

The 1950s

“The Cold War”

- After World War II, most Americans agreed that another world war had to be avoided at all costs.
- Yet, in the new atomic age, the United States and the Soviet Union became caught up in a new kind of struggle – *the Cold War*.

“The Cold War”

- The Cold War was a state of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union – without actual fighting.
- Soviet Union - U.S.S.R.
(*Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*)



VS



“The Cold War”

- The roots of the Cold War are in World War II – although the Allies had worked together to defeat the Axis Powers, the United States and Britain deeply *distrusted* the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union *distrusted* the United States and Britain.



“The Truman Doctrine”

- In 1946, Winston Churchill warned of an “iron curtain” walling off Soviet-dominated nations from the rest of the world.
- President Truman grew more and more concerned about Soviet Expansion (in Europe).



The Truman Doctrine –

The U.S. pledged to help nations threatened by Soviet expansion.

The Truman Doctrine

- ***The Truman Doctrine***
 - March 12, 1947
 - Communist “*containment*”
 - In the *Truman Doctrine*, the U.S. pledged to help nations threatened by *Soviet expansion*.



The Marshall Plan

- ***The Marshall Plan*** –
 - WW II left homes, roads and factories in ***Europe*** in ruins. Secretary of State, George Marshall, took a tour of Europe and, based upon what he saw, proposed a large-scale plan to help Europe's ***economy***.
 - The ***Marshall Plan*** provided more than \$***12*** billion in aid to European nations.





“The Cold War”

- After WW II, Germany was divided into four zones:
 - American
 - French
 - British, and
 - Soviet troops

Each occupied a zone.



“West Germany”

- By 1948, the four zones were ready to be *re-united*.
- Josef Stalin (Soviet Union) on the other hand opposed unifying *Germany*.
- The U.S., Britain, and France announced their plans to join their zones into *West Germany*.



“East Germany”

- In response, Stalin closed all passageways connecting West Germany with Berlin – the blockade cut off West Germany from the rest of the eastern world.
- In 1949, a year after he imposed the blockade, Stalin ended it – the Soviet zone became East Germany.



The Berlin Wall



“The United Nations”

- Disputes in the Cold War were debated by the new international peacekeeping organization known as the **United Nations**.
- The “**UN**” came into existence in October, 1945
 - **51** original members
 - Today there are 193 members



The United Nations

- Under the “United Nations Charter”, members agreed to bring disputes before the UN for peaceful settlement.
- Preventing wars has proven difficult.
- Sometimes, nations have refused to go along with UN decisions.
- In other cases, The UN has kept crises from becoming full-scale wars.

Election of 1948

- ***Democrat*** candidate – Harry Truman
- ***Republican*** candidate – Thomas Dewey
- Most Americans believed that President Truman faced an impossible task of being re-elected in 1948.



N.A.T.O.

- As another way of keeping international order, the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (*N.A.T.O.*) was formed.
- In 1949, the United States formed alliances with friendly nations of western Europe.



The Warsaw Pact

- In 1955, the Soviet Union formed its' own military alliance with seven other Communist countries – the **Warsaw Pact**.
- As the Cold War continued, the nations of **Africa** and **Asia** became battlegrounds in the struggle between the Communist and non-Communist world.

“Red China”

- In late 1943, Americans focused special attention on **China**.
- **Chiang Kai-shek** was the ruler of China.
- For years, he had been fighting a war against the Chinese Communists, who were led by **Mao Zedong**.



“Red China”

- In 1949, the battle for the Chinese mainland ended up in a **communist** victory.
- Mao Zedong’s victory meant that the largest nation of Asia had become **communist**.

The Korean War

- From 1910 – 1945, Korea had been a *Japanese* colony.
- After WW II, Korea was divided at the **38th** Parallel (of latitude).



The Korean War

- **North** Korea was governed by Communists who were supported by the **Soviet Union**.
- A non-Communist government in South Korea was backed the the **United States**.
- In June 1950, **North** Korean soldiers swept across the **38th Parallel** into **South** Korea.
- President **Truman** chose General **Douglas MacArthur** to lead forces into Korea.

The Korean War

- The **U.N.** forces were outnumbered and poorly equipped.
- By August 1950, **Communist** troops controlled almost all of **South** Korea.
- Then, General **MacArthur** launched a daring counterattack.



The Korean War

- General MacArthur's job was to push the **North** Koreans out of **South** Korea.
- President **Truman** and his advisors wanted to punish **North** Korea for its aggression – they also wanted to **unite** the two Koreas.



