

Chapter 37 (14th)

The Eisenhower Era

1. Affluence and Its Anxieties
 1. The post-WWII economy was a booming economy. 25% of all homes in 1960 were less than a decade old. 83% of the new homes were in the suburbs.
 2. The field of electronics hit a milestone with the invention of the transistor. Computers and electronics could now become small (the first computers, "UNIVAC" and "ENIAC", were room-size).
 1. This gave rise to high-tech companies like IBM. The "information age" was beginning.
 3. In the Cold War atmosphere led Pres. Eisenhower to build up the Strategic Air Command. Aerospace industries thrived, like the Boeing Company which built the first passenger jet airliner, the 707.
 4. A social milestone was hit in 1956 when "white-collar" workers outnumbered "blue-collar" workers. That is to say there were more tie-wearing professionals than workers who get their hands dirty.
 1. This was bad news for labor unions. Unions membership numbers peaked in 1954.
 2. This was good news for women who found jobs as clerks and in offices.
 1. In the media, the traditional roles of women at home were championed. For example, TV shows like "Leave it to Beaver" and "Ozzie and Harriet" featured stay-at-home moms. This so-called "cult of domesticity" would soon be challenged.
 2. **Betty Friedan** started the modern feminist movement with her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). A former homemaker herself, Friedan wasn't satisfied with just being a suburban mother and felt women were selling themselves short—they could get jobs of their own and do so much more. Many women liked what they read.
 3. Friedan's book showed a split in the views of the roles of women: should women focus exclusively on their families or should they pursue careers as men did? The idea was that staying at home may sell the woman short; a career woman may sell the family short.
2. Consumer Culture in the Fifties
 1. Similar to the 1920's, the 50's were an era of consumerism.
 2. Diner's Club cards made their appearance, McDonald's started, Disneyland was built, TV's came to nearly all homes.
 1. Reflecting TV sales, \$10 billion was spent on TV ads and movie attendance went down.
 2. "Televangelists" went to airwaves to save souls, like Billy Graham (Baptist), Oral Roberts (Pentecostal Holiness), and Fulton J. Sheen (Catholic).
 3. Following Americans to the west, sports shifted westward. The Dodgers moved from Brooklyn to L.A., the New York Giants to San Francisco.
 4. Sex appeal was used to sell.
 1. **Elvis** "the Pelvis" **Presley's** dance moves were dubbed inappropriate by the older generation. On his second appearance on the "Ed Sullivan Show" he was only filmed from the waist up.
 2. **Marilyn Monroe** was featured on the cover of the new magazine *Playboy* and was called the "Sex Goddess for the Nuclear Age."
 5. Though mostly good news in good times, there was criticism.
 1. Writers criticized the new era's conformity, such as in *The Lonely Crowd* by David Riesman, *The Organization Man* by William H. Whyte, Jr., and in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* by Sloan Wilson.
 2. **John Kenneth Galbraith**, a Harvard economist, wrote *The Affluent Society*. The book saw a problem between a generally rich and affluent society despite public problems such as polluted air and garbage.
3. The Advent of Eisenhower
 1. For the 1952 presidential election, the Democrats nominated **Adlai Stevenson** the down-home Illinois governor. The Republicans opted against Robert A. Taft, an isolationist, and went with war hero **Dwight D. Eisenhower**. Richard Nixon was Eisenhower's running mate for V.P.
 2. Eisenhower was the clear favorite. He was a war hero, grandfatherly, had a big smile, and the "I like Ike" slogan and song was catchy. He attacked Stevenson as soft on communism.
 1. Ike's campaign hit a snag when Nixon was accused of having used a secret "slush fund" as a senator. Nixon went on TV and gave the "**Checkers speech**. He spoke of his dog Checkers and how his little girl loved the dog and said he wasn't a crook. People forgave him and he stayed on the ticket.
 1. Aside from pushing emotional buttons, the importance of the Checkers speech showed the new power and influence of TV.
 2. Seeing the power of TV, Ike did some question-and-answer spots for the campaign.
 3. Ike won big, 442 to 89 in the electoral.
 1. He'd promised to personally go to Korea and settle the issue.
 1. Ike did fly to Korea, but failed at ending the conflict.
 2. 7 months later, after Ike threatened nuclear bombs, an armistice was signed. Korean War's evaluated...
 1. 54,000 Americans had died (and maybe a million Chinese and Koreans). Tens of billions of dollars had been spent. Korea's still split at 38th parallel, same as the beginning of the war.

2. On the plus side, America's mission had been to uphold the Truman Doctrine and contain communism, and that mission was accomplished.
