Brash 168-9).

**Literature**

Two classical war novels, James Jones’ *From Here to Eternity* (1951) and Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), are still testimonies to the fighting men and the skeptical statements about the war. In 1953, Frank Sinatra, who had at one time been blacklisted for using a “Communist” songwriter, won the Academy Award that helped him make a comeback. A richer variety of viewpoints were possessed by educated readers. The writing of women and people of color were no longer neglected
by the self-consciousness that emerged from the postwar search for identity. After the war, a tremendous operatic chorus of new and gifted performers emerged. Individuals who no longer felt part of any community were depicted by writers of the '50s. Young women writers in the 1950s used a growing awareness of independent womanhood to express individual skepticism about social institutions. Moreover, many powerful Southern writers emerged during the '50s. Large audiences still enjoyed the writing of strong writers from prewar times. African Americans held the honor of producing two of the decade's great men of letters. A censored version of Anne Frank's diary appeared on Broadway and helped remind the audience of why they had fought World War II. In their books, science fiction writers captured some of the most real social dilemmas of the time. Books for young people not only described women who played roles outside the home but also stressed how they dealt with obstacles. Many children discovered E.B. White's *Stuart Little*, and *Charlotte's Web* appeared in 1952 (Kaledin 155-162).

**Artistic Expression**

**Architecture**

Art was included in the freedom of choice by the end of the decade. Architects like Buckminster Fuller and Edward Durrell Stone became creators of "American" public buildings. Architecture was valued very much during this period of middle class prosperity. Furthermore, sculpture was sometimes designed to be part of the civic experience that involved architecture and planning (Kaledin 164-5).

**Music and Dance**

African American music was prevalent in the 1950s. This decade contained all the great classical jazz musicians and singers which included Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and Ella Fitzgerald. In Detroit, the new Motown sound began
to take shape. Dance began to incorporate the vitality and originality of the American art world. Americans made good use of both new immigrant and native talents, thus New York was turned into the dance capital of the world. Following in the footsteps of Isadora Duncan, modern dance pioneer Martha Graham appeared with her trained company not only in New York City but also in various other American cities. As time would go by, the world would recognize and honor achievements that Americans themselves could not see (Kaledin 165-6).

“The Eye of the Camera”

The 1950s turned out to be much more complicated than the war years. The mainstream movie industry was able to produce a rich variety of films that reflected the changing attitudes in the postwar world. One of the great actors of the time was Charlie Chaplin; he made most of his films in America and remained a British subject. The movies accurately reflected the social currents that made 1950s a different world. Doris Day comedies that ended in marriage and Alfred Hitchcock mysteries that allowed beautiful women a measure of wit in overcoming fear and evil were a part of the times (Kaledin 169-170).

Photojournalism and Art

Photography began to gain much power and became a great art form. Art museums, by the end of the decade, would begin to display the creations of the camera all over the country. The photograph had become as reliable a source of American history as the printed word. For some, pictures began to be more reliable than words. At a time when no consumer television existed, during World War II, *Life’s* photographs brought the war into American homes. *Life’s* photographs showed much about American life. Photographers worked hard to document the incredible variety of the
American experience. By the end of the decade, television had begun to take away the important investigative role of photographers. The worlds of children, writers, and artists were explored. Behind a camera, many women felt free to extend their own experiences; they were offered a different kind of power. Once again, in the 1950s, photographers represented many different levels of freedom (Kaledin 170-5).

“The Family of Man”

In 1955, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City released the exhibition of photographs called “The Family of Man.” Photographer Edward Steichen, who organized and created the display, clarified the power and value of photography. The exhibit, “the greatest photographic exhibition of all time,” contained 503 pictures from 68 countries. The picture of the hydrogen bomb was carefully placed in the display; it was arranged as a backdrop to all the black and white photos. In the end, in spite of Steichen’s concern for communication in “The Family of Man,” the show succeeded more in terms of its photographic beauty than its social link to humanity (Kaledin 173-9).

A Home to Call Their Own

Most parents wanted a home of their own. Owning a house was far more affordable as a result of low interest rates and easy down payments under the GI Bill and the Federal Housing Administration. By the end of the decade, one-third of all Americans lived in suburbia. With the move to suburbia came the automobile. The car not only shaped the suburban lifestyle but also brought the entire continent with reach. Thus, in 1956, the Federal Aid Highway Act approved the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate roads. Innovative enterprises such as motel chains sprang up along the embryonic web of superhighways. Kemmons Wilson started Holiday Inn, the first of the
motel chains, in 1952. In addition, fast-food restaurants sprang up. The 50s, for many middle-class Americans would be the best decade of their lives; however, large portions of the nation did not share in the great expectations of the '50s (Brash 30-4).