The Korean War

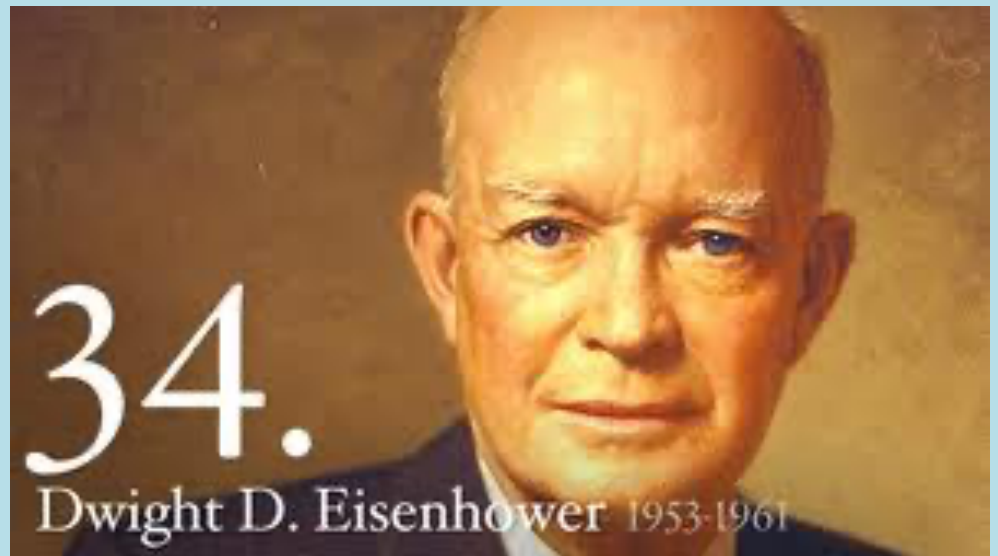
- Chinese Communists warned they **would not** “sit back with folded hands” if the U.S. invaded **North** Korea.
- By March 1951, UN forces had regained control of **South** Korea, and were looking to advance into **North** Korea.
- In the meantime, President **Truman** became more cautious of an invasion of **North** Korea.

The Korean War

- General **MacArthur** complained (publicly) that politicians in Washington, D.C. were holding him back and on his own ordered the invasion of **North** Korea.
- Angry that **MacArthur** was defying orders – President **Truman** fired **MacArthur** for *insubordination (disobeying authority)*.

The Korean War

- Peace talks to end the ***Korean War*** began in 1951.
- At first, there was little progress.
- ***Dwight D. Eisenhower*** was elected President of the U.S. in 1952.



The Korean War

- In 1953, the two sides finally signed a **cease-fire** ending the Korean War.



The Korean War

Killed in Action (KIA):

54, 246

Wounded in Action (WIA):

103, 284

Missing in Action (MIA):

8, 177

Prisoners of War (POWs):

7, 142

Estimated cost = \$54 billion

“The Red Scare”

- Between 1946 and 1950, a number of people in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain were arrested for being **Soviet** spies.
- Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were accused of stealing secrets about nuclear weapons (1951).
- *They were convicted and executed in 1953*



Ethel and Julius Rosenberg

“The Red Scare”

- Early in 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy (Wisc.) announced that he had a list of **205** State Department employees who were Communist party members.
- In 1954, McCarthy claimed there were even Communists in the United States' army
- McCarthy's claim was never proven, yet it gained him national recognition.



The “Arms Race”

- As the Cold War continued, the U.S. and the **Soviet Union** entered the “arms race”.
- Each side built up its’ supply of **nuclear weapons**.



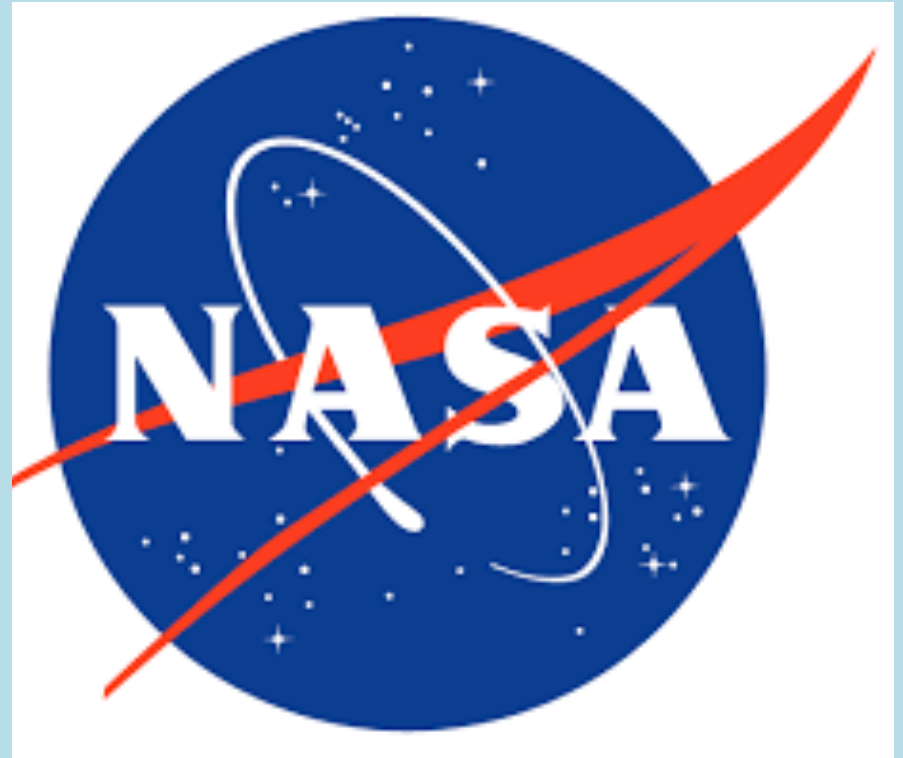
The “Space Race”

