

A. HISTORY OF SUBURBANIZATION

B.1 General History of Suburbanization

Suburbanization across the United States was influenced by both social and technological developments. In most areas, suburban development was directly related to the evolution of transportation routes. Therefore, these suburbs can be characterized as railroad suburbs, streetcar/trolley suburbs, early automobile suburbs, and freeway suburbs. In addition, the location and design of suburbs throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were influenced by such factors as the ethnic heritage and the income of the prospective residents. Philosophies in the nineteenth century that promoted the health benefits of living outside the city and the escape from urban living encouraged settlement in areas outside urban centers. Later in the twentieth century, the philosophy was further perpetuated by urban and regional planning ideals. In both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the phenomenon of pattern-books and mail-order houses influenced and standardized the development of housing across the United States. All of these influences combined to create a nationwide trend away from urban living and toward suburban development.

B.1.1 Agricultural-Industrial Transition Period (1815-1870)

The trend towards suburbanization in the United States has been attributed to the ideas set forth by Thomas Jefferson. As well as describing the general American belief in the Declaration of Independence, the Jeffersonian perception of democracy was promoted by the belief that rural life is best for the soul. He believed that the environment had a strong effect on human beings, and that the right surroundings would encourage men and women to think clearly and behave rationally, a necessary quality for a democratic society. Only life in the country prevented one from being corrupted by city life, with its class divisions, social inequities and disorder. Through his system of land allotment, Jefferson hoped that the infinitely expandable grid would encourage the proliferation of equal, independent homesteads (Wright 1981, 21-22). Thousands of Americans believed that land meant equality and freedom, so despite the familiarity of urban living to the majority of immigrants, large tracts of open land in America beckoned families to claim independence on their own parcel of land. As cities developed as a result of the industrial revolution and the economic opportunities of cities began to out-weigh those of the country, Americans were forced to search for the rural ideal within, or very close to, the city. While very few urban dwellers were capable of, or even willing to, earn their livelihood on a farm or other rural setting, most were content to search for the rural ideal within the confines of suburban living.

The pre-Civil War trend towards suburbanization began as a result of the Picturesque Movement developed and promoted by Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis. Born in 1815, Downing lived only to the age of 36, but in those short years he popularized the philosophies of "country living," what seemed to him the ideal American way of life. In the book *The Architecture of Country Houses*, Downing prescribed the most appropriate and satisfactory houses and furnishing types for his fellow

Americans. Primarily a nurseryman, landscape architect and "tastemaker," Downing relied on the architectural skills of Davis to enhance further his vision of the ideal residential experience. Llewellyn Park, New Jersey, was designed by Andrew Jackson Davis and built in 1857, incorporating the physical expression of the ideals of the Picturesque Movement into the design, including curvilinear roads and natural open spaces. As described by John Reps in his book *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States*, the suburb was developed by Llewellyn Haskell, a New York business man who practiced the religious doctrine of the Perfectionists, who believed that spiritual or moral perfection could be attained, and planned the development for fellow believers. Sites for about fifty houses were laid out, ranging in size from three to ten acres.

Though Davis promoted small, garden cottage homes as the appropriate housing type for the average American, the early designed suburbs were not attainable by the average American. Because they were often placed at some distance from the city and divided into large lots, the suburbs were only affordable to the elite. High commuting fares and the high price of real estate prevented all other classes from moving out of the cities (Fox 1985, 39). During this time period several other communities were developed to help the elite escape the rapidly expanding and increasingly unappealing city, including Lake Forest (1857) and Riverside (1869), both located outside Chicago, Illinois. Riverside was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, combining a rural and open atmosphere with gracefully curved lines, many trees, and mandatory setbacks for the houses to preserve the rural feeling of the design (Tishler 1989, 176). As well as being beautiful, the designs espoused by the Picturesque designers served an important purpose in the planning of new communities. In the mid-nineteenth century, sanitary conditions in most cities were well below modern standards. Most water came from shared wells and streams that were subject to run-off from the waste disposed in backyard septic tanks or cesspools. Improper drainage encouraged mosquitoes to breed, often resulting in city-wide Yellow Fever epidemics. As the population grew, these problems were compounded by the huge numbers of people forced into spaces that were designed for only a few. Olmsted's communities were designed to incorporate drainage of both sewage and storm water into the contours of the land. The location of swampy areas, brooks, streams, and other physical features was taken into account for health and aesthetic reasons. The location of open spaces and plantings was also considered for its effects on light and ventilation. In Olmsted's mind, sunlight, good air circulation and an adequate amount of vegetation were essential to reducing disease. One of his criteria for judging a well-designed community plan was the effectiveness of a design in reducing the threats of disease (Levy 1994, 31-32). The Picturesque Movement permeated almost every type of designed space, including cemeteries and parks. Though the design principles that were promoted would influence later curvilinear designs in the twentieth century, they never again reached the peak they had obtained in the late-nineteenth century.

