found only in the teenage population, delinquency was also thought to threaten younger children, whose infection seemed imminent. Worries that eight to twelve year olds might begin listening to rock, reading horror comics, or disregarding parental or educational authority—in short, losing their innocence—needed to be addressed, and quickly.

Homeowners seemed to find an easy and ready answer for these hazards: fences. Letters advised parents to put up barriers to keep their children safe around pools. "Baby gates" became popular in the home to keep infants from getting into the kitchen or any other "dangerous" area. The wealth of backyard fence building grew to such a point that whole articles were devoted to how to build aesthetically pleasing fences that expressed the owner's individuality.[31] Just as reformers advocated the construction of separate bedrooms for children at the turn of the century (which was one of the selling points of suburban homes), now children were apportioned the fenced-in "backyard," complete with a private swing set, which was only one example of adult attempts to regulate and institutionalize play. As the suburbs grew in population, various groups were organized to supervise children's leisure time. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America were already established outlets for this type of endeavor, and the mammoth rallies held by these organizations during 1955 testify to their widespread popularity.[32] Little league baseball was another form of adult-supervised play, as teams sprung up with each new housing development, replacing (or attempting to replace) the sandlot or street games that parents feared could end in physical harm from an unseen pothole or a passing car.[33]

Another potential tool for keeping children safely within the survey of parents was the latest addition to the suburban home—the television set. One of the popular views of television during this period was as a built-in babysitter, keeping children occupied and out of trouble. Leo Bogart, in his 1956 work *The Age of Television*, summarizes a number of audience studies that he found "agree[d] completely that television has had the effect of keeping the family at home more than formerly."[34] Yet television was quickly seen as a double-edged sword. Other writers thought television was detrimental to children, broadcasting ideas of violence and sexuality into unprepared and innocent minds. Lynn Spigel also lists a number of instances reported in the popular press of children reenacting violent actions that they had seen on television.[35]

The Western genre, with its emphasis on gunplay and Indian attacks, figured strongly in this discussion—particularly since such figures as Hopalong Cassidy and Roy Rogers were specifically aimed at child audiences. At the same time that these programs glorified violence, however, the Western mythologized a unique part of American history as well, inscribing on the tabula rasa of avid young viewers notions of patriotism and national identity. The ambiva-

[illegible] commentators viewed television could also describe the Western genre on television. Did the television Western help keep children contained within the frame of the screen or did it open young viewers to a [illegible] of possibilities beyond parental control?

The Frontier(land) Will Be Televised

By 1955, Walt Disney had become the upholder of the traditional American family, valued for his creation of films that helped preserve a child's innocence. Disney entered the medium of television in 1954 with the aptly titled *Disneyland*, promising family entertainment (emphasized in the early evening scheduling on Wednesday nights, when all the family could watch together). Although Disney barely concealed his use of television as a cross-promotional tool to advertise his upcoming features and about-to-open theme park in Anaheim, California (which ABC helped finance in order to get Disney to sign), both adults and children enjoyed it—making it the first ABC series to break into the Nielsen rating's top twenty.

The television series was structured like the park-to-be, each week devoted to one of the various sections of Walt's Magic Kingdom (more on this shortly). The first episode on Frontierland began a three-part chronicle of the legend of Davy Crockett. On December 15, 1954, "Davy Crockett, Indian Fighter" was broadcast. A few weeks later, on January 26, 1955, the series presented "Davy Crockett Goes to Congress." The story concluded (or so everyone thought) on February 23, 1955, with "Davy Crockett at the Alamo," in which Davy (Fess Parker) valiantly fought for Texan independence, the story fading to a Texas flag flapping in the breeze to spare viewers Davy's death at the hands of the Mexican Army.

The episodes display a conscious engagement of the younger viewer, and although parents lauded Disney as the "keeper of the flame" of family values, there is a marked portrayal of Crockett as a person who values fun over work and independence over authority. Davy and his friend George Russell (Buddy Ebsen) are introduced in the first episode off in the woods rather than at their posts as scouts for the United States Army in the War of 1812. The lieutenant who has been sent to find and drag them back to camp discovers Davy trying to "grin" a bear to death. Later on, Davy and George treat an Indian attack on the army as if it were a big game. When Davy decides that he can't "play" soldier anymore, he disregards any attempts at disciplinary action by the army and simply leaves. Still later, when Davy goes to Congress, he ends up quitting his position (and the stuffy clothes he has to wear) and heads off to the Alamo, where things look more lively.