

The Century: Peter Jennings Happy Daze: 1953-1959

1. What type of America did Eisenhower wish to return to? What does Eisenhower get the U.S. out of?

Eisenhower wanted to return to a peaceful and prosperous America where life was simple. Eisenhower was able to get America completely out of their old lives and begin making new ones.

2. How had the nature of work changed in America? What type of jobs were preferred?

Never before was business so rapid in America the American public was now selling and buying more consumer goods than any other country on the planet. Many people were now working in factories and big business's so unemployment went down dramatically.

3. What were women's roles in society and in the workplace? What role does marriage play in American society?

The 1950s made it so that women would basically stay at home and take care of things while the men worked and even if women worked they would often be made into secretaries. Marriage boomed on a major scale during this decade it was considered unpopular to be eligible to be married and not get married.

4. Where are Americans living in the 1950s? Describe life there!

By the end of the decade a quarter of the population was now living in suburban homes with crab grass and the white picket fence. Life was basically socializing with the neighbors, enjoying holiday's, having respectful and fun kids, and getting the newest and best merchandise.

5. What was driving America's economy in the 1950s? What does the term "keeping up with the Jones's" mean?

The American economy was powered by the peoples need to buy consumer goods. The term "keeping up with the Jones's" simply means how if one person bought a new shiny toaster then everyone needed to get a new shiny toaster.

6. What impact does television have on American culture? American business?

Television revolutionized many things but in the 1950s it changed the way people received information about current events and people believed that that the actors on TV were what an ideal American should be like. TV also helped advertise new merchandise so people would know what was now available.

7. What types of things were threatening the status quo in the 1950s? Why?

Traditionalists enjoyed the way things were in there late 1940s where life was still simple but America was advancing and soon new ideas and advancements would threaten the old way of life. These included the TV, Playboy magazines, and the new music called Rock-in-Roll.

8. Why were people attracted to Rock-n-roll? Why did Rock music & Elvis Presley offend many adults?

It was a new decade with a new type of music so for this next generation many people simply thought this was another advancement like the TV. For many adults they feared that this new music would lead their children to make bad and foolish choices that they would regret. Elvis was often unpopular with adults because they thought that his hair style and the movement of his hips would spark rebellion among the young.

9. What was the situation for black Americans in the 1950s?

The 1950s changed very little from the days of the Jim Crow laws and black and whites now had to live their lives separated. Discrimination was everywhere they couldn't drink from the same water fountains or sit on the same side of the bus or use the same bathroom.

10. How did M.L. King and the blacks of Montgomery react to the arrest of Rosa Parks? What methods of resistance do they use?

M.L.K. and his followers reacted by refusing to ride the buses so they would walk or carpool wherever they needed to go. Though their campaign was peaceful the white population saw this as an act of defiance so white officers would arrest any carpool drivers they found and white extremists; most likely KKK, would bomb M.L.K.'s home and other black establishments.

11. What was being attempted in Little Rock and why?

After the success with the desegregation of the buses at the beginning of new school year new black students tried to enter the school. They did this in hopes that it would help bring segregation to an end.

12. How do the whites of Little Rock react?

While the parents stood across the street yelling the white students as well as the National Guard and the Police would not let the black students enter. Soon the blacks students had to rush home away from the violence.

13. How is the desegregation of Central High School achieved? How is it viewed in the black community?

Three weeks after the students first tried to enter the building they returned now with the help of 101st airborne division. This led to the permanent desegregation of the school. The black community praised the president for sending soldiers to protect their children in their time of need.

14. How did American's view of the automobile change in the 1950s? What impact does its popularity have on America?

Since there were now so many different types of cars to choose from people now began to pick cars that they thought would best fit their personality. With an America that spent so much time on the road whole new business's popped up such as drive through's, roads side dinners, motels, and the thousands of miles of highway that spanned all the way from Los Angeles to New York City.

15. How does each side of the Cold War react to the revolt in Hungary in 1956?

The Soviet Union sent in troops to crush this rebellion and the Hungarians were hopeful that America would intervene and help them gain freedom. Sadly America did not want to rise starting another war so we had to turn our backs on the Hungarians. By the time the fighting stopped over 10,000 Hungarians were dead.

16. What weapons was being tested in the 1950s? How? Why?

In this era Nuclear bombs were being constantly tested in the Arizona desert to see just how powerful they can be. Both sides also began advancing rocket technology which was developed by Germany during

WW2 and now it was being used by America and Russia to be developed into Nuclear Warheads.

17. What impact does Sputnik have on America psychologically and practically?

Sputnik brought great fear to America because now we felt that Russia had a decisive edge if war should break out. It also didn't help our morale because had failed 100 times in launching a rocket and finally when someone succeeded we felt like it was the wrong guy.

18. How does the word consensus fit the 1950s?

The 1950s was the beginning of the American public's distrust of their government now people were wondering how many secrets is government holding from them. This didn't help the country at the time because if the Russians saw that America was destabilizing then they may see it as an opportunity to attack.