

## OVERVIEW:

### The Foundation of Rock And Roll

During the Great Migration more than 100,000 African-American laborers moved from the agricultural South to the urban North bringing with them their music and memories.

Also, during the 1920's the phonograph and the rise of commercial radio began to spread Hillbilly music and the Blues. This gave rise to an appreciating of American vernacular music, both white and black. Ultimately, the homogenizing effect of blending several regional musical styles and cultural practices gave birth to 1950's rock and roll.

### The Tin Pan Alley Pop Era (1885-mid 1950's)

“The Great American Songbook”

1940's Big Bands

1950's **Popular Music**



New York: “Tin Pan Alley” 14th St. and 2nd Ave.

## **Tin Pan Alley - New York (1885-though 1940's)**

The music was distributed  
through sheet music

Professional songwriters  
dominated the period;  
George Gershwin,  
and Cole Porter

Composers wrote for pop  
music, Broadway, and film

Eventually Tin Pan Alley  
tradition was replaced by the  
Rock and Roll tradition



### Tin Pan Alley - Key Points

1. Written by a professional  
(often non-performing) song-writers
2. Sophisticated arrangement
3. Syncopated rhythm (accents on  
unexpected, weak beats)
4. Clever, well-crafted lyrics
5. Striving for upper-class sensibilities
6. Primary audience: Adults

## “Roots Music” - Key Points

1. Regional popular and folk music
2. Played by amateur musicians
3. Not formally taught
4. Spread through an oral tradition
5. Ignored by mainstream American listeners
6. Ignored by the big record companies

## “Roots Music” = The Blues AND Country music

### The Blues

1920's: Mississippi Delta Blues  
1930's: Urban Blues  
1940's: Jump Blues  
1950's: Rhythm and Blues

### Country Music

1920's: Cowboy Songs  
1930's: Hillbilly Music  
1940's: Country Swing  
Country and Western



Rock and Roll: 1952

### “Tin Pan Alley” Tradition

Music marketed through sheet music and “song pluggers”

Professional songwriters  
“repertoire based”

Sophisticated harmony

Promoted by the music establishment

### “Roots Music”

Ignored by mainstream audiences

Untrained performers  
“rendition based”

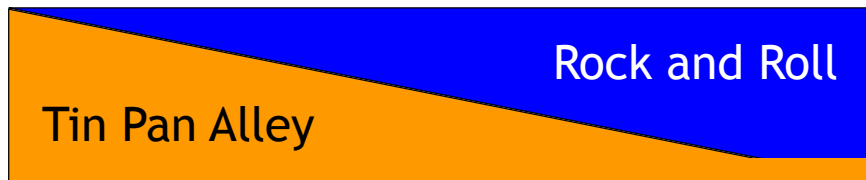
Simple Harmony

The basis of  
Early Rock and Roll

1955

1965

1975



**John Lomax (1867-1948)**

*Cowboy Songs and Other  
Frontier Ballads (1910)*

*Negro Songs as Sung  
by Lead Belly (1936)*



**His son, Alan Lomax (1915-2002)  
followed in his father’s footsteps**



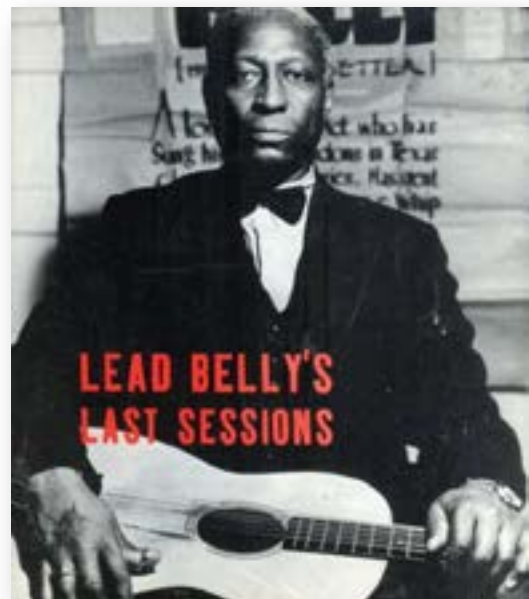
The Lomax car outfitted with primitive audio recording equipment. Alan Lomax, son of John Lomax, continued in his father's footsteps

## Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter (1888-1949)

He becomes a popular entertainer playing "old-fashioned" blues

**Lead Belly's Last Sessions**  
(1948) contained songs that became the springboard to the 1960's folk revival:

*The House of the Rising Sun*  
*The Midnight Special*  
*Rock Island Line*  
*Goodnight, Irene*



Many Leadbelly songs were "covered" by British acts of the 1960's

### **The Influence of the Blues**

The blues were derived from field hollers and work songs. Many of the songs were work songs designed to synchronize manual labor such as swinging an axe or pounding railroad spikes. Other songs helped relieve the monotony and pass the time during repetitive tasks. The songs were kept alive and vital by rote memorization and an oral tradition.

### **Boogie Woogie Piano Playing**

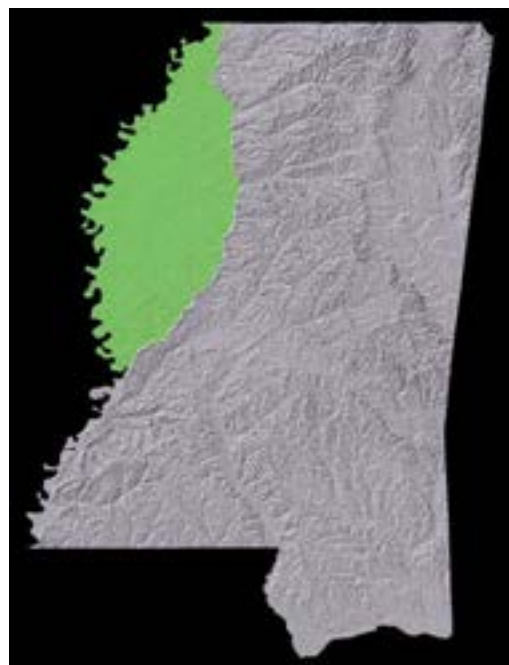
Boogie Woogie piano playing imitates a chug-a-lug train rhythm and was often played on honky-tonk trains transporting laborers throughout the Midwest. The style of makes use of “walking bass”

