Almost 500,000 Americans received degrees in 1950, more than double the 216,500 of 1940. This allowed many Americans to acquire skills and training for work, and pay income taxes, restoring the money the government had subsidised for them.

Around 15 million housing units were built between 1945 and 1955, leading to 60% of Americans owning their houses, compared to less than 50% in 1945, and this was aided by loans from the Federal Housing Administration.

Many of these houses were built by private builders such as the Levitt brothers, who mass produced suburban housing using pre-assembled materials and non-union workers to avoid strikes. This meant houses could be built in 16 minutes, and they build 17,000 homes for 80,000 people in their first Levittown on Long Island. The sizes of these lots were around twice as big as those in most suburbs.

Marriage rates moved upwards from 1940, and peaked in 1946 with 2.2 million couples, however divorce rates also increased, dropping after 1946.

Birth rates rose in 1942 and 1943, but as soon as the war ended they rose rapidly, from a low of 206,000 in February 1946 to a high of 339,000 in October, and by the end of the year 3.4 million babies had been born, 20% more than the previous year.

The higher birth rate was due to people aiming to ‘catch up’ on having a family after the war, with first children born around 13 months after marriage in 1950, compared to around 2 years in 1930. This could be partly explained by people feeling that they could afford to marry, buy a house and have children, as they were better off than their parents' generation.

The baby boom meant there was a new market for children's goods such as toys, children's clothes, and 'labour-saving' devices such as washing machines. This market peaked at around $33 billion a year.

Ethnic Minorities

America was greatly diverse, with 11 million foreign born and 23.5 million first generation immigrants, which made up ¼ of the post-war population. Of these, 14 million were African Americans, 1.2 million were Hispanics, 350,000 were Native Americans, 130,000 were Japanese Americans and 100,000 were Chinese Americans.

Around 50% of the population in 1945 were religious, with 43 million Protestants, 23 million Catholics, and 5 million Jews.

Campaigns during the World War aimed to reduce discrimination, with integrated combat units, African Americans being allowed to join the marines from 1944, and hundreds of African American officers in the army and marines by 1945.

Roosevelt agreed to ban discrimination in the civil service and set up the Fair Employment Practise Committee, to report on discrimination in private companies, and take government contracts away from them. This included the signing of Executive Order 8802 in June 1941, which banned discrimination in defence work.

The Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) was set up in 1942, to achieve civil rights through peaceful protest, and was supported by the African American press, with the 'Double V' campaign aiming for victory abroad and in America.