**Unforgettable Icons**

The 1950s were rich with remarkable personalities. Martin Luther King Jr. led a bus boycott in Alabama, and he emerged to be a spokesman of the civil rights movement. Douglas MacArthur reversed the course of the war in Korea. In Hollywood, James Dean became a symbol of frustrated youth. Marilyn Monroe became the decade's premier sex symbol. "I Like Ike" was a predominant phrase at the time of the 1952 election. Dwight Eisenhower used advertising and harnessed the growing power of television to take his famous grin into millions of American homes. A troubled genius of the time was J. Robert Oppenheimer. He led the scientific team that developed the atomic bomb during World War II; unfortunately, he later was later fired by the Atomic Energy Commission. The social event of the decade occurred on September 12, 1953 with the wedding of Jacqueline Lee Bouvier and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Grace Kelly, in the decade of moviedom's blonde bombshell, was the epitome of aloof allure and subtle, silken sensuality. Kelly gave up a brand-new studio contract at the apex of her career to marry Prince Rainier III of the House of Grimaldi (Brash 36-50).

**Suburbia: The Promised Land**

During the 1950s, new housing was being added at an astonishing rate. Paychecks were fatter than ever, and people were optimistic about the future, thus people were ready to rid themselves of the frugal habits of the Depression and the war years and embark on a buying spree. The average suburban man concentrated on
advancing his career. According to one individual, the prospects for success were excellent: "If you had a college diploma, a dark suit, and anything between the ears, it was like an escalator; you just stood there and you moved up" (Brash 53).

**Decorating the Nest**

Many people became do-it-yourself decorators. Individuals wanted to have the same things as everyone else. Women were bombarded by television, radio, and magazines with the assurance that the kitchen was their realm and that loving food preparation for their families was the way to obtain fulfillment. Manufacturers pushed new timesaving dishes that could be prepared "in a jiffy." Color advertisements that promoted easy recipes were on the cover of magazines. The neighborhood cocktail party became a ritual weekend event for some (Brash 56-61).

**Fun and Toys**

Suburbia became a wonderland of toys. Postwar baby parents wanted their kids to have what they had missed out on themselves. Moms and dad showered their children with toys and board games, bicycles, books on holidays and birthdays. The list of toys included sleds, Erector Sets, baby dolls, Lincoln Logs, toy cars, model trains, and jump ropes. Some brand-new items also resulted because of modern technology (Brash 63).

**Space Age**

The space age began on October 4, 1957, when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the world's first artificial satellite. Americans could not believe what the Soviets had been able to accomplish. The Americans response was not as successful. The U.S. launched a Vanguard rocket carrying a grapefruit-sized satellite. It rose two
feet off the launch pad at Cape Canaveral and blew up. With a later launch of a Jupiter C rocket, America was now a credible competitor. President Eisenhower established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The exploration race had arrived (Brash 92-3).

**Car Culture**

Automobiles in the 1950s were much more than just basic transportation. They represented status, freedom, and personal identity. Worn-out clunkers had been nursed along, and at the same, other Americans had never had a car. The typical automobile of the 1950s was a family car. Old cars were traded in for new ones every two years. Two rival sports cars, the Chevrolet Corvette and the Ford Thunderbird, were most likely the most distinctive American automobiles. Later on, car design became a business of style over substance. Seat belts and safety features were unpopular extras (Brash 95-9).

Americans went positively car crazy in the ‘50s. Drive-in theaters flourished. In addition, drive-in restaurants, banks, and laundries could be found (Brash 104).

**Art and Entertainment**

Although many stayed at home to watch television, Hollywood stars were able to keep the old magic alive. Brand-new Broadway musicals debuted, which included *Guys and Dolls* in 1950 and *The Sound of Music* in 1959. Americans enjoyed new hits from appealing artists, such as Rosemary Clooney and Perry Como. By mid-decade, rock and roll had arrived (Brash 122). Despite declining movie attendance, Hollywood produced a host of classic pictures in the ‘50s. The casts included familiar faces like Judy Garland and Gary Cooper; new stars included Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando. Moviemakers pursued technological advances because of competition with TV.
Improved color and wide-screen formats such as CinemaScope resulted. Moviemakers aimed bigness at television’s weak spot. MGM’s *Ben-Hur* was the most colossal of the colossal epics (Brash 124-131).