- In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the world's first artificial satellite, Sputnik.
- The new leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, claimed that the Soviet Union would soon surpass the United States in the “arms race”.



The “Space Race”

- In 1957, President Eisenhower approved a U.S. space program to catch up in the “new” Cold War competition.
- The ***National Aeronautics and Space Administration*** (NASA) was founded in 1958.



Life in the United States

- The **Eisenhower** years were prosperous (good) for many Americans.
- In 1956, he was **easily** re-elected.
- During the 1940s and 1950s, **population** experts talked about a “***baby boom***.”
- The population of the United States grew by **29 million** people!



In some respects, the 1950s seemed like a return to the 1920s.

Life in the United States

- Life in the suburbs grew 40 times faster than cities.
- The government encouraged the building of new houses by offering low-interest loans to World War II veterans.
- As people moved to the suburbs, cars once again became important to American life.
- By 1960, 9 out of 10 families living in the suburbs owned a car.



The Interstate Highway Act

- In 1956, Congress passed an act that called for a network of **high-speed** roads that linked the entire nation.
- Local governments would spend over **\$250** billion to complete the largest public works project in history!



The Television

- The product that probably had the greatest effect on American life in the 1950's was the television.
 - 1946 = **17,000** television sets
 - 1950's = **7 million** television sets sold **each year!**



The Television

- Television brought news, sports, and entertainment into people's homes everyday.

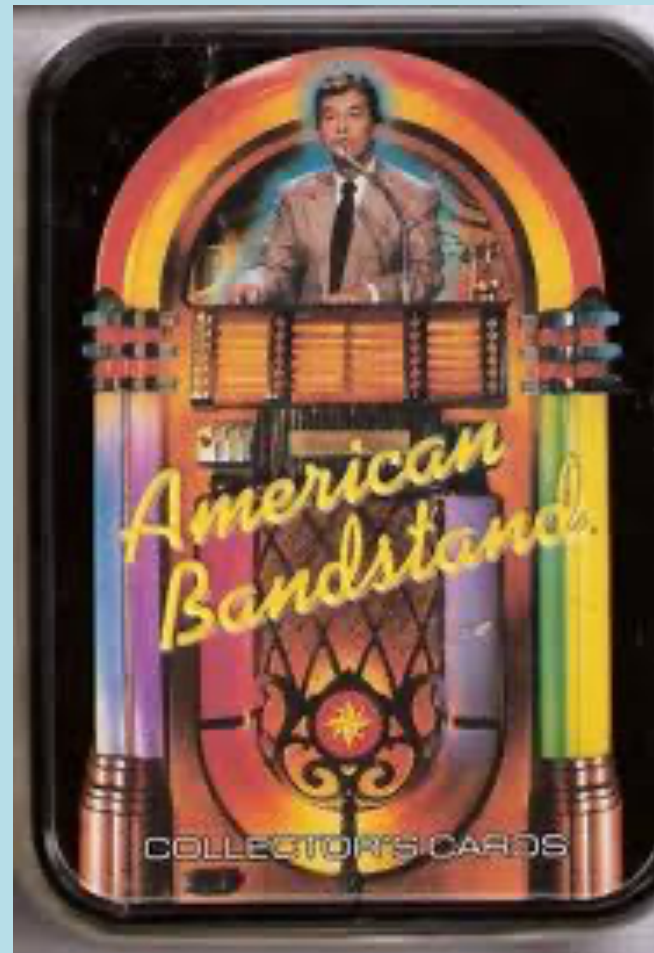


- In 1952 and 1956, millions of Americans, for the first time ever, watched political conventions.



Youth Culture

- Every week, **20 million** teenagers tuned into *American Bandstand* to see and hear rock n' roll stars perform their latest hits.



The Television

- Television programs such as Howdy Doody, and I Love Lucy captivated American audiences.
- As more and more families bought television sets, television became a major influence on how Americans lived their lives!



The Television



Youth Culture

- Hula-Hoops, poodle skirts, sock hops, rock & roll all emerged as part of a mass youth culture.