### **Mississippi Delta Blues (1900-1930)**

Also known “country blues” the primary practitioners were male African-American itinerant laborers. The lyrics often expressed basic human conditions such as poverty, homelessness, unfaithful love, penitentiary life, and alienation. The vocal style features a fierce singing style similar to that of field hollers. Typical instruments included slide guitar, and harmonica. The rhythm was often fluctuating and uneven. Among the most influential of the Delta Bluesmen were Son House (1902-1988) and Robert Johnson (1911-1938)

### **Mississippi Delta Blues or Country Blues (1900-1930)**

- Primate blues style
- Instruments limited to voice and acoustic guitar, and sometimes harmonica
- Fluid, fluctuating rhythm based on the lyrics
- Non-dance music that tells a story about hardships, loneliness, or sex







Robert Johnson (1911-1938) allegedly sold his soul to the Devil at the crossroads. He embodies the spirit of the rocker; a man and his guitar telling his story to the world.



The Great Migration (1915-1940)

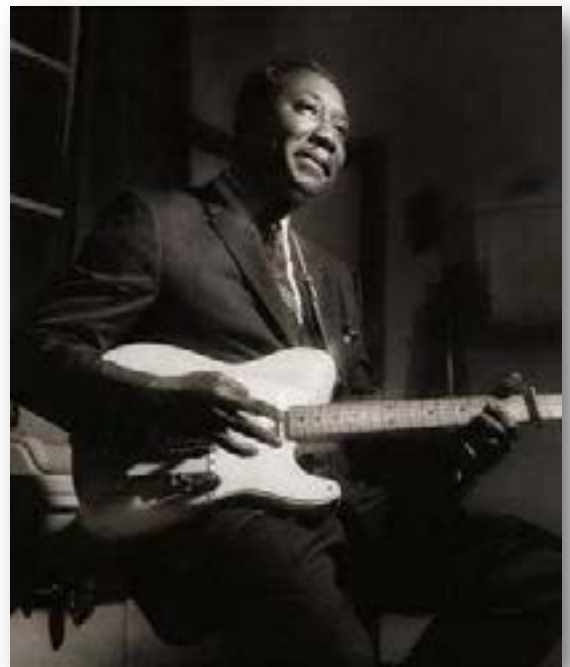
Why was there a migration to the North?

1. Farming machines took away the work
2. World War I provided work opportunities in factories
3. WW I reduced flow of immigrants from Europe
4. Draft siphoned off northern workers
5. Unskilled southern workers were heavily recruited
6. Northern companies offered southern workers well-paying jobs, free transportation, and low-cost housing.

**Muddy Waters (1915 -1983)**

Born McKinley Morganfield

One of the most important Chicago Blues masters.



**The Rolling Stones** derived their name from Muddy Waters' song "Rolling Stone"





**Bristol, Tennessee**

The Bristol Recording Sessions were held in 1927 by Victor Talking Machine Company (RCA). The sessions are often described as **“The big bang of country music”**



**Ralph Peer (1892-1960)**  
Talent scout, recording engineer and record producer in the 1920s and 1930s. The influence of the Carter Family can be heard in the film **O Brother Where Art Thou**



**Jimmie Rogers**



**The Carter Family**



**Hank Williams, Sr., (1923-1953) blended  
Country and Western with the Blues**



**Archtop Guitar**



**Upright Bass**



**Fiddle**

### **Urban Blues Types (1930-1950)**

As transplanted Southern musicians adapted the Mississippi blues style, unique urban or “city blues” styles emerged. Several major urban hubs such as Chicago, Memphis and New Orleans had their versions of urban blues.

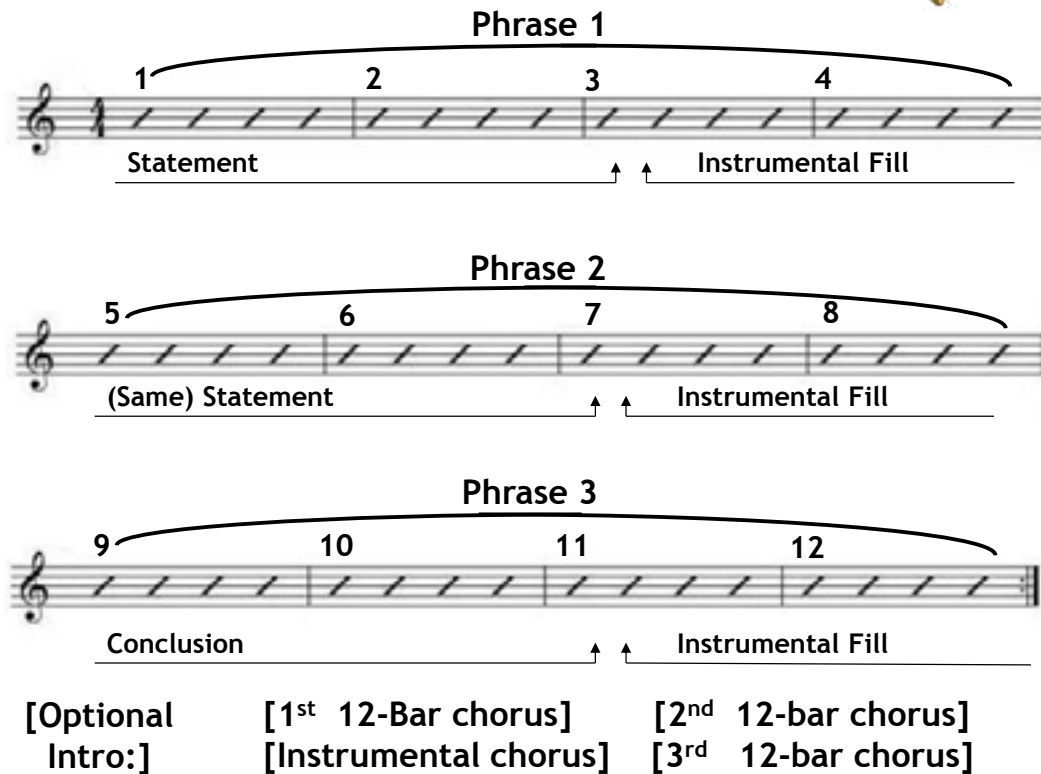
### **Chicago Blues (1930-60)**

Primarily bar-room drinking music, the vocal styling of Chicago blues is often gruff and raspy sounding. Vocals are usually solo; rarely using back-up vocal harmony. The lyrics struggle with issues such as liquor, sex, and unemployment.