"*Bright Lights, White Lights*"

As the ’50s dawned on Broadway, musicals played to full theaters. Cast recordings gave Americans a taste of the Great White Way. *Guys and Dolls* was the first smash hit of the decade. Other musicals included *The King and I, Pajama Game, West Side Story, The Music Man, Gypsy, The Sound of Music, and My Fair Lady* (Brash 140). In regards to music, the juke boxes in 1950 were filled with a new generation of clean-cut singers along with perennial favorites Frank Sinatra and a few Big Bands. Pop stars included Rosemary Clooney, Perry Como, Teresa Brewer, Nat King Cole, Patti Page, and Johnny Mathis (Brash 144-6).

**1960s and Onward**

*A New Love*

During the 1960s, while Alwayne was working in packing and shipping, William Bartolet came to Diebold’s in 1961; he was relieving one of the workers for a month. William worked for Railway Express Agency, and they relieved agents all over Ohio. He eventually convinced her to go out on a date with him. They dated for several years, and in March of 1964, they were married. Her life after 1964 was always kept very busy. Her father died July 23, 1964.

Since Alwayne was no longer living at home, the household was left to her “crazy” brother, John. He thought that his mother and sister had destroyed his family, a wife and son. Her mother did not want him in a mental institution anymore. Alwayne tried
to get John a job at Diebold's, but he could not handle the pressure and would leave work whenever he wanted. She told her mother that she could not handle all the stress, and eventually her boss came to her and told her that John needed to straighten up or he was going to be fired. In the end, John was laid off.

Alwayne's relationship with William, “Bill,” became “ugly” at times. Bill’s work relocated to Akron, and he took a couple of tests and passed them. He thought he would be able to advance “up the ladder,” but when he quit his job, Alwayne gave him an ultimatum. She told him that he would go to work, or she was going to divorce him. Eventually, her attorney sent him the divorce papers; nonetheless, the divorce never was finalized. (It was never finalized because she became a Christian in 1973. She wholeheartedly believes that spiritual intervention, God, “saved” their marriage.) She really did not trust Bill anyhow; after all, she was his third wife. She really needed Bill to work because she had to support John and her mother. Claudena and she were John’s sole support. After her father's death, her mother received her father’s Social Security, which was $69 a month. She gave some of her paycheck to her mother to support the family. She had to provide more money for her mother when she found out she had colon cancer. Some financial help came when unfortunately, Ernie, Alwayne’s brother, died in 1965. Her mother said, “Ernie had to die, so that John and I could live.” The funeral director told her mother that she could receive Ernie’s Social Security because she had supported him; consequently, she received $210 a month.

Losing a Son

After he was released from the Marines, Alwayne’s son, Joseph, moved from California to Anderson, Indiana in March of 1972. Once he was settled in Indiana, he lived with his aunt, Claudena, and uncle, George Kufeldt, in Anderson and attended
classes at Ivy Tech College in Muncie, Indiana. In addition, after the encouragement of a friend, Joseph applied for a position at Fisher Guide, located in Anderson. Later, Joseph met Deborah Ware, a student at Anderson University; they were married June 23, 1974. They have four children: Rachel, Rebekah, Joseph, and Elizabeth.

**Sorrow Commences**

Alwayne and her sister supported their mom and John. She still had to raise Joe. John controlled the house, and he became her sole responsibility when Claudena died of cancer in 1978. Her family continued to grow smaller. She worked at Diebold’s for 30 years. She retired in 1982, and in 1983, her mother died. After her death, John knew that she had to sell the house. She and Bill went to the house, and Bill discovered that John had been looking at apartments and moving companies. Bill called one of the apartments, and they found out where John had gone. He lived on his own for the rest of his life until he was longer able. He moved with Bill and Alwayne to Anderson, and she eventually had to place him in Marion’s Veteran’s Hospital in 2000. She continued to take care of John and his affairs until he died of cancer September 6, 2002.

**Ministering**

After retiring from Diebold’s in 1982, Alwayne’s life was still very full. Besides taking care of her brother, she did some ministering. In 1984, she and Bill went to New York with David Wilkerson, an evangelist from New York, and they worked on the streets, part of his ministry, for two weeks. Back in Ohio, she continued to feel the burden of street people. She talked to several people about opening a soup kitchen. One woman finally consented to opening a kitchen if she would cook for her. She worked in the soup kitchens from 1989 to 1993. From 1993 to 1996, Bill had colon cancer. It had
always been her dream to live in Florida. She and Bill owned land in Lehigh Acres, Florida, but they decided it would be best to move to Anderson to be near Joseph and his children. In 1996, they sold their home and moved to Anderson, Indiana. Up until John’s death, she had been kept very busy taking care of him, and now she tries to spend as much time as she can with her grandchildren.

