**Chapter 27, Section 2: The Affluent Society**

**I. American Abundance** *(pages 814–816)*

**A.** In 1958 economist **John Kenneth Galbraith** published *The Affluent Society*, in which he claimed that the United States and some other industrialized nations had created an “economy of abundance.” New business techniques and improved technology had produced a standard of living never before thought possible.

**B.** As the mechanization of farms and factories increased, many Americans began working in **white-collar** jobs, such as sales and management. In 1956, for the first time, white-collar workers outnumbered **blue-collar** workers—people who perform physical labor in industry.

**C.** White-collar employees generally worked for large corporations, some of which expanded into overseas corporations. **Multinational corporations** were located close to important raw materials and used cheaper labor forces, making them more competitive. The 1950s also had an increase in **franchises,** in which a person owns and operates one or several stores of a chain operation.

**D.** Cooperate leaders wanted employees who could conform to company standards. In the 1950s book *The Lonely Crowd*, sociologist **David Riesman** argued that the “innerdirected” man was giving way to the “other-directed” man, with concerns regarding company approval outweighing personal values.

**E.** The rise in luxury products led to the growth of more sophisticated advertising. The advertising industry became the fastest-growing industry in the United States, using new marketing techniques to sell products.

**F. Levittown,** New York, one of the country’s earliest suburbs, was a mass-produced residential community spearheaded by Bill Levitt. Between 1947 and 1951, other evittown–type communities were built all over the United States. The suburbs came to symbolize the American dream, while others saw it as another example of American conformity.

**Discussion Question**

What evidence supported John Kenneth’s Galbraith’s idea of an “economy of abundance?” *(Between 1940 and 1955, personal income for many American’s almost tripled.* *Americans produced more than they could use, and there was a huge increase in the number of* *homeowners.)*

**II. The 1950s Family** *(pages 816–817)*

**A.** The 1950s changed the American family as families grew larger and women entered the workforce.

**B.** The period between 1945 and 1961 is known as the **baby boom,** in which more than 65 million children were born in the United States. Many young couples had delayed marriage until after the war and were now ready to marry and begin a family. Other factors in this boom were the GI benefits that encouraged the growth of families, and television and magazines promoting pregnancy and large families.

**C.** In the 1950s, although many women were expected to remain at home, the number of women who held jobs outside the home increased.

**Discussion Question**

Why did the American birthrate explode after World War II? *(Many young couples had delayed marriage until after the war and were now ready to marry and begin a family. Other factors in this boom were the GI benefits that encouraged the growth of families, and television and magazines promoting pregnancy and large families.)*

**III. Technological Breakthroughs** *(pages 817–819)*

**A.** In 1946 scientists working for the United States Army developed one of the earliest computers. It was called ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), and it made military calculations. Later, a newer model called UNIVAC (Universal Automatic Computer) could handle business data and led to the computer revolution.

**B.** In the 1950s, there were many medical breakthroughs such as the development of antibiotics; new drugs for arthritis, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease; and advances in surgical techniques.

**C.** Polio epidemics swept the nation in the 1940s and 1950s. **Jonas Salk** developed an injectable vaccine that prevented polio. New cases of polio declined dramatically. American scientist Albert Sabin later developed an oral vaccine for polio, causing the threat of polio to disappear in the United States.

**D.** The Soviet Union launched the world’s first space satellite, *Sputnik*, in October 1957. The United States launched its own satellite in January 1958.

**E.** American engineers were making commercial planes smoother and faster.

**Discussion Question**

Why did American families in the 1950s have increased free time? *(The computer and improvements in communication and transportation systems allowed many Americans to work more quickly and efficiently.)*