After World War II electric guitar and amplified harmonica become common. There is strong rhythmic emphasis on the “back-beat” Much of the music was recorded at independent record companies such as Chess studios in Chicago.

# **Blues as a Musical Structure**

## 12 Bar Blues Format - *Call It Stormy Monday* 🍌



**Bing Crosby**  
(1903-1977)

The first  
entertainer to use  
the tape recorder



No one had ever considered  
pre-recording radio programs!

**The Tape Recorder gave rise to Indie record companies such as Chess, Sun, Atlantic and Specialty**

**Record companies now had a product to merchandise. They could either sell the recordings to a label or create their own label like “Sun Records”**

**These small independents (indies) provided new music to juke boxes for eager teenagers; both black and white**

### **“Indies”**

The first commercial tape recorders became available shortly after WWII. Small independent record labels such as Chess, Sun, and Atlantic records emerged riding the wave of interest in rhythm and blues. As “Indie” records began filling the juke boxes in the inner cities in the early 1950's, an increasing number of white teenagers became infatuated with the new sound.

Disk jockeys such as Cleveland's Alan Freed (1921-1965) began playing rhythm and blues records using the term "rock and roll", a relatively unknown blues euphemism for sex and partying, to disguise the music's black origin.



## Important Independent Record Labels (indies)

**Atlantic** - New York (Ahmet Ertegun, Herb Abramson and Jerry Wexler, 1947) This important indie label recorded early stars including Ruth Brown, Big Joe Turner, Ray Charles, Clyde McPhatter, and Ben E. King

**Chess** - Chicago ( Leonard and Phil Chess, 1946-1947) The Chess brothers recorded Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, Sonny Boy Williamson, Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, Jackie Brenston, Chuck Berry. Chess Records, through its U.K. subsidiary Pye label, was largely responsible for the flowering of **British Blues**.

**Sun Studios**- Memphis (Sam Phillips, 1950) Sun was the birthplace of the rockabilly style of rock, Sam Phillips recorded "masters" of black bluesmen for other companies. Among artists he recorded during this period were Howlin' Wolf, and Ike Turner



Edison Cylinders

Thomas Alva Edison  
(1847 -1931)



## The phonograph record from 1930 to the present



10-inch, 78 rpm shellac record (1930-40s)



12-inch, 33 rpm "long-playing" record (LP)  
1948, Columbia



7-inch, 45 rpm single, 1949, RCA



5-inch, 200-500 rpm Compact Disc Phillips, 1982



The portable record player brought music to teenager's bedrooms and provided an opportunity to evolve teen oriented music: Rock and Roll



Although the term “race music” seems derogatory now, at the time it showed pride and support for African American people and culture

In 1949 Atlantic record executive and Billboard reporter Jerry Wexler (1917-2008) was instrumental in re-labeling “Race Music” “Rhythm and Blues”



His biggest discovery was Aretha Franklin



## From Blues to “Rhythm and Blues”

1920-1930: Mississippi Delta Blues

1930's: Urban Blues Types

- Chicago Blues

- Memphis Blues

- Kansas City Blues

- Texas Blues

- New Orleans Blues

1940's New Orleans Jump Blues

Late 1940's Rhythm and Blues



Benny Goodman Orchestra

**Big Band Swing music** was the most popular style of music during World War II. Big band touring was curtailed by **rationed gas** and **rubber**. **Jump bands** were a scaled down version of swing bands with a jazzy, bouncy beat.



## **New Orleans Jump Blues:** The 1940's forefather of rhythm and blues:

**Style characteristics:**

**Big band swing style dance music**

**Small ensemble: One or two horns,  
piano, guitar, drums and bass**

**Bouncy and upbeat rhythm**

**Boogie-woogie piano rhythm**

**Geared toward younger audiences**

**More mainstream and commercial than other  
blues styles**

**Louis Jordan  
and his Timpany Five:  
New Orleans “Jump Blues” King**







The G.I. Bill provided loans for homes and education. This gave rise to a more affluent middle class in the 1950's.



1955 Novel by  
Sloan Wilson



Once heroes and warriors, soldiers **returned to mundane desk jobs**, climbing the social ladder, settling in to domestic life, and raising families.

## The Baby Boom

The rise of the Post- WW II baby boomers (78 million children born between 1945-1964) led to a substantial youth subclass. The typical allowance of many 1950's teenagers was greater than the main family breadwinner of the previous generation.

The term "teenager" was first used in 1941 in reference to juvenile delinquency. The term soon began to be associated with the tastes, styles, attitudes and cultural identity of the growing ranks of WW II baby boomers. The rise of teenage allowances and greater free time set the stage for some-thing new (anything new) to capture the teenager's youthful energy. 1950's films depicted problems of this new teenage idle time in such films as *Rebel Without A Cause*.

New record formats were being introduced for the expanding consumer music market. Columbia records introduced the 12-inch 33 rpm long playing vinyl record in 1948. RCA, introduced the 7-inch 45 rpm record (1949) The convenience of the 7-inch 45 gave rise to portable record players. When music migrated from the living room into a teenager's bedrooms, a divergent, teen age based, music market emerged.



