

## **New Modern Society**

New electric appliances and gadgets with push buttons began to appear in many households. Air conditioning was introduced as a novel modern convenience that tremendously added to the comforts of living in Florida. It became especially important because air conditioning allowed for a year-round economy and freed architects from having to adapt their buildings to the hot, humid climate.

The technological advance that had perhaps the greatest impact on America was the television. It forever changed mass communications and entertainment. The television came into every household with programs portraying harmonious, happy families living perfect lives in beautiful homes. These TV show characters became society icons. Rock-and-roll emerged as mainstream pop music for carefree, fun-loving American teenagers, brought directly into their homes on the radio or television. It was the age of innocence.

The automobile increased its role as the main mode of transportation because of highly efficient, rapid mass production systems and the development of new technologies. Radical new car designs responded to this age of exuberance. Together these factors produced highly desirable and dependable automobiles that were affordable to much of America's rapidly expanding middle class.

Gasoline was plentiful and affordable. As a result, people became more mobile. They were better able to afford a home and fulfill the American dream. They were also able to afford travel, and began to drive to more and more distant vacation destinations across America as the nation greatly upgraded its highway system.

Leisure became a reality for more people. Automobile manufacturers very successfully promoted the sales of these truly new personal vehicles with slogans like "See the USA Today in Your Chevrolet."

The advent of the jet passenger plane in 1957 made air travel tremendously faster, more comfortable, and eventually within the financial reach of the upper-middle class. Gradually, the burgeoning seaside resort of Miami Beach became the ultimate high-status vacation destination, synonymous with glitz and glamour.

It was the beginning of the Space Age. The first Sputnik was launched in 1957. Rivalry with the U.S.S.R. led to the space race. Futuristic, flamboyant, fun design elements showed up in cars, furniture, and buildings. Automobiles sprouted wings and depicted rocket motifs. The small globe with protruding antennae reminiscent of the Sputnik became a common design detail.