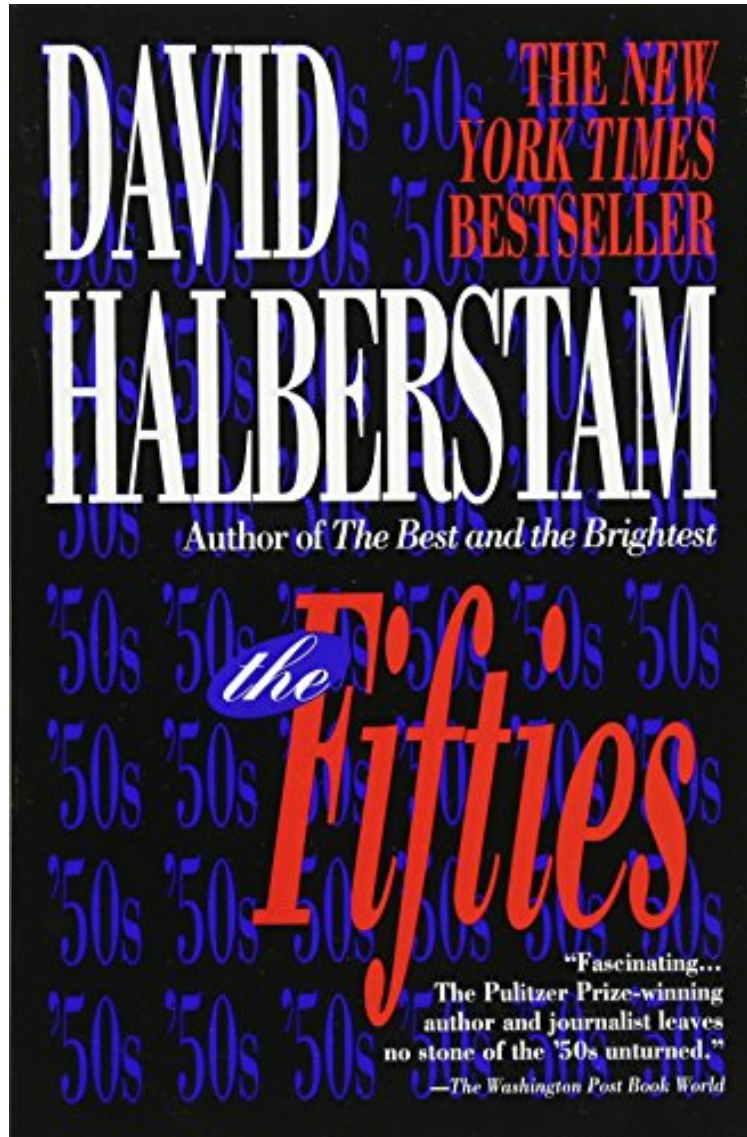


## The Fifties

David Halberstam

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#71005 in Books David Halberstam 1994-05-10 1994-05-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.30 x 1.30 x 5.40l, 1.50 #File Name: 0449909336816 pages The Fifties | File size: 28.Mb

**David Halberstam : The Fifties** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fifties:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The foundation of post war America By Richard Carlson All they key political events of the fifties nicely interspersed with cultural happenings. Well worth reading. Missed the key technology event, the rise of the computer, but missed little else. From I love Lucy to Kinsey, here's the fifties. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Best Decade By Customer Gray capsulization how the world changed

in the Fifties. A seemingly innocent but complex decade. All of the challenges of the second half of the 20th century surfaced in the fifties. I found the following review helpful. Fascinating Read!! By Susan I grew up in the fifties and sixties, and as a young kid I remember a lot of this. Had you asked me to describe the era, I wouldn't have thought to include so much of what Halberstam has woven together but he does a masterful job of doing so. And in the process, you understand how the Sixties happened, which is when things really got crazy (and not always in a good way!). Hindsight is 20-20 and it's fascinating to look back to the decade that was so instrumental in paving the way to fundamental change in America.