2. As president, Ike handled the military well. He seemed above petty political splits. On the down side, looking back, he could've used his popularity to propel the infant civil rights movement (he largely ignored it).
4. The Rise and Fall of Joseph McCarthy
 1. Sen. **Joseph McCarthy** claimed that Sec. of State **Dean Acheson** had knowingly hired 205 communists. Despite lacking evidence, the red-hunt was on.
 1. McCarthy's claims got wilder and out of hand. He accused Gen. George Marshall as being in some kind of communist conspiracy.
 2. Ike didn't like McCarthy and didn't want to get into the dirty business. Ike did allow purges to go on at the State Dept. Many Asian specialists were removed—when the Vietnam War started, their absence hurt.
 3. McCarthy met his downfall when he threw charges at the U.S. Army. Hearings were held on TV where the nation saw him as reckless, a bully, and making the whole thing up on the fly. He was later condemned by the Senate and died three years later of alcoholism.
5. Desegregating American Society
 1. Down South, **Jim Crow laws** still segregated the races. Though able to vote on paper, only about 20% of southern blacks were actually registered to vote (only 5% in the Deep South states).
 2. On top of the Jim Crow laws, Southern whites used an array of social norms to keep blacks second class.
 1. There was intimidation, threats of job loss, beatings and lynchings. These crimes often were unpunished.
 3. The rest of the world saw this American embarrassment. Swede **Gunnar Myrdal** wrote *An American Dilemma*. In his book, he pointed out the hypocrisy of "The American Creed" (liberty, equality, etc.) when placed against the reality of racism in America.
 1. This was a continuation of WWII's "Double-V" argument—how could the U.S. fight Hitler's racism yet let it carry on at home?
 4. The Civil Rights movement did get its beginnings after the war.
 1. There's a saying that "Baseball is life." Baseball certainly mirrors much of America's life and history and the race issue is prime example. In 1947, **Jackie Robinson**, became the first black to play in the Major Leagues. This symbolic move was the one of the first steps in the Civil Rights movement.
 2. Pres. Harry S Truman integrated the military in 1948, a major step.
 3. The NAACP instigated and won race-based cases.
 1. *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), Supreme Court ruled that black professional schools were not equal to white. This referred to the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case (1896) saying "separate but equal" facilities were okay.
 4. In 1955, **Rosa Parks** refused the custom of giving up her bus seat to white riders. Her arrest sparked the **Montgomery Bus Boycott**. The boycott was led by **Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.**, succeeded in changing the custom, and was thrust onto the national stage.
 1. By boycotting, King showed his tactic of "peaceful resistance" (AKA "nonviolent protest" or "civil disobedience"). This tactic was used by Henry David Thoreau protesting the Mexican War and by Mohandas Gandhi in India.
6. Seeds of the Civil Rights Revolution
 1. When black soldiers were lynched in 1946, Pres. Truman made the move to integrate the military (1948). But, that's as far as it went. Eisenhower and Congress did little to propel the civil rights.
 2. The only branch of government civil rights activists had to work with was the judicial branch.
 3. The "Warren court", headed by Chief Justice **Earl Warren** engaged in judicial activism to make changes.
 1. The case of ***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS*** (1954) was the bombshell. Building on the *Sweatt v. Painter* case, *Brown v. Board* said segregated public schools were unconstitutional and should be integrated with "all deliberate speed."
 2. The *Brown* case essentially overturned the *Plessy v. Ferguson* "separate but equal" case.
 3. "Deliberate speed" was slow in the South as local school districts simply didn't want to integrate.
 1. After ten years, only 2% of schools in the Deep South were integrated.
 2. Real integration of schools in the Deep South occurred roughly around 1970.
 4. Other civil rights events occurred.
 1. Though reluctant to act on civil rights, Eisenhower was forced to at **Little Rock Central High School** in 1957. The AR governor had activated the National Guard to *not* admit black students into the school. Challenged, Ike called in federal troops to admit the students.
 2. In 1957, a Civil Rights Act was passed, the first since Reconstruction. Ike said it was the "mildest" 1 possible.
 3. Martin L. King, Jr. formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to organize black churches.
 4. In Greensboro, NC, the "**sit-in**" movement began. Black students protested segregated lunch counters by sitting at white-only counters. They wouldn't get served, but their sitting down shut down the counters until the policy was changed.
 1. With success in Greensboro, the movement spread and became wade-ins, lie-ins, and pray-ins.
 2. Black students formed the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to organize efforts.
7. Eisenhower Republicanism at Home
 1. Ike had promised "dynamic conservatism"—be liberal with people, be conservative with money. Ike was a middle-of-the-road politician who didn't strike too far one way or the other.
