

# POST WAR PROSPERITY



# The Big Idea

- Post World War II, the US experienced economic growth and prosperity.

# America Post World War II

- Soldiers Returning Home
- Worry about a post-war drop in the economy.
- The demand for consumer goods rose sharply after the war.
- Racial minorities began to press for better opportunities.

# 1955 COST OF LIVING

## LIVING

New House	\$10,950.00
Average Income	\$4,137.00 per year
New Car	\$1,910.00
Average Rent	\$87.00 per month
Tuition to Harvard University	\$800.00 per year
Movie Ticket	.75¢ each
Gasoline	.23¢ per gallon
United States Postage Stamp	.3¢ each

## FOOD

Granulated Sugar	.85¢ for 10 pounds
Vitamin D Milk	.92¢ per gallon
Ground Coffee	.80¢ per pound
Bacon	.58¢ per pound
Eggs	.27¢ per dozen
Fresh Ground Hamburger	.56¢ per pound
Fresh Baked Bread	.18¢ per loaf

# Cost Of Living in the United States 1975 vs 2015

<b>Good or Service</b>	<b>1975 Cost</b>	<b>1975 Cost</b> <small>(In 2015 Money)</small>	<b>Cost 2015</b>
New House <sup>1</sup>	\$48,000	\$209,417	\$270,200
Median Income	\$12,686	\$55,347	\$51,759
New Car	\$3,800	\$16,578	\$31,252
Minimum Wage	\$2.10/hour	\$9.16/hour	\$8.25/hour
Public College <sup>2</sup>	\$1,819	\$7,938	\$18,943
Private College <sup>2</sup>	\$3,776	\$16,475	\$42,419
Movie Ticket	\$2.03	\$8.86	\$8.17
Gasoline	\$0.59/gallon	\$2.57/gallon	\$2.38/gallon
Postage Stamp	\$0.13	\$0.57	\$0.49
Sugar	\$0.65/5 pounds	\$2.84/5 pounds	\$3.25/5 pounds
Milk	\$1.65/gallon	\$7.20/gallon	\$3.49/gallon
Coffee	\$1.12/pound	\$4.89/pound	\$4.91/pound
Eggs	\$0.84/dozen	\$3.66/dozen	\$2.08/dozen
Bread	\$0.28/pound	\$1.22/pound	\$1.43/pound

# Servicemen's Readjustment Act (1944)

- Known as the GI Bill
- Provided veterans of World War II benefits.
- The GI Bill helped produce a highly trained workforce and reduce unemployment by allowing veterans to attend school.
- Supplied loans to veterans to buy homes, to go back to school, start businesses, and provided money to those who could not find work.

**VETERANS** - if buying a Farm,  
Home or Business, learn about  
**GUARANTEED LOANS**



# The Baby Boom



- The baby boom refers to the increased birthrate that occurred from 1946 to 1964.
- Returning soldiers were ready to settle down began to marry and raise families.