The living room was *the* exclusive center of family life. Television replaced the radio as the primary mode of family entertainment

## What was Pop Music Like before Rock and Roll?

Top of the Charts in early 1950's  
The U.S. Hit Parade is dominated  
by **white** mainstream  
performers.

The music was **well-produced**,  
with **naïve** or **sentimental** lyrics.  
The songs were **inoffensive** and  
geared toward white middle-  
class audiences.

Novelty songs such as “*How  
Much Is That Doggie In The  
Window?*” became popular.



Perry Como (1912- 2001)

## **Q: What kind of disturbed society would call this music?**

**A desire to shelter their families from horrors of WWII**

**Music was geared to the White adult middle-class**

**Music became less important to growing families**

**The television advocated “family values”**

**Music was designed to be inoffensive and polite**

**Novelty songs and instrumentals are popular**

### **1950 Hit Parade Winners**

**My Foolish Heart (18 weeks)**

**All My Love (17 weeks)**

**Mona Lisa (17 weeks)**

**Goodnight Irene (15 weeks)**

**A Bushel and A Peck (15 weeks)**

**Tennessee Waltz (15 weeks)**



**Rock and Roll brought unpredictability and turmoil to the music industry**

## **The Restless “Teenager”**

**More spendable income**

**More leisure time**

**Looking for excitement or “kicks”**

**Cars and Cruising**

**Motorcycles**

**No marketing specific to youth sub-culture**

### **Teen Musical Tastes:**

Prior to Rock and Roll there was no separate teen record market; teenagers listened to the same music as their parents. Professional songwriters and standard renditions were more important than the performer. Bored with the musical status quo, teenagers began listening to black dance music; rhythm and blues. The binding force was teenage self-identification rather than socio-economic, regional, or racial distinctions.





**Marlon Brando in  
The Wild One, 1953**



**James Dean in Rebel Without a Cause, 1955**

**How did African-American Performers  
fit into the Pop Music Mainstream?**



< Nat King Cole

Louis Jordan>



< Fats Domino

Inoffensive and non-threatening,  
he transitioned from Jump Blues  
to Rhythm and Blues

**What are the differences between early  
Rock and Roll and Rhythm and Blues?**

## Differences between early Rock and Roll and Rhythm and Blues

The rock and roll uses elements of Rhythm and Blues in a more mainstream way

The lyrics are often “cleaned up” for mainstream audiences

The tempo is generally faster

Other elements such as country western and mainstream pop are often thrown in the mix

“Swing 8ths” replaced by “straight 8ths”



Alan Freed, Cleveland DJ, popularized the term Rock and Roll ... but what was his “inspiration”?

## The Geography of Early Rock



Bill Haley - a hybrid of Blues and Country - he foreshadowed rockabilly

Ray Charles - secularized gospel music

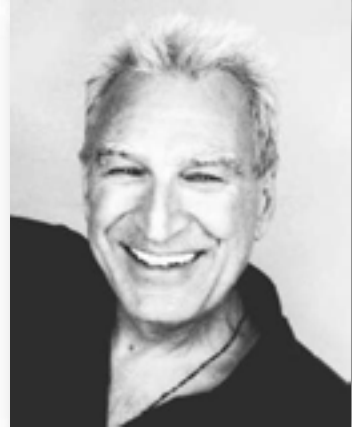




Phil  
Chess



Marshall  
Chess



Chess Records, Chicago



Chess Artist Bo Diddley (1928 -2008)



**Chuck Berry (1926 -2016 )**

**Chess Record's first  
Rock and Roll Star**



**Sun Studios, Memphis: Sam Phillips, Elvis Presley  
and Marion Keisker Despite popular belief,  
it was Marion who discovered Elvis**

J & M Studios, in New Orleans was owned and operated by Cosimo Matassa (1926-2014)



**Matassa's Market**  
**1001 Dauphine St, New Orleans, LA**



<Little Richard



Fats Domino >

**1920-1930: Mississippi Delta Blues**

**1930's: Urban Blues Types**

Chicago Blues (electric guitar based blues)

Memphis Blues

Kansas City Blues

Texas Blues

New Orleans Blues

**1940's: New Orleans Jump Blues**

(boogie-woogie rhythm with honking horns)

**Late 1940's: Rhythm and Blues**

(boogie-woogie rhythm with honking horns)

# The Golden Age of Rock and Roll (1952-1959)

1950's Rock and Roll  
**Not one single style!**

Several Regional Styles:  
Rockabilly, Doo-wop, Gospel shout,  
Blues and Rhythm and Blues covers

**1950's Rock and Roll Regional Styles:  
Rockabilly, Doo-wop, Gospel shout,  
Blues and Rhythm and Blues covers.**



**Today:  
Beale Street,  
Memphis, TN**

**Famous Beale Street  
Musicians:**

**W. C. Handy  
Furry Lewis  
Louis Armstrong  
B.B. King  
Muddy Waters  
Albert King  
Memphis Minnie  
Rufus Thomas  
Rosco Gordon**







**B.B. King  
Beale Street Blues Boy**



**Robert Johnson “sold his soul  
to the Devil” here**



**Owned and operated by Sam Phillips  
He sold blues and C&W recordings to other labels; i.e. Chess  
Eventually he started his own label, Sun Records  
Sun Records became the birthplace of the Rockabilly style**



Ike Turner (1931-2007) and the *Kings of Rhythm* recorded *Rocket 88* at Sun Studios in 1951



*Rocket 88* was released under the Chess label naming *Jackie Brenston and the Delta Cats* as the artists.