 2. Eisenhower wanted to balance the federal budget and safeguard from "creeping socialism."

1. He cut military spending, supported transferring control of offshore oil drilling to the states, and tried to cut back on the TVA by encouraging *private* power companies instead of *government* ones.
 2. When the Salk polio vaccine was given freely, Ike's secretary of health, education, and welfare said it was socialism coming in through the back door.
 3. Under Sec. of Agriculture **Ezra Taft Benson**, the government bought up grain at the clip of \$2 million per day in hopes of keeping prices up. Farmers struggled none-the-less.
 4. Mexican gov. was concerned that illegal Mexican immigration into the U.S. would undermine the *bracero* program of legal immigrants. Ike started "Operation Wetback" to round up/return illegal Mexican immigrants.
 5. Ike again reversed the government's policy toward American Indians. FDR's "Indian New Deal" would go back to policies similar to the old Dawes Severalty Act—end tribes and assimilate into mainstream American culture. This move was unpopular and ended in 1961.
 6. Ike did keep much of the New Deal.
 1. Social Security, unemployment benefits stayed on.
 2. Ike even one-upped FDR with his **Interstate Highway Act**. It built 42,000 interstate miles. These highways did much to change the economic and social structure of America. They helped businesses and families move from downtowns to suburbs, from Main Street to Wal-Mart.
8. A New Look in Foreign Policy
1. Sec. of State **John Foster Dulles** wanted to go beyond the policy of containment. He wanted to "rollback" communism, to liberate countries that had been taken over.
 1. He proposed cutting back on military spending, but focusing on building nuclear weapon-carrying bombers in a "Strategic Air Command."
 2. The policy spoke of "massive retaliation", the threat that any nuclear action would result in massive response.
 3. This stepping up of policy centered on "deterrence" (convincing an enemy to *not* act) and it greatly increased the stakes of the Cold War.
 2. Ike wanted to ease the tension a bit with Stalin's successor **Nikita Khrushchev**, but Ike was blocked.
 1. Also, the Russians ruthlessly put down a revolution in Hungary.
9. The Vietnam Nightmare
1. Southeast Asia, for years, had been under French colonial rule. The Asians wanted France out.
 1. Vietnamese leader **Ho Chi Minh** had tried to appeal to Woodrow Wilson for self-determination, way back in 1919. He felt FDR may be sympathetic to Vietnam's cause. However, Ho Chi Minh started going more and more communist, and the U.S. started backing away.
 2. America simply wanted to let France handle the growing communism (though the U.S. paid for 80% of France's fighting).
 1. **Dienbienphu** (1954), France was surrounded, lost, & France decided to leave Southeast Asia. This created a void where communism could grow. This battle marks the real beginning of America's interest in Vietnam.
 3. A multinational conference at Geneva split Vietnam in half at the 17th parallel. North Vietnam wound up communist, a non-communist government in South Vietnam was led by **Ngo Dinh Diem**.
 4. Like NATO, Sec. Dulles created SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), a more symbolic than anything, though.
10. Cold War Crises in Europe and the Middle East
1. Russia formed the **Warsaw Pact** (1956) to balance NATO.
 2. But, the "spirit of Geneva" (the peace conference) encouraged an ease in tensions. When Ike asked for arms reductions, Khrushchev was receptive. Also, Khrushchev publicly denounced the atrocities of Stalin (Stalin had killed some 20 million of his own people).
 3. A wake-up call happened in 1956 when Hungary was protesting against the communists. The Soviets rolled in the tanks and crushed the rebellion. The U.S. gave no aid and it was clear the Cold War would continue.
 4. Communism, colonialism, and oil combined in events in the Middle East as well.
 1. The U.S. worried Russia would invade the Middle East for its oil. The CIA pulled off a *coup* in Iran and placed a young shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi in charge as essentially a dictator.
 1. This operation was successful for the time, but would come back to haunt the U.S. in the 1970's.
 2. In Egypt, nationalist **Gamal Abdel Nasser** wanted to build a dam on the Nile. America and Britain offered some help, then Nasser flirted with communism. Sec. Dulles removed the U.S. offer and Nasser took over the Suez Canal. This threatened the oil supply to the West.
 1. Britain and France attacked Egypt (Oct. 1956) without America's knowledge. Ike would not supply oil to Britain and France and they had to withdraw. The U.N. sent in peacekeeping forces.