The Fifties is a sweeping social, political, economic, and cultural history of the ten years that Halberstam regards as seminal in determining what our nation is today. Halberstam offers portraits of not only the titans of the age: Eisenhower, Dulles, Oppenheimer, MacArthur, Hoover, and Nixon, but also of Harley Earl, who put fins on cars; Dick and Mac McDonald and Ray Kroc, who mass-produced the American hamburger; Kemmons Wilson, who placed his Holiday Inns along the nation's roadsides; U-2 pilot Gary Francis Powers; Grace Metalious, who wrote *Peyton Place*; and "Goody" Pincus, who led the team that invented the Pill. A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

"In retrospect," writes David Halberstam, "the pace of the fifties seemed slower, almost languid. Social ferment, however, was beginning just beneath this placid surface." He shows how the United States began to emerge from the long shadow of FDR's 12-year presidency, with the military-industrial complex and the Beat movement simultaneously growing strong. Television brought not only situation comedies but controversial congressional hearings into millions of living rooms. While Alfred Kinsey was studying people's sex lives, Gregory Pincus and other researchers began work on a pill that would forever alter the course of American reproductive practices. Halberstam takes on these social upheavals and more, charting a course that is as easy to navigate as it is wide-ranging. From Library Journal The Fifties were more than just a mid-point decade in a century; they were to be the crucible in which the rest of the 20th century was forged. Halberstam (The Next Century, LJ 1/92) here touches every thread in the warp and woof of the national fabric. This is the true drama of history: President Truman's firing of General Douglas MacArthur, the Eisenhower years, Senator Joe McCarthy's red-baiting, the early U.S. involvement in Indochina, the H-bomb, the purging of atomic scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Supreme Court ordering the integration of schools, troops in Little Rock to enforce it, the Montgomery bus boycott, the rise of Martin Luther King, Russia's sputnik launch, and Castro's revolutionary Cuba. Halberstam also explores major social and cultural changes--the advent of national television, fast-food restaurants, the flight to the suburbs, huge cars with fins, the phenomenon of Elvis Presley, the contraceptive pill, and much more. A superb book; recommended for all libraries. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 2/1/93.- Chet Hagan, Berks Cty. P.L. System, Pa. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus In The Best and the Brightest, The Powers That Be, and The Reckoning, Halberstam proved that he can master intimidating subjects with aplomb--and in this massive tome on a convulsive decade in American life, he meets with equal success. Such a sprawling panorama can't be depicted coherently without selective use of material, and some of Halberstam's omissions are open to question. While rightly lingering over McCarthyism and the development of the atomic bomb, he skims over Communism's advances in Eastern Europe and China in the late 40's, leaving an inadequate sense of why Americans yielded so readily to national-security hysteria during the period. Halberstam also fails to explain fully America's role in reviving the postwar economies of Japan and Western Europe. And why is there nothing on the advances that put air travel in reach of the average American? Nevertheless, Halberstam keeps his narrative tightly focused by concentrating on the era's human instruments of change, including some famous (Eisenhower, Elvis, Brando, Kerouac, Milton Berle, et al.) and others more obscure (Kemmons Wilson and Dick and Mac McDonald, founders of, respectively, Holiday Inn and McDonald's). In this often "mean time" of red-baiting, change still managed to burst out, with the invention of the Pill, the moves by Japan and Germany to undercut GM's preeminence in the auto industry, and the assault on legalized segregation. Halberstam finds at the heart of this decade of social, political, and economic innovation a deep split between an acceptance of change and a yearning for earlier and simpler times, and he examines thoroughly how TV altered various aspects of American life--its recreation habits, its advertising, and, inevitably, its politics, through the medium's coverage of the Little Rock crisis and the JFK-Nixon debates. Compulsively readable, with familiar events and people grown fresh in the telling. (Thirty-two pages of photographs--not seen) (First Serial to American Heritage) -- Copyright 1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.