For more on Thomas Jefferson's perceptions of the American ideal, see the 1972 reprint of his *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Additional information regarding the Picturesque Movement can be found in A.J. Downing's 1859 book, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* and his 1850 book, *The Architecture of Country Houses*.

B.1.2 Industrial/Urban Dominance Period (1870-1930)

From 1870 to 1930 many planned communities continued to be suburban enclaves for wealthy Americans. Olmsted's office continued to be the leading designer of these new suburban communities, including Tarrytown Heights in New York (1871), that was divided into individual lots and included separate villages for servants; Roland Park in Baltimore (1891), that introduced a commercial area and deed restrictions; Forest Hills Gardens, Queens, New York (1911); and Palos Verdes Estates near Los Angeles (1923). After 1920, planned communities were designed to accommodate the automobile and its space requirements. Residential densities were no higher than a few dwellings per acre, and large open spaces for recreation were famous in such mid-1920s developments as Shaker Heights (Cleveland), River Oaks (Houston), and the Country Club District (Kansas City).

From 1820 to its peak in 1890, the number of residents per square mile living in the central districts of American cities was on the rise. New manufacturing enterprises and opportunities were not only drawing workers from the surrounding rural areas into the urban sphere, but were also, until the beginning of World War I, attracting a huge immigrant population. The immigrant population had a huge impact on the industrial cities of the eastern seaboard and a lesser but nonetheless significant impact on service-oriented towns such as Washington, D.C. Though density declined somewhat towards the edges of cities, there remained a sharp delineation between city and country. The increasing density of urban places led to increased problems with health, sanitation, fire, and housing. Suburban housing seemed like an ideal solution for those who could afford to maintain two households, one in the city and one outside of it, or who could afford to pay the high commuting fares associated with railroads which served only a sparsely populated area. However, a suburban house remained unattainable for those who were not of the elite class. As technology continued to improve, a number of changes within the manufacturing and business world made it possible for a greater number of people to aspire to suburban living (Fox 1985, 38).

In the late nineteenth century, suburban growth was shaped by new ideas in addition to the ideals of aesthetic landscape design and the Picturesque Movement. As the nineteenth century moved towards its close, a number of technological and planning innovations spurred suburban growth onward. Four trends resulted in the spreading of the American city and the outward migration of those who could afford to move: the growth of the total urban population, especially the urban poor; the creation of larger, more noxious and physically unpleasant manufacturing and industrial plants; the introduction and expansion of mass transportation systems; and the articulation and popularization of the "suburban ideal." David Ames states in his article "Interpreting Post-World War II Suburban Landscapes as Historic Resources," that:

...it was the streetcar that created the modern metropolitan area as a settlement form--as an urban region made up of a high-density central city surrounded by lower-density suburbs whose residents commute daily to jobs in the central city...The street car greatly increased the area available for residential development by making it possible to travel ten miles from downtown in thirty minutes (Ames 1995, II-97).

The electrification of the streetcar in the 1880s prompted a number of lines to expand radially outward from most cities. These lines not only provided a cheap fare into the city, but also opened up new areas of land that were affordable for a larger number of people. Along the streetcar lines gridded residential neighborhoods developed, making every lot only a short distance from quick and inexpensive transportation into the city (Ames 1995, II-97). On these small lots, people were able to build detached homes with gardens for the first time in fairly large numbers. Though the lots were fairly small, and therefore affordable, they were larger than comparably priced lots in the city. Pattern-books, collections of house plans published in catalogs and offered through the mail, provided inexpensive plans for houses that could fit onto the lots. By encouraging growth away from the cities, the electric streetcar lines guaranteed that they would have a rider population, and the large number of riders allowed the streetcar companies to keep their fares low.