 2. This was to end to America's "oil weapon." In 1940, the U.S. produced 2/3 of the world's oil. By 1948, the U.S. was a net *importer* of oil.
 3. Ike and Congress declared the **Eisenhower Doctrine** in 1957. It promised U.S. help to the Middle East if threatened by communism.
 1. In the Middle East, communism *wasn't* the real threat to the U.S., nationalism and the power of oil was. In 1960, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran linked with Venezuela to form OPEC (Org. of Petroleum Exporting Countries). OPEC would become a major headache for America.
11. Round Two for "Ike"
1. The election of 1956 was a repeat of '52: Eisenhower vs. Adlai Stevenson. The Democrats attacked Ike's health and said he was a part-time president—doing more golfing than governing.
 2. Times were good and Ike was popular, he won big again, 457 to 73.
 1. However, both houses of Congress did go to the Democrats.

3. Ike lost two of his top men. Sec. of State Dulles died of cancer in '59. Ike's assistant Sherman Adams had to step down due to bribery charges. There would be less golfing for the president.
 4. The labor unions had been getting ugly with things like gangsterism, fraud, bullying.
 1. The AFL-CIO (combined at this point) had to boot out the Teamsters because of their leader **James Hoffa's** rough tactics. He was convicted of jury-tampering, served a while, then disappeared (likely mobsters he'd angered finally got him).
 2. Ike got **Landrum-Griffin Act** passed (1959) to watch labor unions' bookkeeping & other monkey-business.
 5. On Oct. 4, 1957, Americans were stunned to read that the Russians had placed the first satellite in orbit, the 184 pound **Sputnik I**. The space race was on. A month later, *Sputnik II* put a 1100 pound satellite in space, and a dog.
 1. Four months later, the U.S. sent up Explorer I with America's first satellite (a tiny 2.5 pounds).
 2. Americans had comfortably assumed the U.S. led in all matters scientific; apparently, not true. Worse, the logic went: if the Soviets can put a dog in space, then they can deliver a nuclear weapon to the U.S. using ICBMs (intercontinental ballistic missiles).
 3. Rocket fever started.
 1. Ike set up the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and channeled money.
 2. By 1960, several U.S. satellites were up and ICBMs were tested.
 3. Schools also changed. After *Sputnik*, emphasis was taken from the humanities (art, drama, dance, etc.) and placed on the sciences and math. The National Defense and Education Act (NDEA) provided millions of dollars in college loans to teach science and languages.
12. The Continuing Cold War
1. Testing nuclear weapons was dirty business—radioactive fallout is not healthy. Both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. said they'd stop "dirty tests." In a world of distrust, policing this wasn't possible, however.
 2. Tension was high in 1958. Lebanon was threatened by Egypt and communism. They asked for U.S. help under the Eisenhower Doctrine. Ike sent several thousand U.S. troops and the situation was resolved without any loss of life.
 3. In 1959, Nikita Khrushchev wanted to look good for propaganda purposes. He invited Ike to Russia. Khrushchev spoke to the U.N. General Assembly and offered complete Soviet disarmament (this was hollow talk).
 1. Khrushchev met Eisenhower at Camp David. Things sounded good as Russian leader spoke of evacuating Berlin.
 2. This "spirit of Camp David" didn't last long. The next year, there was to be a summit in Paris. Berlin was to be the main topic.
 1. The night before the summit, an American U-2 spy plane was shot down. The plane had indeed been spying on Russia in their airspace (a no-no). The "**U-2 Incident**" was an embarrassment to the U.S. and to Ike. The summit fell apart.
13. Cuba's Castroism Spells Communism
1. The Latin American nations were upset that the U.S. gave *billions* to Europe (the Marshall Plan) and *millions* to them.
 1. Latin America also disliked continued American interventionism, such as a CIA *coup* in Guatemala (1954) and support to nearly any dictators who claimed to be fighting communism.
 2. In Cuba 1959, **Fidel Castro** overthrew Fulgencio Batista whom America supported. Castro began to nationalize Cuban lands, many were owned by Americans. Castro's plan was to take from large landowners then distribute the land to the people. His tactics, however, were bloody and merciless.
 1. Castro's communistic actions pleased and endeared him to the Soviet Union.
 2. Almost 1 million Cubans fled to America, mostly to Miami and Tampa (still headquarters for American cigars).
 3. In protest, the U.S. broke diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961 and started a strict economic embargo.
 4. There was talk of invoking the Monroe Doctrine to keep Russia out. Khrushchev said the doctrine was dead and threatened nuclear missiles if Cuba was attacked.