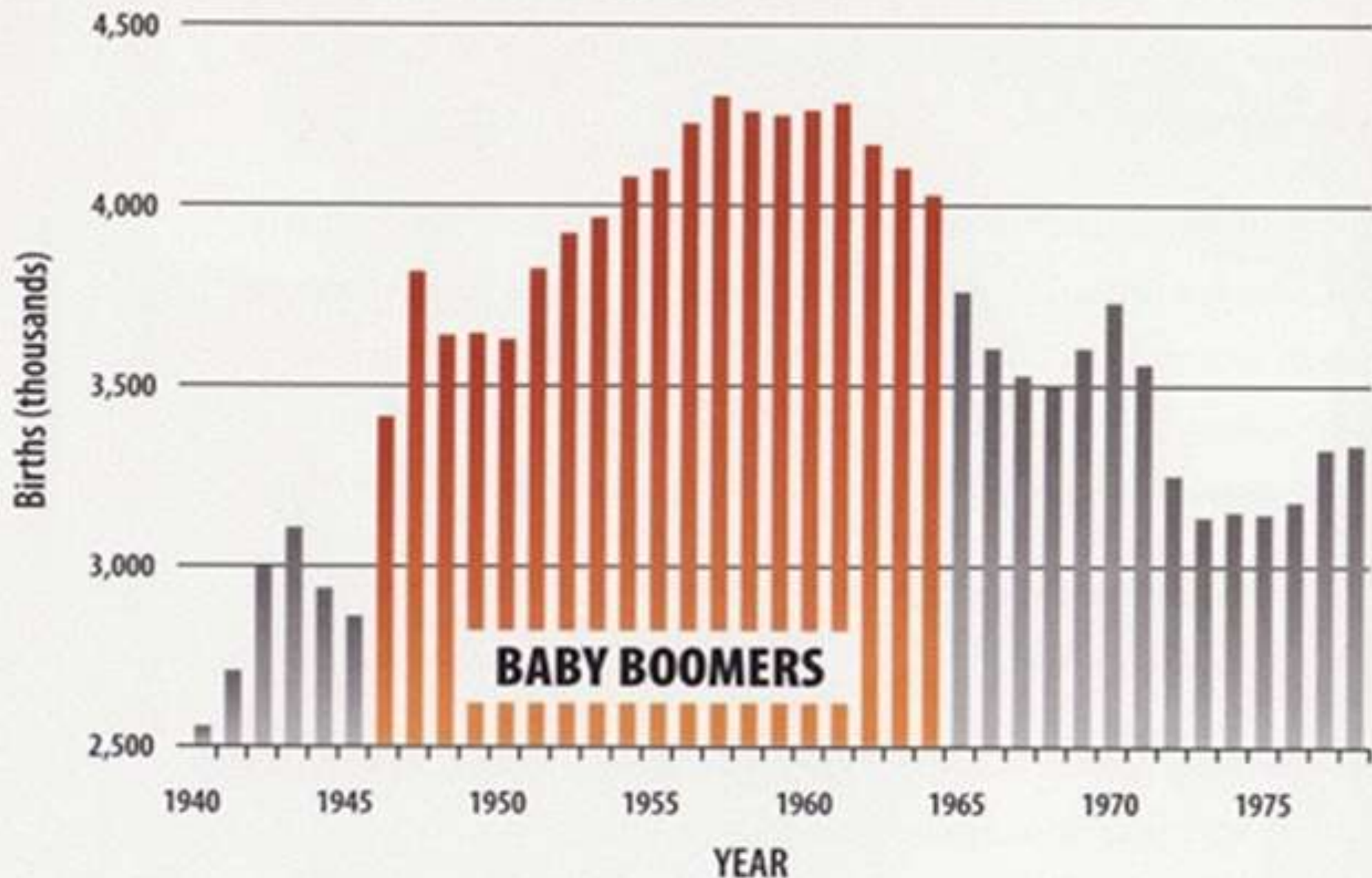


# The Birth Rate

- Economic growth helped couples afford having children. Because of this, the birth rate soared.
- A country's birthrate is calculated as the number of births per 1,000 women. The U.S. birthrate jumped from 83.4 in 1945 to 100.4 in one year. The birthrate continued to climb to its peak of 117.7 in 1957. It did not return to below 90 until 1967. From 1946 to 1964, Americans gave birth to 75.9 million babies.

# U.S. BIRTHS: 1940-1980

(Baby Boomer Generation in Orange)