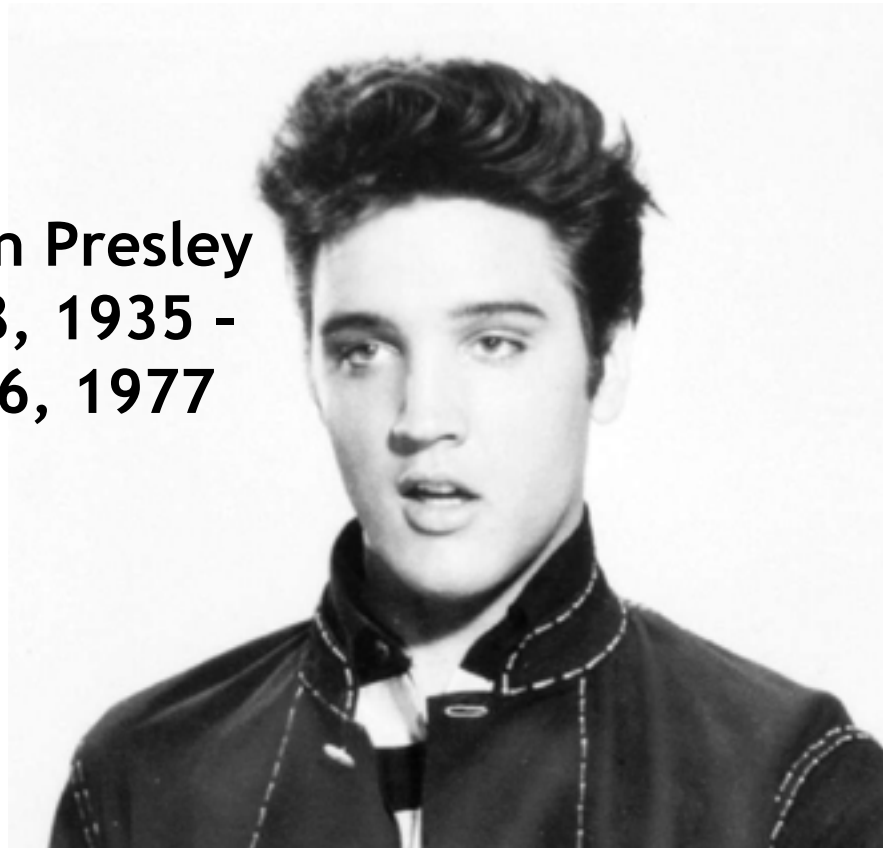
Jackie Brenston was Ike Turner's cousin.

***Rocket 88*** was  
“covered” by a  
Country and  
Western band;  
***Bill Haley and  
the Saddlemen.***



**They decided to drop their country image  
and became *Bill Haley and the Comets***

**Elvis Aaron Presley  
January 8, 1935 -  
August 16, 1977**





**Elvis' birthplace: 306 Old Sattilo Road, Tupelo, Mississippi, (now Elvis Presley Drive). The two room “shotgun” wood frame house was built by his father, Vernon, for \$180**

**Elvis was very close to his mother.**

**His family was extremely poor, his father working odd jobs and his mother as a sewing machinist.**

**His father was sent to jail for writing an \$8.00 forged check.**

**The Presley's lost their house in the process.**

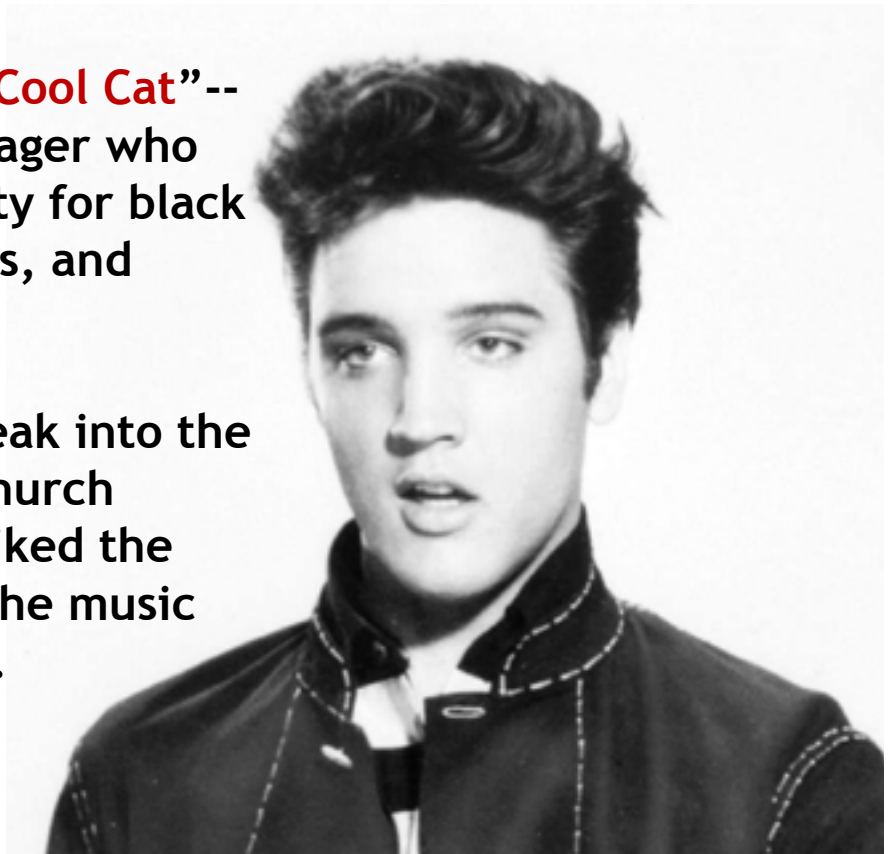


**Gladys, Elvis, and Vernon Elvis Presley**



Elvis was a “Cool Cat”--  
A white teenager who  
had an affinity for black  
culture, dress, and  
affectations.

He would sneak into the  
local black church  
because he liked the  
fervency of the music  
and sermons.



Despite the urban myth that Elvis came to Sun  
Studios to record a song for this mother's birthday,  
Elvis actually hung out at Sun Studios for months  
before he was discovered.



## MEMPHIS RECORDING SERVICE “SUN STUDIOS”

The birthplace of rockabilly. Owned by white record producer Sam Phillips, Sun studios began recording blues acts in the early 1950's such as Little Junior Walker, B.B. King, and Howlin' Wolf.

