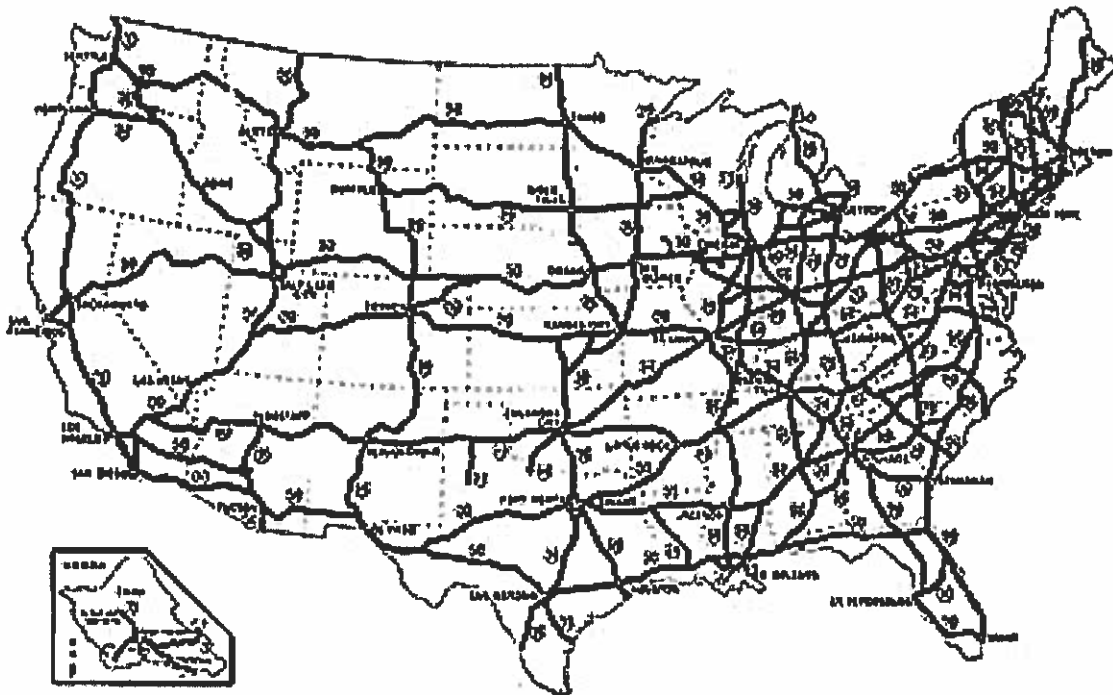
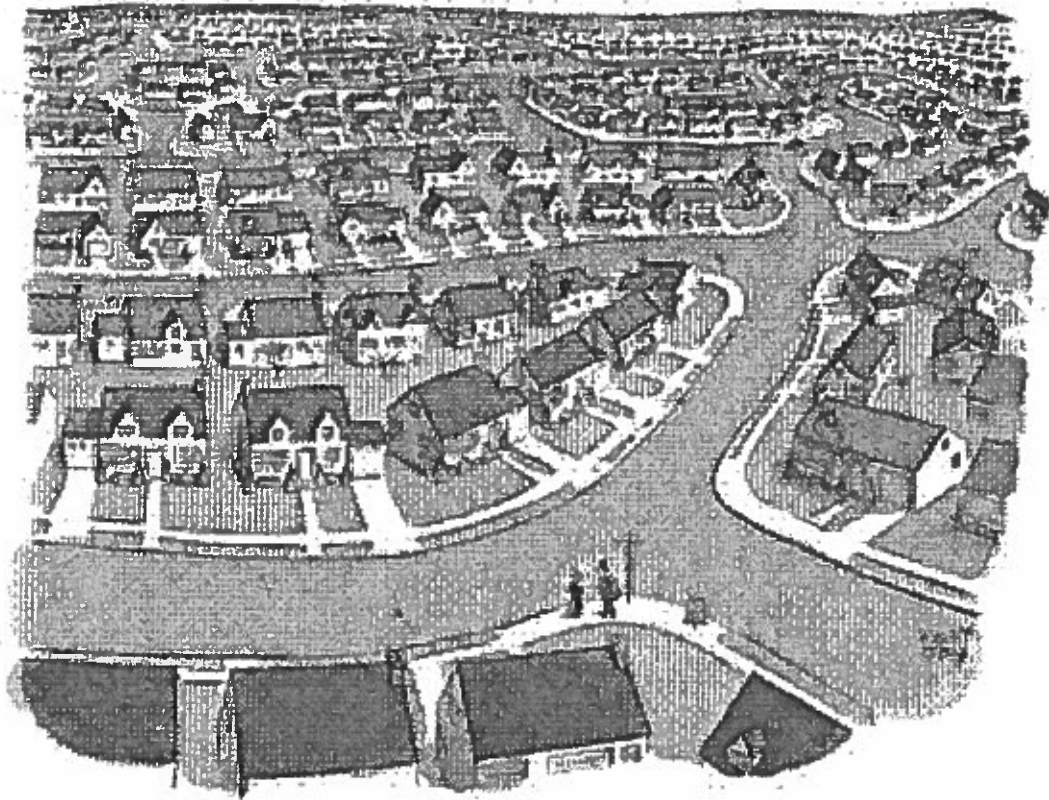


**THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER SYSTEM OF  
INTERSTATE AND DEFENSE HIGHWAYS**



1. Economically, how did the Interstate Highway System impact the United States? Think of terms of businesses and the individual consumer.
2. Socially, how did the Interstates impact the United States?
3. Explain the correlation between the building of the interstates and the growing trend of suburban expansion.
4. Based on your answers above, what impact did the interstate have on the socio-economics of cities?

**This cartoon spoofs the suburban housing developments of the 1950s that gave Americans the cookie-cutter homes and neighborhoods they craved, known as Levittowns.**



*"For Mrs. Edward M. Barnes. Where do I live?"*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What words or phrases would you use to describe the housing development depicted in this cartoon?
2. How do you think the woman in the cartoon, Mrs. Edward M. Barnes, feels about living in a suburban development?
3. Why do you think Americans in the 1950s wanted to live in a housing development like this one? Cite evidence from your textbook to support your opinion.
4. According to the cartoon, what was one negative aspect of postwar suburban developments?

## 27-3 Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*, 1957

*The most influential and prodigious of the "Beat generation" writers, Jack Kerouac documented the lives of young people who had turned their backs on what they saw as the stifling conformity and materialism of postwar America. Although written years earlier, Kerouac could not get *On the Road* published until 1957. His difficulties with publishers, along with the vitriolic critical attacks on his work, helped drive Kerouac to alcoholism and death at age 47. SOURCE: Jack Kerouac, "On the Road (1957), pp. 104-107, 110-112.*