# Video 1







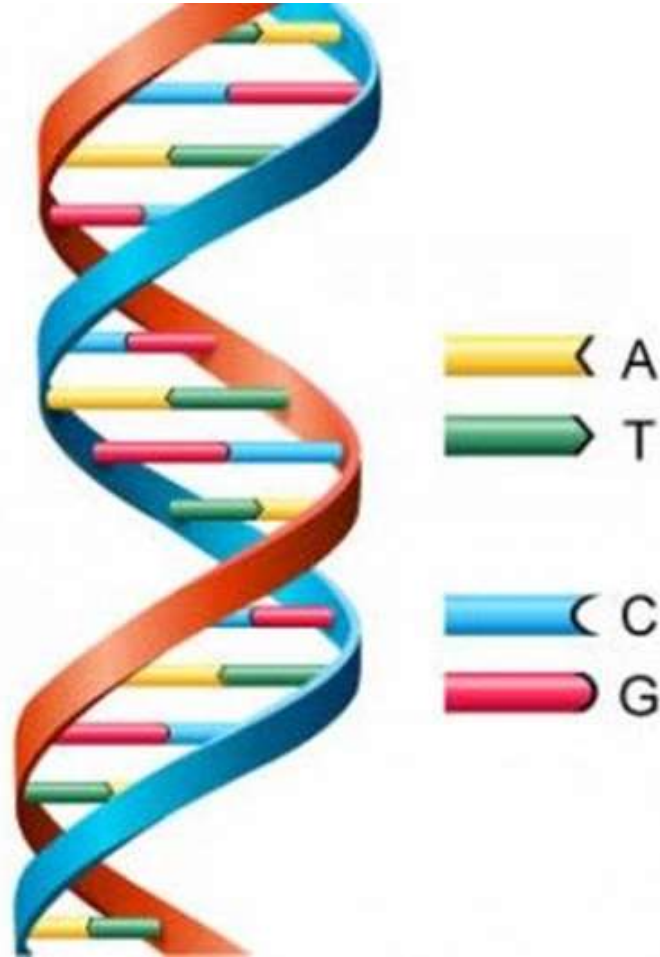
# Prosperity in America

- The demand for goods brought an increase in jobs.
  - Farmers found jobs in urban manufacturing areas.
- Manufacturing jobs paid good salaries, so more manufacturing jobs meant more workers with enough income to purchase more consumer goods.
- U.S. manufacturing was thriving because the U.S. was helping rebuild Europe.

# Prosperity in America

- Many of America's major industries were booming because of World War II.
- Consumer spending rose.
  - ▣ 1946, \$143 Billion
  - ▣ 1961, \$335 Billion
- The number of white collar jobs rose.
  - ▣ Managers, Accountants, Sales, Banking, Advertising

# The Nation & Health



- The 1950's was a period of medical breakthroughs.
- The polio vaccine was discovered.
- The Double Helix of DNA was discovered which assisted the medical field.



# Closing the Gap

- Throughout the 1950s, income and wealth inequality decreased.
- The average real income of the top 10 percent of earners grew by 23 percent, while the average real income of the entire country increased by 28 percent.
- Many found that the economic boom created new opportunities, but not all Americans shared equally in the prosperity.

# Women & the Workforce

- Women were pressured to give up their war time jobs to soldiers returning home.
- Women were considered the home makers.
- Advertising focused on the nuclear family with a stay-at-home mom, a father who worked, and several children.
- In spite of this, the number of women working increased to around 60%.
  - ▣ Families wanted/needed a 2<sup>nd</sup> income

# Video 2



# Poverty & Race

- Poverty decreased dramatically.
  - ▣ 34.5 million families were still living in poverty.
- More than half of African American families lived below the poverty level.
- Segregation was still an issue.

# Native Americans

- Beginning in 1945, however, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs began programs called termination and relocation to try to assimilate and integrate Native Americans.
- Native American people were offered free job and general education, temporary housing, and small amounts of cash.

# Native Americans

- ❑ Relocation programs encouraged nearly 750,000 Native Americans to move to cities.
- ❑ The job training and education offered prepared people for only the lowest-paid jobs.
- ❑ Many faced problems of poverty and alcoholism.
- ❑ Many ended up back on reservations.

# Federal-Aid Highway Act (1956)

- Idea thought of by Dwight. D Eisenhower
- Created a 41,000-mile National System of Interstate and Defense Highways
- Would assist in travel, commerce, and defense activities.