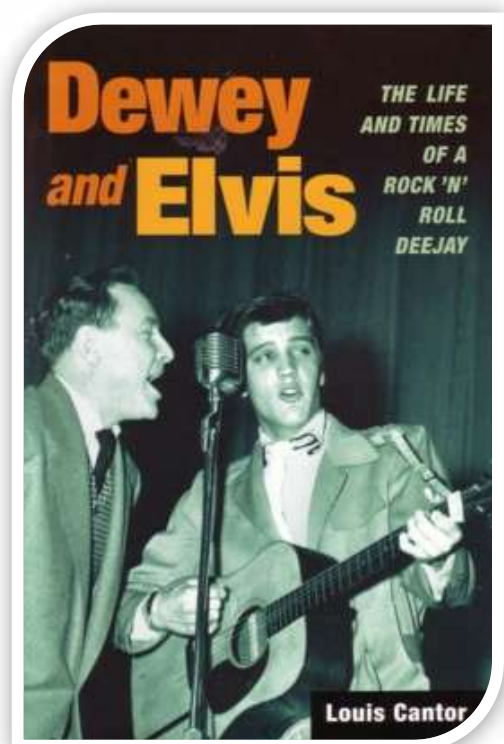
He then sold these recordings to other indie labels such as Modern and Chess Records. Sam Phillips felt that if he could find a white performer who had the charisma and energy of a black R & B performer he could “make a million dollars”.

His discovery and merchandizing of Elvis Presley is a major landmark in the evolution of Rock and Roll. The Sun studio sound popularized heavy reverb, slap-bass, a nasal singing style.



Memphis Radio DJ Dewey Phillips (no relation to Sam Phillips) broke “That’s Alright, Mama” on his *Red Hot & Blue* radio show.

His show predates Alan Freed’s *Rock and Roll House Party*.





Elvis Presley had the first “cross-over” hits:

That’s Alright, Mama (Blues)

Blue Moon of Kentucky (Country and Western)

In 1958, he was  
inducted into US Army  
and was stationed in  
Friedberg, Germany

Unfortunately, it was  
in the Army that he  
became addicted to  
drugs



3rd Armored Division





In 1970, Elvis visited Richard Nixon at the White House. Presley wrote Nixon a letter suggesting that he be made a “Federal Agent-at-Large” in the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs.

In the first eight months of 1977, his doctor, George C. Nichopoulos had prescribed more than *10,000 doses* of sedatives, amphetamines, and narcotics all in Elvis' name

His death has been determined to have been brought on by a heart attack





## The Contributions of Elvis Presley

Hybridized **Rhythm and Blues** with **Country and Western**

Was considered a “**lesser evil**” among white parents

Became an **icon** that propelled rock into an international phenomenon

One of the most **widely imitated and influential** rockers

Elvis **Topped all three charts**; C&W, R&B, and Pop



## Rockabilly (1956-1960)

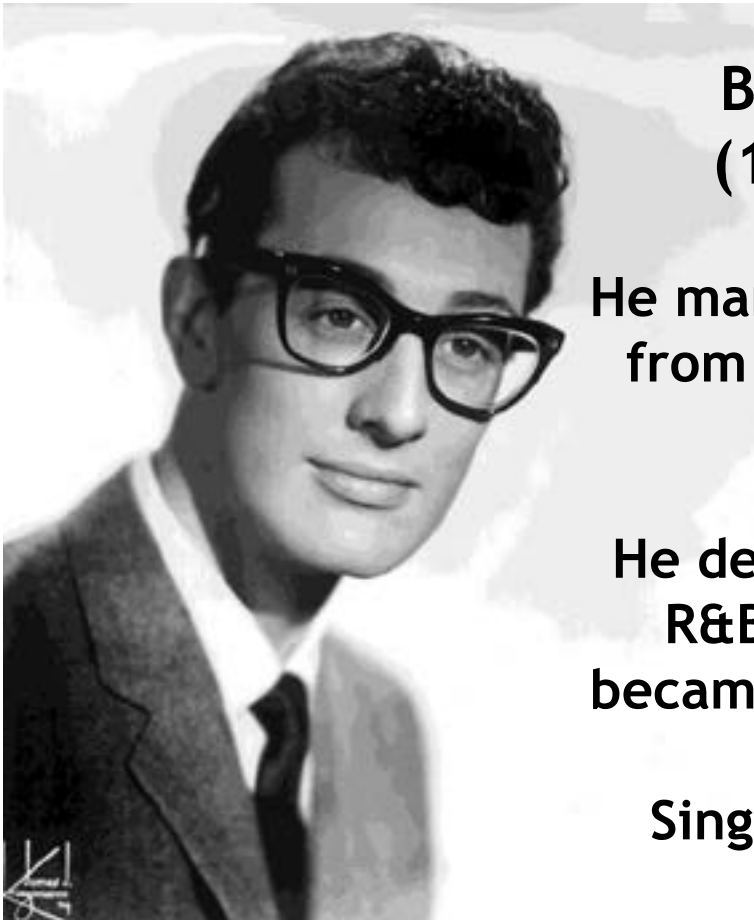
Rockabilly is a hybrid of blues and hillbilly music. During its height, performers came from several styles i.e.; Rick Nelson (pop); Johnny Cash (country); Elvis Presley (rock). The style makes heavy use of twanging guitars, nasal singing and slap-bass. Heavy drumming, still associated primarily with black music, was kept to a minimum. The visual style of rockabilly stars was strongly influenced by actors James Dean and Marlon Brando. Hank Williams Sr. and Bill Haley and the Comets bridge the gap between country-swing and rockabilly styles.