The parties were enormous; there were at least a hundred people at a basement apartment in the West Nineties. People overflowed into the cellar compartments near the furnace. Something was going on in every corner, on every bed and couch—not an orgy but just a New Year's party with frantic screaming and wild radio music. There was even a Chinese girl. Dean ran like Groucho Marx from group to group, digging everybody. Periodically we rushed out to the car to pick up more people. Damion came. Damion is the hero of my New York gang, as Dean is the chief hero of the Western. They immediately took a dislike to each other. Damion's girl suddenly socked Damion on the jaw with a roundhouse right. He stood reeling. She carried him home. Some of our mad newspaper friends came in from the office with bottles. There was a tremendous and wonderful snowstorm going on outside. Ed Dunkel met Lucille's sister and disappeared with her; I forgot to say that Ed Dunkel is a very smooth man with the women. He's six foot four, mild, affable, agreeable, bland, and delightful. He helps women on with their coats. That's the way to do things. At five o'clock in the morning we were all rushing through the backyard of a tenement and climbing in through a window of an apartment where a huge party was going on. At dawn we were back at Tom Saybrook's. People were drawing pictures and drinking stale beer. I slept on a couch with a girl called Mona in my arms. Great groups filed in from the old Columbia Campus bar. Everything in life, all the faces of life, were piling into the same dank room. At Ian MacArthur's the party went on. Ian MacArthur is a wonderful sweet fellow who wears glasses and peers out of them with delight. He began to learn "Yes!" to everything, just like Dean at this time, and hasn't stopped since. To the wild sounds of Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray blowing "The Hunt," Dean and I played catch with Marylou over the couch; she was no small doll either. Dean went around with no undershirt, just his pants, barefoot, till it was time to hit the car and fetch more people. Everything happened. We found the wild, ecstatic Rollo Greb and spent a night at his house on Long Island. Rollo lives in a nice house with his aunt; when she dies the house is all his. Meanwhile she refuses to comply with any of his wishes and hates his friends. He brought this ragged gang of Dean, Marylou, Ed, and me, and began a roaring party. The woman prowled upstairs; she threatened to call the police. "Oh, shut up, you old bag!" yelled Greb. I wondered how he could live with her like this. He had more books than I've ever seen in all my life—two libraries, two rooms loaded from floor to ceiling around all four walls, and such books as the Apocryphal Something-or-Other in ten volumes. He played Verdi operas and pantomimed them in his pajamas with a great rip down the back. He didn't give a damn about anything. He is a great scholar who goes reeling down the New York waterfront with original seventeenth-century musical manuscripts under his arm, shouting. He crawls like a big spider through the streets. His excitement blew out of his eyes in stabs of fiendish light. He rolled his neck in spastic ecstasy. He lisped, he writhed, he flopped, he moaned, he howled, he fell back in despair. He could hardly get a word out, he was so excited with life. Dean stood before him with head bowed, repeating over and over again, "Yes... Yes... Yes." He took me into a corner. "That Rollo Greb is the greatest, most wonderful of all. That's what I was trying to tell you—that's what I want to be. I want to be like him. He's never hung-up, he goes

every direction, he lets it all out, he knows times, he has nothing to do but rock back and forth. Man, he's the end! You see, if you go like him all the time you'll finally get it."

"Get what?"

"TT! IT! I'll tell you—now no time, we have no time now." Dean rushed back to watch Rollo Greb some more.

George Shearing, the great jazz pianist, Dean said, was exactly like Rollo Greb. Dean and I went to see Shearing at Birdland in the midst of the long, mad weekend. The place was deserted, we were the first customers, ten o'clock. Shearing came out, blind, led by the hand to his keyboard. He was a distinguished-looking Englishman with a stiff white collar, slightly beefy, blond, with a delicate English-summer's-night air about him that came out in the first rippling sweet number he played as the bass-player leaned to him reverently and thrummed the beat. The drummer, Denzil Best, sat motionless except for his wrists snapping the brushes. And Shearing began to rock; a smile broke over his ecstatic face; he began to rock in the piano seat, back and forth, slowly at first, then the beat went up, and he began rocking fast, his left foot jumped up with every beat, his neck began to rock crookedly, he brought his face down to the keys, he pushed his hair back, his combed hair dissolved, he began to sweat. The music picked up. The bass-player hunched over and socked it in, faster and faster, it seemed faster and faster, that's all. Shearing began to play his chords; they rolled out of the piano in great rich showers, you'd think the man wouldn't have time to line them up. They rolled and rolled like the sea. Folks yelled for him to "Go!" Dean was sweating; the sweat poured down his collar. "There he is! That's him! Old God! Old God Shearing! Yes! Yes! Yes!" And Shearing was conscious of the madman behind him, he could hear every one of Dean's gasps and imprecations, he could sense it though he couldn't see. "That's right!" Dean said. "Yes!" Shearing smiled; he rocked. Shearing rose from the piano, dripping with sweat; these were his great 1949 days before he became cool and commercial. When he was gone Dean pointed to the empty piano seat. "God's empty chair," he said. On the piano a horn sat; its golden shadow made a strange reflection along the desert caravan painted on the wall behind the drums. God was gone; it was the silence of his departure. It was a rainy night. It was the myth of the rainy night. Dean was popeyed with awe. This madness would lead nowhere. I didn't know what was happening to me, and I suddenly realized it was only the tea that we were smoking; Dean had bought some in New York. It made me think that everything was about to arrive—the moment when you know all and everything is decided forever.