While the development of streetcars was a necessary element in the expansion of suburbs in the late nineteenth century, it does not sufficiently explain why suburban growth was a desirable practice. The competitive phase of industrial capitalism culminated in a severe profitability crisis in the 1890s. The crisis was resolved through a merger movement in manufacturing, resulting in monopoly corporations that took over many smaller operations, combining them into one large corporation. The age of monopolistic capitalism was characterized by manufacturing plants located along the fringes of the city, controlled from a central location. The innovations in electricity and rail transportation made it possible for manufacturing to move away from the inner cities where coal and transportation routes had traditionally been accessible. Businesses also moved to escape the conflicts with workers spurred by the crowded conditions and increasingly militant working class in the city and to try to develop more co-operative relations with their workers in a more neutral environment. At this time, companies even began to build towns for their workers close to the newly moved businesses, but away from the city and its ills. Though towns like Lowell, Massachusetts were developed as industrial centers in the mid-nineteenth century, the large industries that developed during and after the Civil War began more often to choose locations close to, but not directly within, major cities. Pullman, Illinois was planned outside of Chicago in 1880 for the building of railroad cars. Gary, Indiana was developed by U.S. Steel in 1907. Though only two of many, these towns provided America's first planning consultants with opportunities to experiment with site planning techniques that would be used later in re-designing cities and suburbs (Reps 1965, 438).

Throughout the same time period, the nature of the working class was changing. Between 1890 and 1920 the number of white-collar jobs swelled as large corporations required more managers, governmental bureaucracies grew, and business services became increasingly important (Fox 1985, 43). The relocation of businesses not only made it more practical for working-people to move out of the city, but also gave them jobs that made it financially possible. The higher salaries that accompanied many white-collar jobs allowed for the purchase of modest lots and the construction of inexpensive homes outside the crowded city. The development of pattern-books and mail-order houses made

it possible for the average potential homeowner to build an attractive, but economical, house. By selling plans or entire house kits at affordable prices, the pattern-book industry allowed the home-owner to build a professionally-designed, convenient home without having to pay high fees for an architect.

As technological and economic changes made it more and more feasible for a greater proportion of the population to acquire suburban housing, new ideas about the nature of suburban areas and planning for them were developing. In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition, or World's Fair, was held in Chicago. Influenced by the design of European cities, the Fair presented the image of the city as a harmonious whole that was well thought-out, planned, beautifully executed, and free from the factories, railroads, and shipping yards which typified most American cities. The World's Fair generated interest in city planning through the City Beautiful Movement, which was further propelled by the McMillan Commission plan for redesigning Washington, D.C.(1901).

Beginning in 1898, British authors, planners, and reformers Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes promoted a radical new idea for planned communities. In *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, Howard set forth a plan for creating new urban centers, removed from the congestion and pollution of existing city centers. These Garden Cities combined the economic and social advantages of the city with the tranquil, healthful environment of the country. Meant to be self-supporting, though linked with a series of other garden cities, several were built in England in the early twentieth century, including Letchworth and Welwyn outside of London (Levy 1994, 49). Though the Garden City Movement did influence development in dozens of communities in the United States, American suburbs remained tied to the city and dependent on it for work, shopping, and leisure (Fox 1985, 41).

After the turn of the century, the suburb underwent something of an identity change. Problems arose in the effort to maintain a level of suburban public services commensurate with a good-quality residential development. During the late nineteenth century, annexation of surrounding suburban territory, including the absorption of already incorporated satellite municipalities, was the predominant method of urban growth. Though initially promoted to inspire confidence in the city's future among investors and to assure prospective suburban home buyers that suitable public service would be available, the issue evolved into a conflict between long-term residents of the suburbs who refused to give up their individual suburban identities and newcomers who saw themselves as part of the expanding city. After 1900, the city annexation movement ended as quickly as it had begun, but not without some lasting effects (Mueller 1981, 36). As cities expanded past their boundaries, the Federal government developed the concept of "metropolitan areas" in order to compare more precisely cities whose suburbs were not included within the city lines with those whose suburbs and commercial growth were within city boundaries. In 1910, the first year that metropolitan areas were recognized on the census, there were 58 designated metropolitan areas in the United States. By 1940, that number had grown to 140. The change was largely due to the growth of smaller urban places in the South, the Plains, the Mountains region, and the Southwest. In the older industrial regions of New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Great Lakes region, growth was focused in previously

established metropolitan areas, with a greater proportion of the population living in the metropolitan region in 1910 than in 1940 (Fox 1985, 35).