Carl Perkins (1932 -1998)



## **Rockabilly elsewhere: Tex-Mex Rockabilly**



**Buddy Holly  
(1938-1959)**

**He marks the transition  
from Rock 'n' Roll to  
*Rock.***

**He departed from the  
R&B tradition and  
became one of the first  
important  
Singer/Songwriters**

## **Buddy Holly's Innovations and Contributions**

- 1. He was one of the earliest performers to use the guitar band format. (Lead guitar, rhythm guitar, drums and bass)**
  - 2. He was one of the first white rockers to write his own material**
  - 3. He wore glasses on stage portraying him as “the boy next door”**
  - 4. He produced and “mixed” some of his own recordings**
- 
- 5. He rarely employed Rhythm and blues in his music**
  - 6. He often used vocal effects such as his trademark hiccups and baby talk**
  - 7. He was one of the first performers to use a solid-body electric guitar**

# The Day The Music Died



## Singers Killed

These three rock 'n' roll singing idols were killed Tuesday when their plane crashed near Mason City, Iowa, en route to play an engagement at Moorhead, Minn. Buddy Holly, 22, left, Ritchie Valens, 17, center, and J.P. (The Big Bopper) Richardson, 24, were killed along with the pilot of the chartered plane. The three took the plane after playing an engagement near Mason City so they could arrive early and get their clothes laundered. The rest of the troupe went by bus. The Moorhead performance went on last night although members of the troupe said they didn't have the heart to perform. Some 1,000 advance tickets had been sold.



**Don and Phil Everly: The Everly Brothers  
Influenced a wide range of performers with their  
“close harmony” duet singing style**



**Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent in 1960**

**Eddie Cochran  
(1938 - 1960)**



***Summertime Blues***



## Doo-Wop

Late 1940's through early 1960s:

“The forgotten 1/3 of Rock and Roll”



## Doo-Wop (Early '50's)

Doo-wop was one of the first successful styles of rock and roll. The style started in the late 1940's with black vocal harmony groups performing on the street corners of New York. Doo-wop is characterized by elaborate vocal harmony, and was often sung “a cappella” (without instrumental accompaniment). The vocal arrangement usually follows a standard format: A sweet, strident lead singer, back-up singers vocalizing nonsense syllables such as “ooma ooma kow kow” or “doo-wop” and an independent and prominent bass singer. The lyrics were optimistic, hopeful, and naive. Because of its romantic and sweet vocals, doo-wop was one of the first black popular styles to effectively penetrate the white pop market.

During its height there were approximately 3,000 doo-wop groups in America, the vast majority of which were one-hit wonders. The style was later popularized by groups such as the Coasters and the Platters. There have been numerous doo-wop revivals and stylistic adaptations throughout the decades.



**The Ink Spots**



**The Mills Brothers**

## Characteristics of Doo-Wop: Late 1940's through early 1960s

Sweet harmony sound derived from  
jazz vocal harmony groups of the 1940's

Sung in a competitive, street corner  
“a-cappella” style

Inoffensive, charming, sentimental lyrics

Listened to by large cross-section of teen America

About 3000 doo-wop groups saturated the market

## Style characteristics of Doo-Wop:

High, Strident lead singer

Prominent bass singer

2 or more backup singers using non-sense  
syllables such as “Rat-a-tat”, “Doo-wop”, or  
“Sh-boom”

Stereotypical chord progression. I-vi-IV-V  
(C-am-F-G)



The Penguins



The Platters

**Chuck Berry (1926-2016 )**

**Chuck Berry is one of rock and roll's greatest innovators.**

**Berry wrote many of the standards of the period. His guitar riffs were copied by countless rockers.**



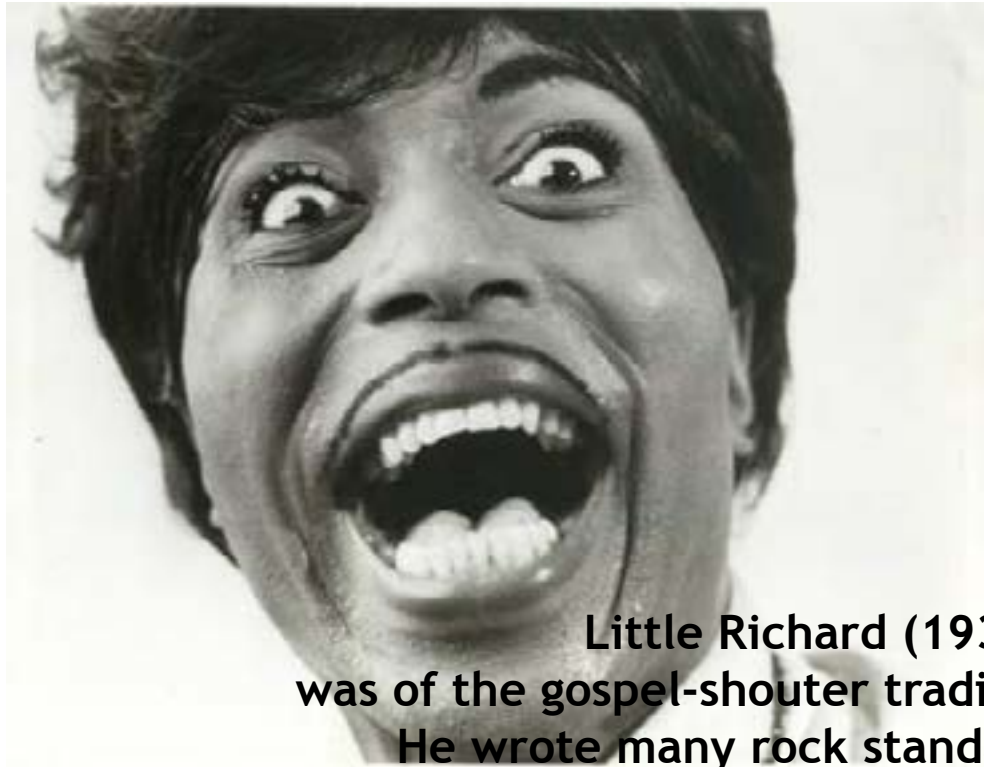
## **The Gospel Shouters:**

**Many early rock singers  
were influenced by  
fervency of gospel music**

### **Gospel Shouters (1953-1957)**

Many early rockers were influenced by the vocal intensity and fervency of black congregational singing.

Shouting, “call-response” techniques and emotional delivery of gospel sermons found its way into the vocal style of rock and roll singers. Much for Little Richard’s music is a combination of the gospel shout tradition and boogie-woogie piano playing.