It was drizzling and mysterious at the beginning of our journey. I could see that it was all going to be one big saga of the mist. "Whooeel!" yelled Dean. "Here we go!" And he hunched over the wheel and gunned her; he was back in his element, everybody could see that. We were all delighted, we all realized we were leaving confusion and nonsense behind and performing our one and noble function of the time, *move*. And we moved! We flashed past the mysterious white signs in the night somewhere in New Jersey that say *SOUTH* (with an arrow) and *WEST* (with an arrow) and took the south one. New Orleans! It burned in our brains. From the dirty snows of "frosty fagtown New York," as Dean called it, all the way to the greeneries and river smells of old New Orleans at the washed-out bottom of America; then west. Ed was in the back seat; Marylou and Dean and I sat in front and had the warmest talk about the goodness and joy of life. Dean suddenly became tender. "Now dammit, look here, all of you, we all must admit that everything is fine and there's no need in the world to worry, and in fact we should realize what it would mean to us to *UNDERSTAND* that we're not *REALLY* worried about *ANYTHING*. Am I right?" We all agreed. "Here we go, we're all together... What did we do in New York? Let's forgive." We all had our spats back there. "That's behind us, merely by miles and inclinations. Now we're heading down to New Orleans to dig Old Bull Lee and ain't that going to be kicks and listen will

you to this old tenorman blow his top”—he shot up the radio volume till the car shuddered—  
“and listen to him tell the story and put down true relaxation and knowledge.”

We all jumped to the music and agreed. The purity of the road. The white line in the middle of the highway unrolled and hugged our left front tire as if glued to our groove. Dean hunched his muscular neck, T-shirted in the winter night, and blasted the car along. He insisted I drive through Baltimore for traffic practice; that was all right, except he and Marylou insisted on steering while they kissed and fooled around. It was crazy; the radio was on full blast. Dean beat drums on the dashboard till a great sag developed in it; I did too. The poor Hudson—the slow boat to China—was receiving her beating.

“Oh man, what kicks!” yelled Dean. “Now Marylou, listen really, honey, you know that I’m hotrock capable of everything at the same time and I have unlimited energy—now in San Francisco we must go on living together. I know just the place for you—at the end of it the regular chain-gang run—I’ll be home just a cut-hair less than every two days and for twelve hours at a stretch, and *man*, you know what we can do in twelve hours, darling. Meanwhile I’ll go right on living at Camille’s like nothin’, see, she won’t know. We can work it, we’ve done it before.” It was all right with Marylou, she was really out for Camille’s scalp. The understanding had been that Marylou would switch to me in Frisco, but I now began to see they were going to stick and I was going to be left alone on my butt at the other end of the continent. But why think about that when all the golden land’s ahead of you and all kinds of unforeseen events wait lurking to surprise you and make you glad you’re alive to see?

1. What attraction do you think the character of Dean Moriarty held for readers?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Why do you think so many critics reviled the novel? In what ways does Kerouac reject the dominant values of 1950s America?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. The Beat writers strongly identified with the art and lives of jazz musicians. How is this reflected in the excerpt?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ladies' Home Journal, "Young Mother" (1956)

*After the end of World War II, women who had entered the work force during the war were expected to return to the home; "Rosie the Riveter" was to have been a wartime aberration. As these women married returning servicemen, the greatest increase in the native-born population in U.S. history, known as the baby boom, began.*

---

In 1946, to help these new mothers, Dr. Benjamin Spock, a noted pediatrician, published *Baby and Child Care*, which immediately became a bestseller. It contributed to the renewed cult of domesticity and the child-centered image of the middle-class (largely white) woman. Throughout the 1950s, U.S. women strove to be perfect housewives and mothers, their task supposedly made easier by the many new appliances available. In reality, the ideal suburban middle-class life created its own problems, which in turn contributed to the rise of the women's movement of the 1960s. This article from the *Ladies' Home Journal* illustrates how lonely and unattractive middle-class motherhood could be.

*Mrs. Gould:* As editors and parents we are extremely interested in this whole problem. The welfare of our society depends upon the type of children you young mothers and others like you are able to bring up. Anything that affects the welfare of young families is most crucial, and I do feel that the young mother, any young mother in our day, should get far more general recognition and attention than she does -- not so much for her own sake as for society as a whole, or just out of sheer common sense.