**Final Thoughts**

My grandmother’s life has always been very full. She was born into the Great Depression. The time period, the 1920s to the 1930s, was characterized by despair and struggle. Times were difficult for everyone. Yet, she and her family stayed together as a family, and with the support of each other, they survived one of the worst times our country has ever seen. Undoubtedly, the Great Depression made her a much stronger person and prepared her for the struggles that would later come in life.

Another significant event that my grandmother lived through was World War II. The war had an impact on her family. Like other families, they were forced to make sacrifices for the war effort. Enduring through the Great Depression had prepared her family for the sacrifices they needed to make for World War II. Life was hard during this time as a result of being alone at home with just her parents. Since she was the only child at home, she mainly had to rely on herself for support. Her mother was extremely domineering and wanted to control as much of Alwayne’s life as possible. My grandmother would undergo her mother’s oppression up until her mother’s death in 1983; however, her mother realized that she did not deserve a daughter like my grandmother, and they were able to reconcile their relationship.

No matter what the circumstances, she endured through various trials and tribulations. She survived a difficult childhood, a difficult relationship with her mother,
the Great Depression, and World War II. Moreover, she lost two children, one to abortion and one to a miscarriage. She began to lose her family, one member at a time, beginning in the 1960s. Today, she is the only one left from her family of eight.

My grandmother is an inspiration to me. Moreover, I view her as one of the least selfish individuals I know. She is one of the most generous individuals. She always has given all that she has to her family and others. She took care of her mother and brother, John, when they were ill, and she never expected anything in return. When John was staying at the Veteran’s Hospital in Marion, Indiana, she and her husband would visit him two to three times a week. This is just one of the many instances where she has shown her love for her family. She always has shown generosity and kindness to everyone she meets. Besides taking care of her family, she and her husband, William Bartolet, donated their time and services to a local soup kitchen in Canton, Ohio. Since becoming a Christian on May 5, 1973, she has had a continuing commitment to helping the lost. Furthermore, being a devout Christian, she has instilled much in her grandchildren. Looking at my grandmother’s life, I have learned that anything is possible, that strength comes from within, and that we must surround ourselves with those we love.
Bibliography

Bartolet, Mary. Personal interview. Various dates.


Appendix

Great Depression Poem:

Hoover is my Shepherd, I am in want,
He maketh me to lie down on park benches,
He leadeth me by still factories,
He restoreth my doubt in the
Republican Party.
He guided me in the path of the
Unemployed for his party’s sake,
Yea, though I walk through the alley
 of soup kitchens,
I am hungry.
I do not fear evil, for thou art against me;
Thy Cabinet and thy Senate, they do discomfort me;
Thou didst prepare a reduction in my wages;
In the presence of my creditors thou anointed
 my income with taxes,
So my expense overruneth my income.
Surely poverty and hard times will follow me
All the days of the Republican administration.
And I shall dwell in a rented house forever.
Amen.
~E.J. Sullivan, “The 1932nd Psalm” (McElvaine 34).

Seven cent cotton and forty cent meat
How in the world can a poor man eat?
Poor getting poorer all around here,
Kids coming regular every year.
Fatten our hogs, take ‘em to town,
All we get is six cents a pound.
Very next day we have to buy it back,
Forty cents a pound in a paper sack.
~Bob Miller in Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People (McElvaine 67).

“I hope God will forgive me for voting for Hoover.
Roosevelt is the greatest leader since Jesus Christ”
World War II Facts:

**Prodigious Output: July 1, 1940 to July 31, 1945**

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*Source: Time-Life 62*
Back row: Ernie Eller
Front row: Calvin and Ella Eller

Calvin Eller & Uncle Hubert Nicholson

Alwayne Eller on running board
Calvin and Ella Eller
Front row: Charles “Chuck”, Ernest “Ernie”, Calvin, Ella, Alwayne, Claudena
Back row: James “Jim”, John

One room school house in Tate City, Georgia.
Aunt Ollie, John, Great-Grandma Eller, Joseph Rosenfield, and Gail Rhinehart
Back row: John, Cousin Hazel Rhinehart
Middle row: Aunt Ollie Eller, Joseph Rosenfield, Ella Eller, Alwayne Rosenfield
Front row: Gail Rhinehart
Tate City, Georgia—house where Ella Eller was born.

Rock beside Ella Eller place of birth.
Alwayne Rosenfield, Joseph Rosenfield, Ella Eller, John Eller
Sophie Tucker and Teddy Shapiro: “With Ted Shapiro at the Piano” as all the billing said (circa 1952). (Freedland)