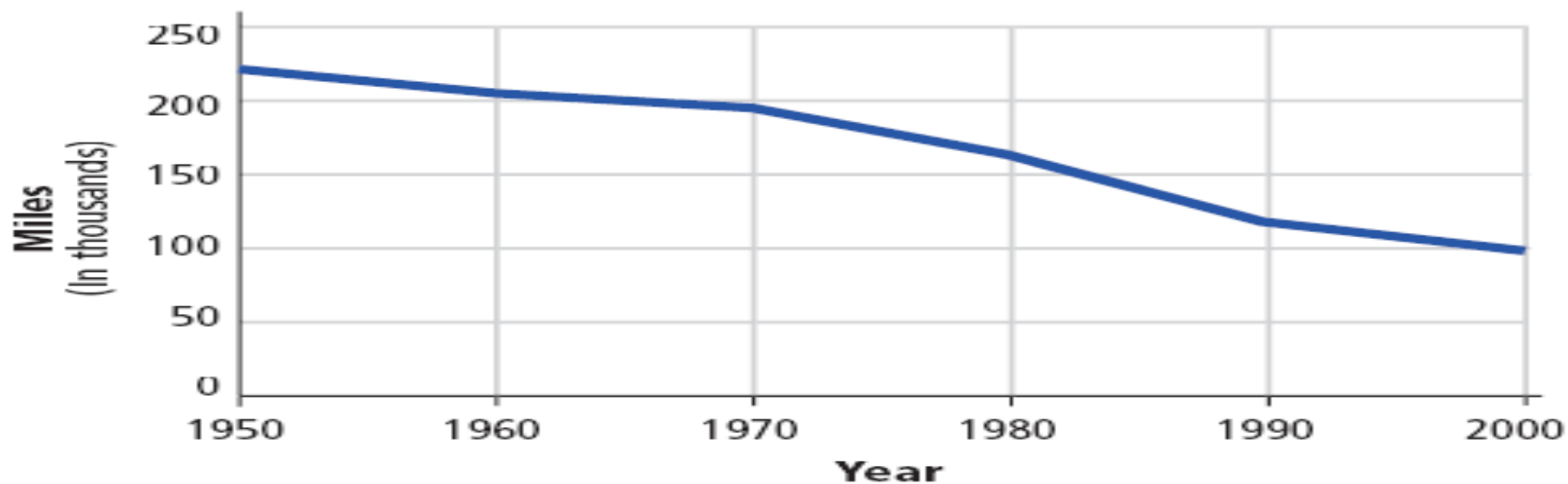
# Impact of Highways

1. Decreased travel time.
2. Development of suburbs.

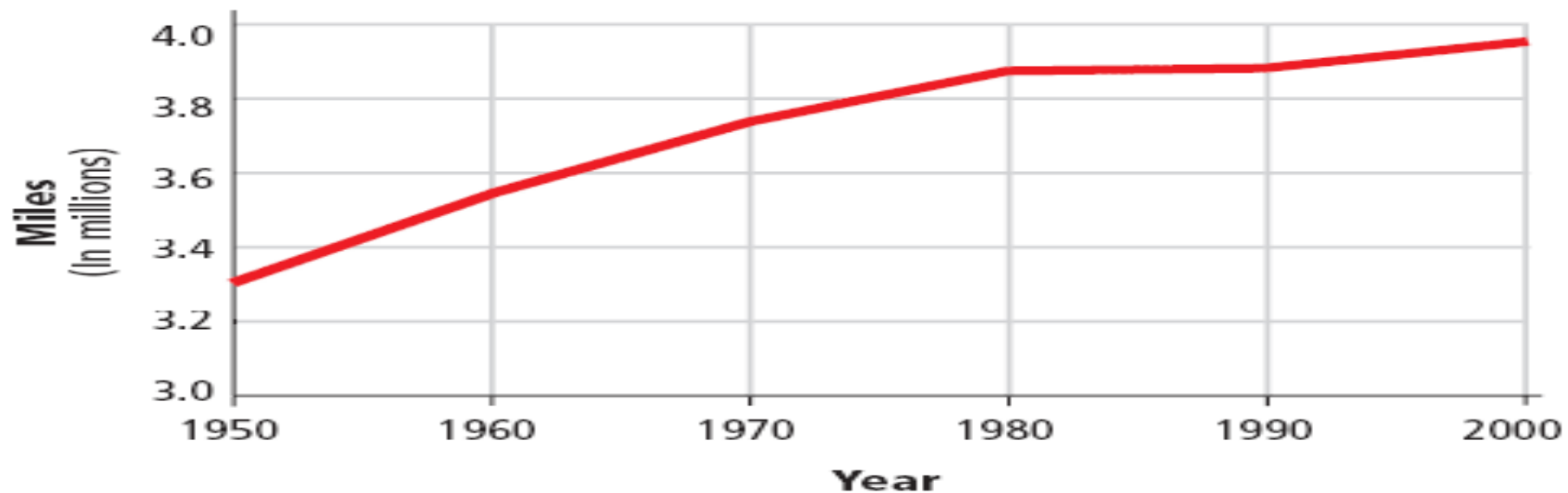


# TRANSPORTATION MILEAGE, 1950–2000

## Miles of Railroad in Service

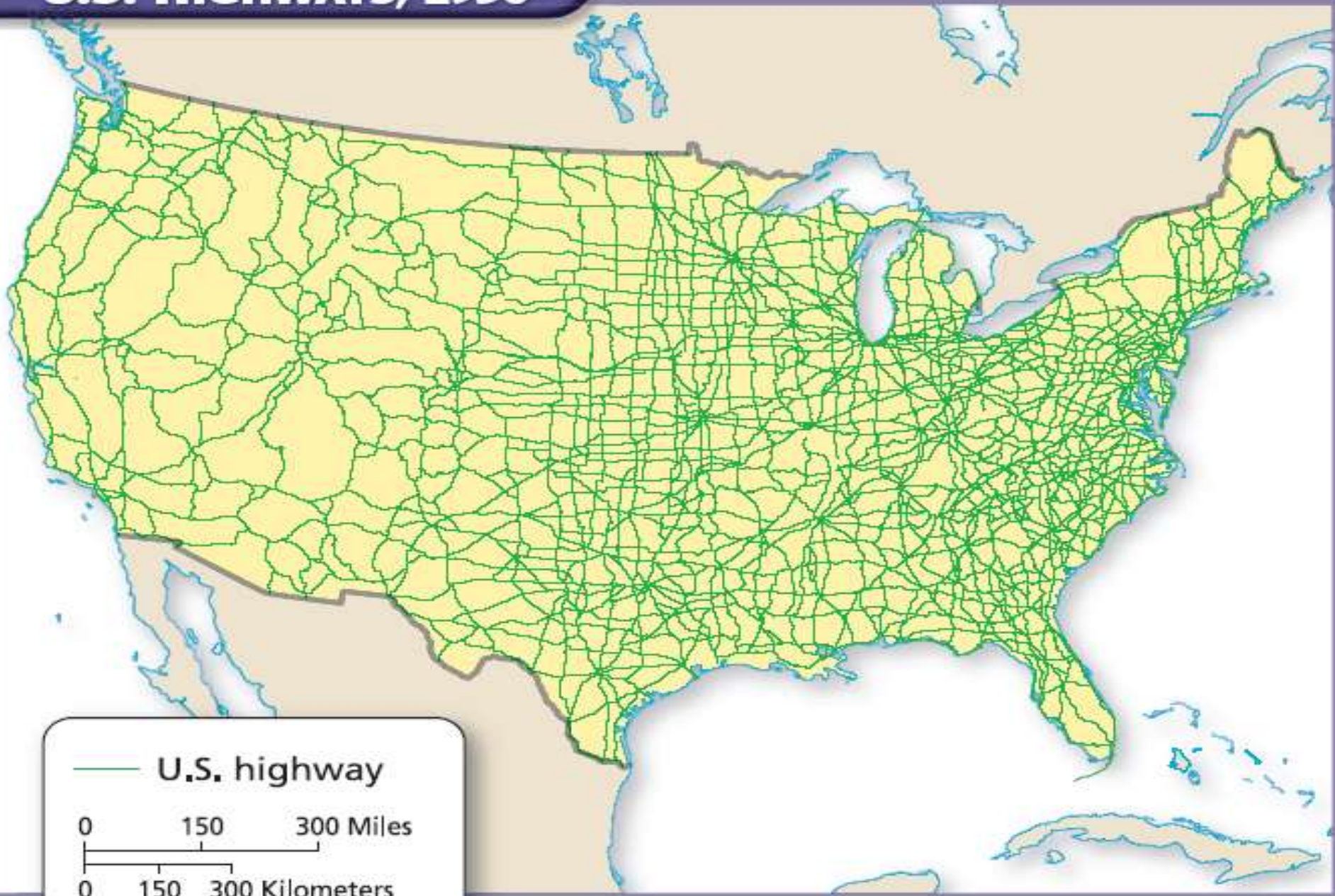


## Miles of Highway in Service



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

# U.S. HIGHWAYS, 1950



— U.S. highway

0 150 300 Miles

0 150 300 Kilometers

Albers equal-area projection

# U.S. HIGHWAYS, 2000



— U.S. interstate

— U.S. highway

0 150 300 Miles

0 150 300 Kilometers

Albers equal-area projection

# New Communities

- The housing industry began following the assembly line to mass produce homes and developing communities.
- Levittown was the most famous of the new suburban communities.
- The U.S. population was beginning a shift in settlement to the so-called Sunbelt—the southern and western parts of the country.

## HISTORY CLOSE-UP

# Building Levittown

Levittown, New York was a large community that eventually included more than 17,000 mass-produced homes. Levittown became a symbol for the many similar suburban towns that sprang up during the postwar years.

