

050:303

Decade in American Culture (1939-1949)

In the 1998 bestseller, *The Greatest Generation*, Tom Brokaw argues that the 1930's and 1940's spawned "the greatest generation any society has ever produced." While he acknowledges that not everybody agrees with his assessment, he asserts "I believe that I have the facts on my side." In this course (which deals with the decade 1939 to 1949), we will consider whether Brokaw is right about the facts. It is true that World War II posed a particular crisis for the United States. In order to defeat the enemy, it was essential that a national unity be forged on the home front across class, ethnic, gender, and racial boundaries. We will examine the degree to which that ideal was achieved. Did World War II reshape conceptions of what constituted American identity?