

## US History

### Social & Economic History of the 1950s

#### Learning Target:

*The students will be able to examine the influence that the car industry and highways had on the decade and the freedom they gave to the emerging youth culture.*

### **7. The Growth of the Automobile Industry and Highway System**

#### Statistics –

-By 1960 80% of American Families owned cars

#### Style –

- Large cars made entirely of steel
- Very poor gas mileage
- Difficult to drive and park for beginners

#### Makers –

- Big 3 –
  - General Motors
  - Ford
  - Chrysler
- The big three ruled over the car market
- No significant foreign competition

#### Conclusions –

- The Automobile industry created a multiplier industry, one which produces spin off industries such as gas and repair stations, glass plants for windshields, and rubber plants for tires

### **The Growth of Highways**

#### The Interstate Highway Act –

- 1956 signed under President Eisenhower
- 10 billion dollars a year toward highway production
- Final bill –
  - \$100 billion

#### Conclusions –

- The increase of highways influenced the economy in many ways including helping the growth of suburban housing, hotels/motels, tourism, and shopping malls