Developers kept costs down by using mass-production assembly-line techniques.

The Levittown planners created shopping areas, recreation centers, schools, and other attractive features for residents.

The houses were fairly inexpensive. Many American families could afford to buy a new, single-family home with little or no down payment.

Although all the houses were similar, builders did use different colors for the siding and roofing.

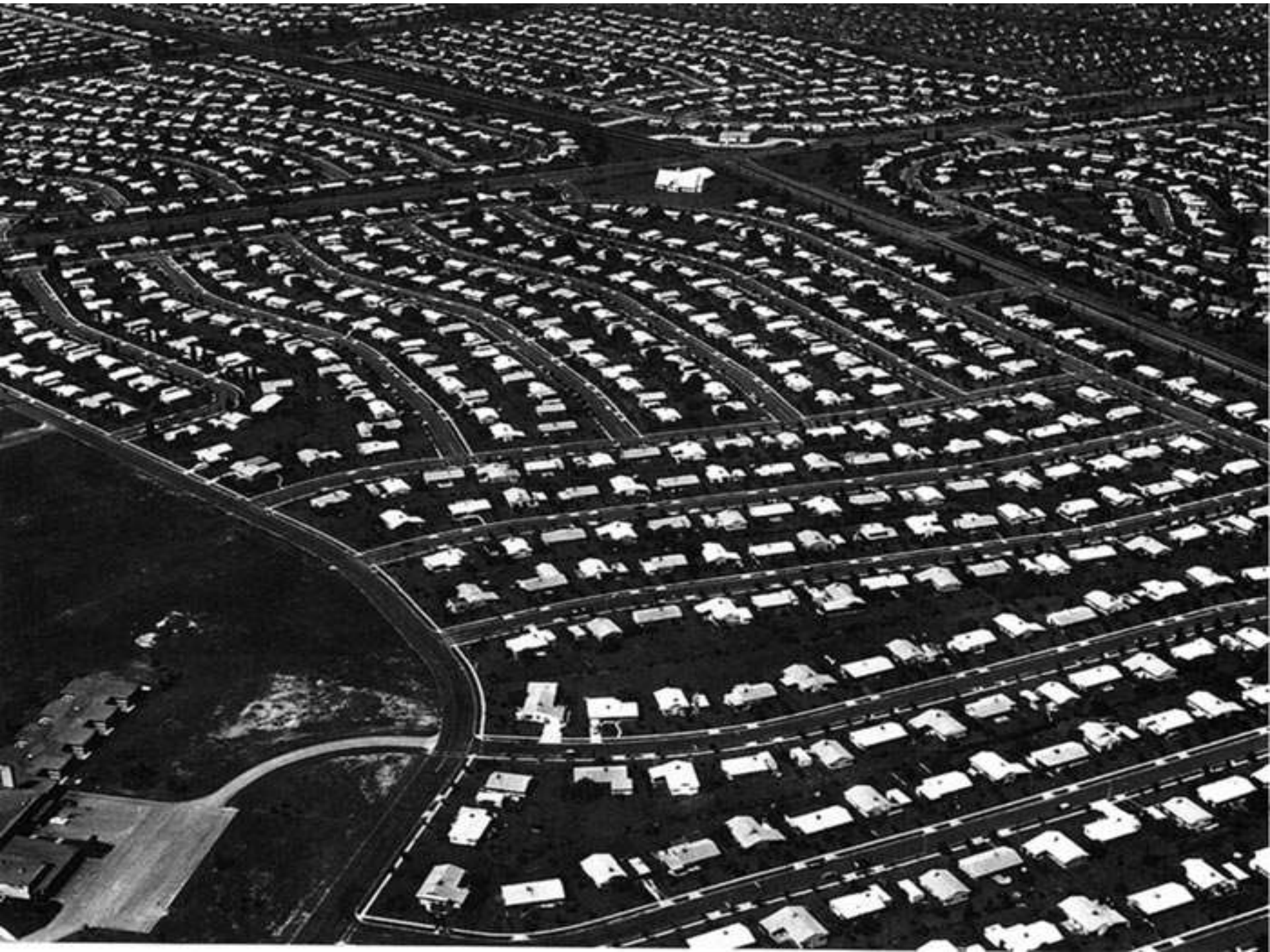
Skills  
FOCUS

INTERPRETING INFOGRAPHICS

Scenes such as this were common in the 1950s.