Though central cities had begun to lose their industrial centers to outlying regions, metropolitan regions were still very industrial in 1910. With the shift of manufacturing to the fringes of the cities in the late-nineteenth century, the central business districts became centers of white-collar business. Banks, insurance companies, commercial offices, real estate companies, brokers, and central corporate offices, as well as department stores and retail establishments, were in complete possession of the central business district by the 1920s. A few elite areas remained in some downtown locations, consisting of fashionable apartment house neighborhoods and mansions. Around this business and elite residential center developed a ring of slums, middle-class ethnic neighborhoods, small shops, and small industrial areas. The city lost many of its middle-income residents to the expanding suburbs, remaining home to mostly the very poor, who were trapped because of economic circumstance, and the very rich, who could afford to live in the still-fashionable areas.

A suburban boom which would be second only to that experienced after World War II began in 1918 and lasted until the financial panic of 1929. It was during this time period that the suburbs, characterized by subdivisions and single-family homes, began to adapt to the increasingly familiar presence of the automobile (Ames 1995, II-98). This period is distinguished by the distinct patterns of land use, development, and building styles developed and used in the suburbs, which were strictly suburban in both concept and design. Mail-order houses and plans became more common, and were sold through such companies as Sears, Roebuck, and Company, Aladdin Company, and the Montgomery Ward Company. The catalogs of home designs offered by these companies often included designs for detached garages as well as houses, indicating an increasing dependence on cars. Radburn, New Jersey, designed by architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, and by landscape architect Marjorie Cautley, in 1928, was designed to incorporate the automobile into residential development in the safest manner possible. The "Radburn idea" embraced several innovative concepts: designation of neighborhood units, clustering into superblocks, cul-de-sacs, separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic systems, and park areas which served as the backbone for community design (Tishler 1989, 179).

The implementation of zoning had a major impact on the layout and design of many early- to mid-twentieth century suburbs, partially brought about by the increased presence of the automobile in the suburbs. Levy, in *Contemporary Urban Planning*, discusses some of the reasons for the development and widespread use of zoning:

The 1920s saw zoning ordinances appear across the nation with remarkable speed. Widespread automobile ownership was promoting a vast wave of suburbanization. One way to control the congestion in commercial areas and prevent the invasion of residential areas by commercial development was through zoning. To many communities, both in older urban areas and on the suburbanizing fringe, the power to zone looked like the best way to protect what was desirable in the status quo from the vagaries of rapid economic

and social change. Perhaps a single-family neighborhood was threatened with invasion by filling stations, used car lots, and hamburger stands. Zoning an area so that only single-family houses could be built seemed like an effective and cost-free way to protect it from the undesirable side effects of progress (Levy 1994, 40).

In 1928, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of zoning as a means of protecting the sanctity of the American home (Ames 1995, II-98). The suburbanization of retailing became noticeable in the inter-war period, though it would not become a significant force in the planning and layout of suburbs until after 1945. Shoppers and retailers alike were reluctant to break the tradition of central-city shopping.

Additional information on the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the City Beautiful Movement, can be found in William H. Wilson's 1989 book, *The City Beautiful Movement*. A more in-depth discussion of zoning can be found in Melville C. Branch's book *Comprehensive City Planning: Introduction and Explanation* and in Herbert H. Smith's *The Citizen's Guide to Zoning*. For more information on the Garden City Movement, see Ebenezer Howard's book, republished in 1970, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. Additional information on pattern-books and mail-order houses can be found in Alan Gowans' book, *The Comfortable House, North American Suburban Architecture 1890-1930 or Houses by Mail, A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck, and Company*, written by Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl and published by The Preservation Press.

B.1.3 Modern Period (1930-1960)

If the late nineteenth century suburbs were designed to appeal to the elite, the suburban developments of the early-to-mid-twentieth century were aimed at meeting the needs and desires of the middle and working classes, which included low-cost, affordable housing, quick and easy access to the areas where suburbanites worked, and a pleasant environment in which to raise their families. But beginning in 1929, the people who made up the middle and working classes were harder to define. With the entire country suffering the effects of the Great Depression, no one seemed to fit earlier patterns of class based on income level when 25 percent of the population was unemployed. By the time President Roosevelt was inaugurated in March 1933, the cash value of goods and services produced had fallen almost by half since 1929 (Levy 1994, 53). But the Depression did not alter metropolitan settlement trends in any fundamental way. National population growth and rural-to-urban migration slowed but did not stop, and the proportion of the population living in metropolitan areas continued to increase, although at a slower pace, reaching 47.8 percent of the total American population in 1940. As in the 1920s, the places experiencing the fastest growth continued to be the outer edges of the suburban fringes of metropolitan areas (Fox 1985, 47).