*Miss Hickey:* And understanding. I think there is a lack of understanding, too. Since it would take all day to tell what a busy woman does all day . . . how about your high points?

*Mrs. Petry:* I would say in the morning -- breakfast and wash time. I put the breakfast out, leave the children to eat it and run into the bathroom -- that is where the washer is -- and fill it up. I come back into the kitchen and shove a little in the baby's mouth and try to keep the others eating. Then I go back in the bathroom and put the clothes in the wringer and start the rinse water. That is about the end of the half-hour there. I continue then to finish the wash, and either put them out or let them see one program they like on television, and then I go out and hang the wash up.

*Miss Hickey:* You put that outside?

*Mrs. Petry:* Yes. Then I eat.

*Mrs. Gould:* Can you sit down and eat in peace? Are the children outdoors at that time or watching television?

*Mrs. Petry:* They are supposed to be outside, but they are usually running in and out. Somebody forgot something he should have eaten, or wants more milk, or a toy or something. Finally I lock the screen door. I always read something while I'm eating -- two meals a day I read. When my husband isn't there, and if I am alone, or maybe just one child at the table, I read something quick. But I time it. I take no more than half an hour for eating and reading.

*Miss Hickey:* You work on schedule quite a bit. Why do you do that?

*Mrs. Petry:* Because I am very forgetful. I have an orange crayon and I write "defrost" on the refrigerator every now and then, or I forget to defrost it. If I think of something while I am washing, I write it on the mirror with an eyebrow pencil. It must sound silly, but that is the only way I can remember everything I have to do. . . .

*Miss Hickey:* Mrs. Ehrhardt, your quietest half-hour?



*Mrs. Ehrhardt:* I would say . . . that when I go out to take the wash in. There is something about getting outdoors -- and I don't get out too often, except to hang out the wash and to bring it in. I really enjoy doing it. If it is a nice day, I stand outside and fold it outdoors. I think that is my quietest hour.

*Miss Hickey:* How often do you and your husband go out together in the evening?

*Mrs. Ehrhardt:* Not often. An occasional movie, which might be every couple of months or so, on an anniversary. This year is the first year we celebrated on the day we were married. We were married in June. We always celebrated it, but it might be in July or August.

It depends on our babysitter. If you cannot get anyone, you just cannot go out. I am not living near my family, and I won't leave the children with teenagers. I would be afraid it might be a little hectic, and a young girl might not know what to do. So we don't get out very often. . . .

*Miss Hickey:* Let us hear about Mrs. Petry's recreation.

*Mrs. Petry:* Oh, I went to work in a department store that opened in Levittown. I begged and begged my husband to let me work, and finally he said I could go once or twice a week. I lasted for three weeks, or should I say he lasted for three weeks.

*Mrs. Gould:* You mean you worked in the daytime?

*Mrs. Petry:* Three evenings, from six until nine, and on Saturday.

*Mrs. Gould:* And your husband took care of the children during that time?

*Mrs. Petry:* Yes, but the third week, he couldn't stand it anymore, Saturday and all. In fact, I think he had to work that Saturday, so I asked if I could just come in to the store during the week. My husband was hoping they would fire me, but they didn't. But I could see that it wasn't really fair to him, because I was going out for my own pleasure.

*Mrs. Gould:* In other words, your working was your recreation.

*Mrs. Petry:* Yes, and I enjoyed it very much.

*Miss Hickey:* Why did you feel you wanted to do this?

*Mrs. Petry:* To see some people and talk to people, just to see what is going on in the world. . . .

*Miss Hickey:* How about your shopping experiences?

*Mrs. McKenzie:* Well, I don't go in the evening, because I cannot depend on Ed being home; and when he is there, he likes to have me there too. I don't know. Usually all three of the children go shopping with me. At one time I carried two and dragged the other one along behind me in the cart with the groceries. It is fun to take them all. Once a man stopped me and said, "Lady, did you know your son is eating hamburger?" He had eaten a half-pound of raw hamburger. When corn on the cob was so expensive, my oldest one begged me to buy corn on the cob, so I splurged and bought three ears for thirty-nine cents. When I got to the check-out counter, I discovered he had eaten all three, so he had to pay for the cobs.