**Little Richard (1932- )**  
was of the gospel-shouter tradition.  
He wrote many rock standards.  
A flamboyant trailblazer and somewhat of a loner,  
he is hard to categorize yet is often imitated.

## **Rock and Roll Comes Under Fire:**

**Churches and local municipalities  
tried to ban rock concerts**

**The music establishment tried to  
discredit rock and roll**

**Rock and Roll DJs came under fire for  
taking bribes (payola)**





### **The Payola Hearings (1959-1960)**

The mid 1950's witnessed not only an astronomical rise in television but also one of its first fads: TV game shows. After it became public that some of the shows, including the Sixty Four Thousand Dollar Question were fixed, a full-blown investigation of television promotional practices ensued. A number of establishment figures thought that the rock and roll was being promoted by unscrupulous disk jockeys who were getting money under the table (payola) and also corrupting the morals of America's youth. They saw this as an opportunity to enlarge the entertainment industry investigation to include the practices of rock and roll disk jockeys as well.

ASCAP (American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers) was the principal music performing rights society in America. ASCAP wanted nothing to do with rock and roll. Traditional song-writers, clients of ASCAP, did not want to jump on the rock and roll bandwagon. Also, ASCAP had their own, more traditional artists, and ASCAP primary focus was on marketing these artists.

ASCAP also prevented radio stations from playing records without paying a huge fee. Radio stations retaliated by starting Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI) which encouraged jukebox type playing on the radio and became a direct competitor of ASCAP. Since rock and roll was, from the beginning, a recorded product, most indies supported BMI.

ASCAP, understandably concerned about its new competitor BMI, jumped on the bandwagon in a drive to discredit rock and roll. Alan Freed, most visible among rock DJs was indicted and later convicted. Dick Clark, selling teen products as well as rock and roll, was asked to divest himself of any financial gain in promoting groups that appeared on American Bandstand.

The after-effects of the payola hearings were the marketing of respectable white teen idols, promotion of top-40 play-lists, homogenizing of rock's regional variations and smoothing its abrasive edge.



**Alan Freed**



### **A.S.C.A.P (1914-present)**

**The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) is a non-profit performance rights organization that protects its 300,000 members' musical copyrights by monitoring public performances of their music, whether via a broadcast or live performance, and compensating them accordingly.**

**The downside of ASCAP was that in order to be a member you had to have had five major hits.**

**It was next to impossible to have a major hit without ASCAP distribution; Catch 22.**

**Almost all African-American composers were excluded as were many Country and Western Artists.**

**ASCAP tried to keep radio stations from playing records.**

**Radio Stations banded together to form BMI (Broadcast Music, Incorporated)**

**ASCAP's fortunes declined as rock and roll records rose in sales**

- **Rock and Roll did not sell much sheet music**
- **Rock and Roll was primarily a recorded medium**
- **Rock and Roll was often self-produced**

**ASCAP sought to discredit rock and roll by attacking the practices of Rock and Roll DJs**



**Twenty One and Dotto: The Quiz Show Scandal -**  
**The FCC starts an investigation**  
**of Game Show corruption**



**In 1959 a U.S. Senate Subcommittee**  
**investigated the practices of Rock DJs**

Dick Clark - really big fish...

Alan Freed

Who was the target of the hearings?

### The Effect of the Payola Hearings:

Deejays relied on national sales statistics to determine songs they would play rather than regional talent

The Rise of Top 40 Format drove regional artists off the charts (Country and Western and Black artists were hardest hit)

Top 40 Format gave rise to more clean-cut (white) Teen Idols

Anything and everything was merchandized as Rock and Roll

The rough edges were removed to maximize market appeal



## Where Did Everyone Go?

- **Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper** died in a charter plane crash in 1959.
- **Chuck Berry** was sent to jail for 1 ½ years for having sex with a 14 year old waitress (he was 34)
- **Little Richard** renounced rock and roll and turned to his life to God (until the money ran out).
- **Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent** were in a car accident that killed Cochran and seriously injured Vincent.
- **Elvis Presley** went into the U.S. Army and focused on movies.
- **Carl Perkins** was injured in a serious car accident.
- **Jerry Lee Lewis** was scandalized by marrying his 13-year old cousin.
- **Sam Phillips** rarely recording after Sun records declined.
- **Rockabilly stars moved on.**
- **Alan Freed** died a broken man in 1965



## **Teen Idols on American Bandstand Dick Clark (L) introducing Fabian, Bobby Rydell, and Frankie Avalon**

### **End Of The Golden Era Rock and Roll's Golden Age came to an end about 1960.**

1. Many of the original artists left the rock and roll scene. Big Bopper Richardson, Ritchie Valens, and Buddy Holly died in a charter plane crash near Clear Lake, Iowa. Chuck Berry was indicted for violating the Mann Act; transporting a minor across State lines without parental permission. Little Richard renounced rock and roll and turned to God. Bill Haley's career declined rapidly after Elvis Presley entered the scene. As Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent began touring Europe they suffered a car accident that killed Cochran and seriously injured Vincent. Elvis Presley was inducted into the U.S. Army. Carl Perkins was in a car accident that killed a band member and put his career on hold. Jerry Lee Lewis was scandalized by marrying his 13-year old cousin.
2. Payola Scandal constrained DJs and performers. This led to the rise of top 40 format. Gone were the regional variations such as inner-city blues or country and western drawl in favor for a more homogenized pop style.
3. Rock and roll came under fire from a number of fronts. Following many disruptive concerts, sometimes bordering on riots, many communities ordered rock and roll concerts to be banned. Religious and conservative groups as well felt that rock and roll was decadent and immoral. Citizen's groups formed to fight rock and roll.
4. Absorption and adaptation of original rock styles by the music industry. By 1960 major record labels such as RCA, Decca, and Capitol had bought Elvis Presley and a flock of Elvis imitators. Anything that could even loosely be marketed as rock and roll, made the rock charts. "Teen idols" replaced the original stars.