**Analyzing Information** What might make such communities attractive places to live?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H18



One of four different styles of the Jubilee



One of four different styles of the Levittowner



# *Levittown* IN 1957



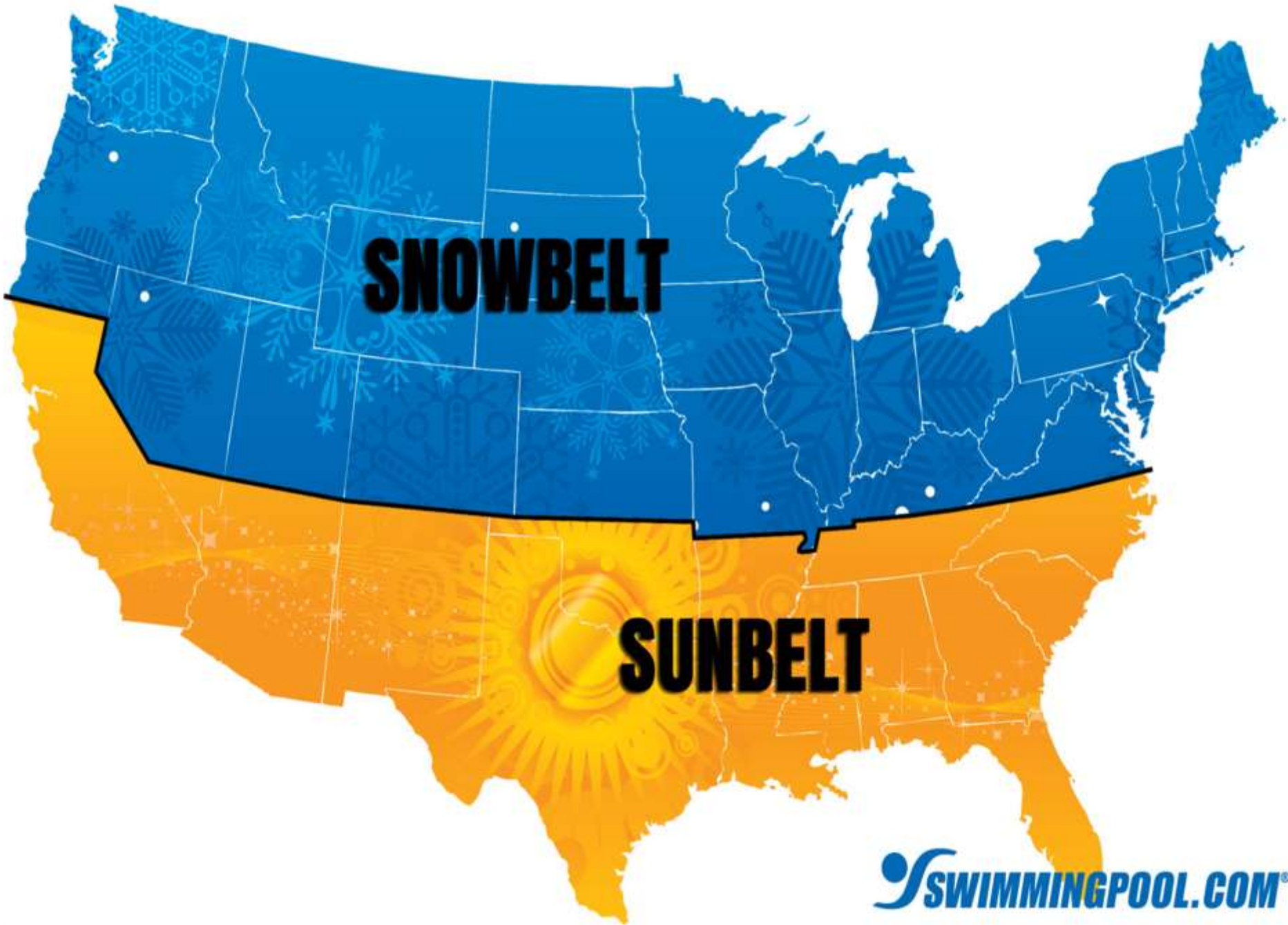
One of five different styles of the Pennsylvania



One of four different styles of the Country Clubber







**SNOWBELT**

**SUNBELT**

# Order of Operations

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- Complete the Post War Prosperity Assignment