*Miss Hickey:* You go once a week?

*Mrs. McKenzie:* Once a week or every ten days now, depending on how often I have the use of the car. That day we usually go to the park, too. . . .



*Miss Hickey:* Tell us about your most recent crisis.

*Mrs. McKenzie:* I had given a birthday party for fifteen children in my little living room, which is seven by eleven. The next morning my son, whose birthday it had been, broke out with the measles, so I had exposed fifteen children to measles, and I was the most unpopular mother in the neighborhood. He was quite sick, and it snowed that day. Ed took Lucy sleigh riding. Both of them fell off the sled and she broke both the bones in her arm.

*Mrs. Gould:* Did she then get the measles?

*Mrs. McKenzie:* She did, and so did the baby. . . . My main problem was being in quarantine for a month. During this time that all three had measles and Lucy had broken her arm, we got a notice from the school that her tuberculin test was positive -- and that meant that one of the adults living in our home had active tuberculosis. It horrified me. I kept thinking, "Here I sit killing my three children with tuberculosis." But we had to wait until they were over their contagion period before we could all go in and get x-rayed.

*Miss Hickey:* And the test was not correct?

*Mrs. McKenzie:* She had had childhood tuberculosis, but it was well healed and she was all right. About eight of ten have had childhood tuberculosis and no one knows it.

*Mrs. Gould:* It is quite common, but it is frightening when it occurs to you. Were your children quite sick with measles?

*Mrs. McKenzie:* Terribly ill.

*Mrs. Gould:* They had high temperatures?

*Mrs. McKenzie:* My children are a great deal like my father. Anything they do, they do to extreme. They are violently ill, or they are as robust as can be. There is no in-between...

*Dr. Montagu:* There is one very large question I would like to ask. What in your lives, as they are at present, would you most like to see changed or modified?

*Mrs. Ehrhardt:* Well, I would like to be sure my husband's position would not require him to be transferred so often. I would like to stay in place long enough to take a few roots in the community. It would also be nice to have someone help with the housework, but I don't think I would like to have anyone live in. The houses nowadays are too small. I think you would bump into each other. Of course, I have never had any one in, so I cannot honestly give an opinion.

*Mrs. Townsend:* At the present time, I don't think there is anything that I would like to change in the household. We happen to be very close, and we are all very happy. I will admit that there are times when I am a little overtired, and I might be a little more than annoyed with the children, but actually it doesn't last too long. We do have a problem where we live now. There aren't any younger children for my children to play with. Therefore, they are underneath my heels just constantly, and I am not able to take the older children out the way I would like to, because of the two babies.

*Miss Hickey:* You have been in how many communities?

*Mrs. Townsend:* I have lived in Louisiana, California, New York, and for a short period in Columbia, South Carolina. . . .

*Miss Hickey:* Mrs. Petry, what would you change?

*Mrs. Petry:* I would like more time to enjoy my children. I do take time, but if I do take as much

time as I like, the work piles up. When I go back to work I feel crabby, and I don't know whether I'm mad at the children, or mad at the work or just mad at everybody sometimes.

I would also like to have a little more rest and a little more time to spend in relaxation with my husband. We never get to go out together, and the only time we have much of a conversation is just before we go to bed. And I would like to have a girl come and do my ironing.

I am happy there where we live because this is the first time we have stayed anywhere for any length of time. It will be two years in August, and it is the first home we have really had. That is why my husband left the Navy. I nearly had a nervous collapse, because it seemed I couldn't stand another minute not having him home and helping, or not helping, but just being there.

---

### Document Analysis

1. Why did Mrs. Petry consider working evenings and Saturdays "for her own pleasure"? What does this tell you about her socioeconomic status and about attitudes regarding women's work?
2. How would you compare the lives of these women to the lives of housewives and mothers in earlier periods of U.S. history?
3. What conclusions can you draw from the women's closing remarks? What do you think of the lives these women led? How do they compare the lives of most women in the United States today?