The Depression sent the building industry, like most other industries, into shock. Home ownership had increased dramatically from 1918 to 1929. When the Depression hit, most new homeowners could no longer afford their mortgage payments. Upon realization

that they owed more than the house was worth, many homeowners sacrificed their properties to bank foreclosure. In order to encourage the building industry, the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) was created in 1934 to guarantee housing loans. As construction increased in the late 1930s, the quality of construction increased, due to the low cost of materials and labor (Ford 1994, 157).

Though people were willing to give up their houses to the bank during the Depression years, the automobile was quickly becoming an indispensable part of American life. One study conducted in 1929 found that many working-class families would mortgage their homes to buy a car. In many places, passenger-car registrations remained nearly constant in the early years of the Depression, and in both numbers and in ratio to population, vehicle registration between 1932 and 1935 exceeded the 1929 level. A greater amount was spent on highways during the Depression than in the prosperous 1920s (Flink 1975, 141). This trend was just the beginning of America's love affair with the car, which would profoundly influence the development of suburban life well into the future. As early as 1922, 135,000 suburban homes in sixty urban areas were fully dependent on motor vehicles (Flink 1975, 164).

Peter Mueller describes the impact of the automobile on the development of transportation networks and suburbs in *Contemporary Suburban America*:

By opening up the unbuilt areas lying between suburban rail axes, the auto quickly lured real estate developers away from the densely settled streetcar corridors to the more profitable and newly accessible interstices...Public transport companies were obliged on one hand to offer a decent level of service, yet, on the other, the boosting of fares in order to earn profits large enough to attract new capital on the open money market would have been prohibitive and caused massive rider desertion (Schaffer and Sclar 1975, 38-44). Other factors also contributed to the decline of city-suburb transit in the early automobile age. These included: the shifting of population away from high-density corridors that generated passenger volumes sufficient to support fixed-route transit; the dispersion of employment within large cities, which served to diffuse commuter destinations in addition to origins; reduction of the workweek from 6 to 5 days; increasing congestion where trolley and auto traffic mixed; and the general dislike of riding in more flexible-routed buses that were better able to follow residential development but rarely captured significant numbers of new passengers. Although government subsidies eventually mitigated the crisis somewhat, the quality of transit service steadily deteriorated so that by World War II the American metropolis had all but lost its efficient trolley-era regional public transportation network...New suburban growth assumed far lower densities as built-up residential areas expanded laterally beyond the older transit lines...By the close of the inter-war period the suburbs as a whole were characterized by a diffuse settlement fabric increasingly dependent on near-total automobility (Mueller 1981, 40-41).

The early automobile suburbs were encouraged by Americans' new-found love of driving, and their demands for suitable automobile roads, rather than the thoroughfares of gravel and cobblestone designed for horse traffic. When Ford developed an affordable mass-produced car, he created an industry that allowed the unbuilt areas lying between suburban rail axes to be developed. Originally functioning as appendages to existing suburban corridors, the early auto suburbs eventually began to take on a character of their own, as they developed at lower densities than streetcar suburbs. New roads were opened strictly for pleasure motorists, banning bus and truck traffic, the first being the Bronx River Parkway in 1921 (Mueller 1981, 41). Soon bridges and tunnels crossing urban waterways to rural areas encouraged more suburban growth. These projects included Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Bridge across the Delaware River (1926) and New York's Holland Tunnel (1927)

Planning efforts peaked in the 1920s, though an attempted resurrection occurred in the 1930s with the WPA sponsorship of greenbelt towns built outside Washington, D.C., Milwaukee, and Cincinnati (Mueller 1981, 43). Based on the theories of Ebenezer Howard, the program was intended to foster deconcentration of the cities' populations. The communities were to be characterized by decent housing and a high level of social and educational services, and were to be surrounded by a belt of open land to prevent sprawl. The communities were attacked by conservatives, who were scornful of the excessive construction costs and the potential to encourage separation and segregation of society. The greenbelt communities ultimately failed to serve as the models they were intended to be (Jackson 1985, 195.)