14. Kennedy Challenges Nixon for the Presidency
1. The 1960 election was a memorable one. The Republicans nominated **Richard Nixon** (V.P. candidate Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.) and the Democrats nominated **John F. Kennedy** (V.P. candidate Lyndon B. Johnson).
 2. Kennedy was Catholic, supposedly a drawback in an election. But, his faith might've *gained* as many votes as it *lost*.
 3. The 1960 TV debates were important. Kennedy was young, handsome, articulate, and spoke into the camera (to the viewers). Nixon came off as sweaty, shifty, and unshaven. As V.P. for 8 years, Nixon was likely the front-runner. But, the TV debates helped draw the race to dead even and again showed the power of TV.
 4. Kennedy won the election, 303:219 in the electoral. The popular vote differed by only 118,000 votes/68 million cast.
15. An Old General Fades Away
1. All-in-all, Eisenhower's eight years were respectable for their dignity, decency, sincerity, good-will, and moderation.
 2. The **Twenty-second Amendment** (1951) limited a president to two terms. The thinking, then, was that Ike's power would diminish his last couple of years since everyone knew he was on his way out. Instead, Ike was very active in his last couple of years as president.
 1. The St. Lawrence seaway was finished in 1959. The cities of the Great Lakes were now seaports to the ocean.
 2. Two states were added: Alaska and Hawaii in 1959.
 3. The biggest failure of Eisenhower was that he didn't embrace the infant civil rights movement. Being a moderate, Ike would not shake things up with civil rights changes.
 4. Still, Ike did more good than bad: he incorporated Democratic New Deal ideas, was restrained at using the military, he ended one war and avoided others, and presided over one of America's most prosperous decades.
16. The Life of the Mind in Postwar America

1. Marvelous literature came at this time. **Ernest Hemingway** wrote *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) and won the Nobel Prize for literature. He killed himself in 1961. **John Steinbeck** won the Prize too. He wrote *East of Eden* (1952) and *Travels with Charley*.
2. Whereas WWI had spawned tremendous literature, WWII didn't so much. There were some WWII novels...
 1. The earlier WWII novels used cutting realism, as WWI had done. **Norman Mailer** wrote *The Naked and the Dead*. **James Jones** wrote *From Here to Eternity* about Pearl Harbor.
 2. Later WWII novels turned away from realism and used fantasy. **Joseph Heller** wrote a quirky *Catch-22*. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. wrote *Slaughterhouse Five* in a crazy style that jumped all over the place.
3. Literature looked at social issues.
 1. **John Updike** criticized conformist affluence in *Rabbit, Run*. The similar theme was pursued in John Cheever's *The Wapshot Chronicle*.
4. Poets boomed too. They were usually very critical of American life as being showy and hollow. Older poets were still active, such as Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams.
 1. New poets emerged to overshadow the old. Theodore Roethke wrote about the beauty of the land, Robert Lowell's tried to apply Puritan sense to modern problems in poems like *For the Union Dead*. **Sylvia Plath** wrote the poem *Ariel* and the novel *The Bell Jar* about her mental illness. She died by suicide. Poets Anne Sexton and John Berryman committed suicide as well.
5. Playwrights wrote masterpieces. **Tennessee Williams** wrote about screwed-up southerners *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.
 1. **Arthur Miller** wrote *Death of a Salesman*. It criticized the conformity culture of the 50's. *The Crucible* dealt with the Salem witch trials, but clearly was criticism of modern McCarthyism.
 2. More criticism of middle-class life came with Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* African-American life was shown in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*.
6. There was much literature written by African-Americans.
 1. **Richard Wright** wrote *Native Son* about a black Chicago killer. **Ralph Ellison** wrote *Invisible Man* arguing that a black man can't be seen as a real man.
 2. James Baldwin wrote *The Fire Next Time* and LeRoi Jones wrote plays like *Dutchman*.
7. Southern literature had its greats. **William Faulkner** often wrote in the newly popular stream-of-consciousness style. His novels were hard to understand and psychologically charged. An example would be *The Sound and the Fury*.
 1. Flannery O'Connor wrote about her native Georgia. William Styron wrote about his native Virginia's ugly past in a novel *The Confessions of Nat Turner* about the slave 1831 rebellion.
8. Jewish authors produced great books too. **J.D. Salinger** wrote *The Catcher in the Rye* about a sassy prep school boy.
 1. Bernard Malamud wrote about Jewish families (his most famous was *The Natural*, a baseball book). **Saul Bellow** wrote of Jewish life in Chicago in books like *The Adventures of Augie March*. He won the Nobel Prize, 1977.