**Chapter 27, Section 4: The Other Side of American Life**

**I. Poverty Amidst Prosperity** *(pages 828–831)*

**A.** In the 1950s, 1 in 5 Americans lived below the **poverty line,** a figure the government set to reflect the minimum income required to support a family.

**B.** Writer **Michael Harrington** chronicled poverty in the United States during the 1950s in his book, *The Other America*. He described how some Americans lived in the run-down and hidden communities of America. The poor included single mothers, elderly, minority immigrants, rural Americans, Appalachians, and Native Americans.

**C.** As many Americans moved to the suburbs, the urban areas became home to poorer, less educated minority groups. In the 1950s, the government tried to improve conditions with **urban renewal** programs, in which they tore down slums and built high-rise projects.

**D.** In 1958 African American salaries were only 51 percent of what whites earned. Although the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality pushed for equality and economic opportunities for African Americans, they had little success.

**E.** Through the **Bracero program,** some 5 million Mexican immigrants came to the United States to help with agricultural needs. These laborers struggled with poverty and worked in unbearable conditions for very little pay.

**F.** Native Americans were the poorest group in the nation. Through the **termination policy,** the federal government withdrew all official recognition of the Native Americangroups as legal entities and made them follow the same laws as white citizens.

**G.** During the 1950s, many impoverished families left Appalachia in search of a better way of life.

**Discussion Question**

Which groups of Americans lived below the poverty line in the 1950s? *(Americans who lived below the poverty line in the 1950s included single mothers, the elderly, people living in the inner cities, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and people living in Appalachia.)*

**II. Juvenile Delinquency** *(pages 831–832)*

**A.** An important social problem in the United States during the 1950s was a rise in, or at least a rise in the reporting of, **juvenile delinquency**—antisocial or criminal behavior of youths. Delinquency in the 1950s cut across class and racial lines. While most teens did not participate in any illegal activity, teens were stereotyped, especially if they had long hair and dressed in an unconventional manner.

**B.** As baby boomers started attending school, enrollments increased greatly. During the 1950s, schools suffered a shortage of buildings and teachers.

**C.** Because the Soviet Union had launched the first space satellites, the nation’s educational institutions were criticized for a lack of technical education. In response to the criticisms, efforts were made to improve math and scientific education in U.S. schools.

**Discussion Question**

What were some reasons people used to explain the rise in juvenile delinquency? *(It was blamed on a variety of reasons including poverty, lack of religion, television, movies, comics, racism, busy parents, rising divorce rates, and anxiety over the military draft.)*