World War II and the increased demand for heavy American industry started the American economy moving again and revived optimism about long-term development. After the war, there was a huge demand for consumer goods. Five years of war had postponed the production of many consumer goods so that industry could respond to the needs of the military. Housing was the area of most pressing need after the war. For sixteen years of economic depression and war, little housing had been built. Many marriages that had been postponed during the Depression quickly took place beginning in 1940 as war threatened. After the war, new families formed rapidly. The birthrate reached its highest level in two decades in 1943. These new families, as well as relocated workers and returning servicemen, all needed housing, which was in short supply.

The Federal government responded to the demand by underwriting a new construction program. Over ten years, Congress approved billions of dollars of mortgage insurance for the Federal Housing Administration. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (GI Bill) created a Veterans Administration mortgage program similar to that of the FHA. The GI Bill also offered a college education to millions of veterans (Jackson 1985, 233). Industrial capital reacted to the influx of better-educated workers after the war. Rather than directing veterans back into the jobs they may have previously held, industry preferred to absorb the post-war working-class veterans, newly educated courtesy of the GI Bill, into white-collar office jobs which were less union-prone than blue-collar jobs (Fox 1985, 59). By using engineers, technicians and managers to revamp production through automation so that fewer factory workers were needed, corporations could expand

advertising, marketing, and product development staffs to sell more products at higher prices. As well as creating a new group of white-collar workers, these new jobs were more highly paid, allowing more people to aspire to home-ownership.

The combination of new jobs with more income, a need to build many homes very quickly, and government-sponsored mortgage insurance created a suburban boom unequalled in previous American experience. The post-1945 suburbs changed forever the type of community where millions of Americans lived and transformed the national social class structure to one in which people were categorized by their material possessions and neighbors, rather than by their inherited social status. Single-family housing starts leapt from only 114,000 in 1944, to 937,000 in 1946, to 1,183,000 in 1948, and to 1,692,000 in 1950 (Jackson 1985, 233). Kenneth Jackson discusses the implication of this surge on the housing industry in *The Crabgrass Frontier*.

...what distinguished the period was an increase in the number, importance, and size of large builders. Residential construction in the United States had always been highly fragmented in comparison with other industries, and dominated by small and poorly organized house builders who had to subcontract much of the work because their low volume did not justify the hiring of all the craftsmen needed to put up a dwelling... Whereas before 1945, the typical contractor had put up fewer than five houses per year, by 1959, the median single-family builder put up twenty-two structures. As early as 1949, fully 70 percent of new homes were constructed by only 10 percent of the firms (a percentage that would remain roughly stable for the next three decades), and by 1955 subdivisions accounted for more than three-quarters of all new housing in metropolitan areas (Jackson 1985, 233).

The new trend towards large building firms set the stage for the introduction of developments like Levittown constructed by Abraham Levitt and Sons in 1947. Beginning in the late 1940s on Long Island, New York and moving to Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the 1950s, William Levitt created the largest housing development ever constructed by a single builder, and served the American demand for single-family housing at close to the lowest prices the industry could attain. Essentially mass-produced, the houses were small, about 750 square feet, but they were priced within the reach of the middle-class, and offered more than shelter for the low \$100 down payment and \$60 a month mortgage payment. Levitt worked to create a community, complete with a community image and ideals, as well as building houses:

When the initial families arrived with their baby strollers and play pens, there were no trees, schools, churches, or private telephones. Grocery shopping was a planned adventure, and picking up the mail required sloshing through the mud to Hicksville. The Levitts planted apple, cherry, and evergreen trees on each plot, however, and the development ultimately assumed a more park-like appearance. To facilitate development as a garden community, streets were curvilinear (and invariably called "roads" or "lanes"), and through traffic was shunted to peripheral thoroughfares. Nine swimming

pools, sixty playgrounds, ten baseball diamonds, and seven "village greens" provided open space and recreation opportunities. The Levitts forbade fences (a practice later ignored) and permitted outdoor clothes drying only on specially designed, collapsible racks. They even supervised lawn-cutting for the first few years--doing the job themselves if necessary and sending the laggard families the bill (Jackson 1985, 236).

It is clear that what was being sold was a lifestyle, not just a home. A number of factors went into making this an acceptable choice for thousands of home buyers. The increase in white-collar families expanded the boundaries of the middle-class. Rather than being based on occupation and familial social status, income and style of living quickly became the defining parameters of the middle-class after World War II. Buying a suburban home helped white-collar families to cement their position between the elite and working classes. The small houses also promoted the ideas of privacy and the new streamlined family. A husband, wife, and children became the extent of the family, excluding other generations and associations. As well as forcing the family to focus their energies on the husband's career and their own house, smaller families facilitated new child-rearing principles being espoused by Dr. Benjamin Spock and others. Child mental health was purported to be directly linked to a stay-at-home mother and limited contact with other family members. The single-family home encouraged the development of an isolated family structure and suburban values (Fox 1985, 60-65).

After the war until the early 1970s, new subdivisions tended to share five common characteristics. First, in general, they were more removed from the central city and less dependent on it than they had previously been. Secondly, new suburbs were built with fewer houses per acre than pre-war suburbs. The third major characteristic of the postwar suburbs was their architectural similarity. After 1945, subdivisions rarely offered more than a half-dozen basic house plans, and many offered even fewer. Nationally, regional differences in both housing-style and development plan were lost to uniform cape cod, ranch, and split-level houses. The fourth characteristic of post-war suburbanization was affordability for a greater number of people. Home-ownership was no longer a status symbol, but the norm. Finally, post-war suburbs were characterized by their economic, racial, and age homogeneity (Jackson 1985, 238-241). Encouraged by zoning laws and the FHA and VA mortgage insurers that required that participating houses and neighborhoods be good investments, many subdivisions did not allow minority homeowners. Racially integrated and older neighborhoods were not considered good investments (Ford 1994, 165). Minorities were largely excluded from participating in the suburban housing boom. They, along with the poor, were often forced towards older housing stock in the city which had been abandoned by the middle-class, which had deteriorated to some extent while maintenance was delayed due to the Depression and war.

Developments expanded out from the city, and traffic into the urban centers became heavier as more people commuted to jobs in the city. Interurban road construction accelerated in the 1940s as a result of the perceived need for quick access in and out of cities for defense purposes and to increase accessibility to shifting industrial areas, and

continued into the 1950s and 1960s. The main force behind the expansion and development of urban freeways was the 1956 Interstate Highway Act, which created a trust fund through which the Federal government paid 90 percent of local construction costs. As roads became easier to travel, and cars became more comfortable and easy to drive, all of society shifted to accommodate the car. By the late 1950s, retailers had discovered that mass selling in suburban shopping centers was not only lucrative, but practically necessary as ties to the downtown shopping districts loosened. In fact, freeways steadily eroded the region-wide advantage of the central business district. Workers were no longer constrained to live near their jobs. Nonresidential activities were able to relocate to the suburbs, where the buying population increasingly lived.

Alternatives began to develop for those who wished to experience the suburban way-of-life, but who could not afford to purchase and maintain a single-family residence. The garden apartment consisted of several two-or-three story buildings set within a park or garden-like setting. Duplexes also offered an alternative to detached, single-family housing for lower income families.

After the initial need for post-war housing was met, the demand for more and larger houses grew, spurred partially by economic boom and partially by urban flight. Overcrowding in the country's urban centers, the Supreme Court's 1954 decision to desegregate public schools (*Brown vs. the Board of Education*), wholesale demolition of inner city neighborhoods in the name of urban redevelopment, and other factors caused a middle-class flight from the cities to the suburbs.

By the mid-1950s people were ready to move out of their "starter-homes" and into larger, more expensive homes. By the mid-1960s, the average house had increased from less than 1,000 square feet in the 1940s to about 1,500 square feet, and some additional, non-essential rooms had been added. Many of the smaller houses of the 1950s had either no garage or just a carport. Garages became the norm in the late 1950s, and were integrated with the overall design of the house. Often, the house facade receded in importance to the front-facing garage. Characterized by prominent garages, the houses were just one indication of the prominence of cars in everyday suburban life. Developments incorporated curvilinear roads, cul-de-sacs, and space for parking, emphasizing the space requirements associated with having a car. The new middle-class family was primarily defined by its income and style of living, rather than by its occupation and economic status, and had its foundation in home, residential community, and the material possessions associated with suburban life.