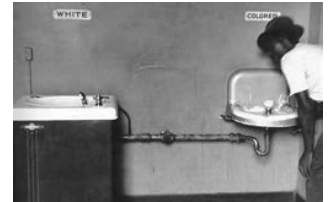


History of Rock 'n' Roll: 1950s

I. Roots of 1950s Rock & Roll

- a. Rock & roll first emerged when? _____
- b. Early R&R was heavily influenced by what? _____
 - i. Rock and Roll was also influenced by blues, country, jazz, folk and gospel music.
- c. At the time, much of America was still _____ and music was no different.

i. DEFINE:



- d. African-Americans had been playing rock and roll for years – WHY did white audiences know very little about them?

II. What helped to popularize rock & roll?

- a. By the mid-1950s, rock & roll had become wildly popular with white and black audiences. WHY?
 - 1. White teens started to secretly _____

 - 2. White artists began to _____

 - 3. Radio stations (facing increased competition from TV) began to _____

III. The role of record labels

- a. Making covers: Major record labels made a practice of re-recording minor hits originally recorded by black artists with their own white artists.
 - i. How did they make the remakes smash hits? _____

- b. Designing hits: To guarantee hits, major record labels:
 - i. Created and mass produced attractive male teen idols
 - ii. Wrote and marketed songs for a mainstream white audience
 - 1. They hired songwriters to write the perfect songs to speak to teen audiences. What kinds of topics did the songs cover? (LIST)
-

- c. The quest for white rock & roll stars:
 - i. Sam Phillips was a _____
 - ii. As head of Sun Records, he recorded a number of well-known black R&B artists. He was worried that his black artists wouldn't be able to break through to the white mainstream market. So he began searching for a white artist who could sing in the same way.
 - 1. He discovered & signed **Elvis Presley** who had the crossover appeal he was looking for.

Video break: *The Fifties: The Beat*

1. How did growing up in Memphis help shape **Elvis Presley** as a musician?

2. How did Elvis help to break down racial barriers?

3. What power did teens have in the 1950s?

4. How did control over music change hands in the 1950s?

IV. Elvis' Influence:

Critics	Fans
Became successful by singing the music that countless uncredited black artists sang before him.	Appealed to diverse musical styles & audiences Brought country & R&B music into rock & roll

V. '50s Rock & Roll Stars

- a. Buddy Holly
- b. Jerry Lee Lewis
- c. Little Richard
- d. Chuck Berry

VI. Role of Teens/Youth Culture:

- a. By the mid-1950s, there were _____ teenagers in the U.S..
- b. 1950s teens had more money than ever before.
 - i. HOW DO WE KNOW THIS? (Support this statement with 2 pieces of evidence.)
- c. Teens were eager to develop their own culture, separate from their parents.

VII. CONSIDER: Why did teens embrace rock & roll?

VIII. Rock & roll music and dance:

- a. Rock & roll music was easy to dance to
- b. Record labels often came up with dances to accompany new songs as a way to do what?

- c. What were some of the popular dances of the 1950s? (LIST 2)



d. **American Bandstand**

- i. Began broadcasting nationwide in 1957
- ii. Projected clean-cut, safe, mostly white image of rock and roll
- iii. Launched careers of teen idols and musicians alike
- iv. Created & promoted dance crazes

e. **The Mitch Thomas Show**

- i. Debuted in 1955.
- ii. What was important about it?

IX. Rock & roll's critics:

- a. What did some people think was wrong with/concerning about rock & roll music? (LIST)

- b. Adults' fear: wild youth!

- i. *Look* magazine reported in 1958 that "many parents are in a state of confusion or despair about their teenagers. And they don't exactly know what to do about it."

- c. Rock & roll and **juvenile delinquency**.

- i. DEFINE (in your own words):

- ii. Why did people worry about delinquency? (How did the numbers support this fear?)

- d. The teenage menace in film:
- i. WATCH CLIP: How do they describe teens in the clip? What words do they use?

 - ii. POSTERS:
 1. What kinds of words do the posters use to describe teenagers and their behavior?

 2. What kinds of activities do these movies suggest teens were involved in during the '50s?

 3. Do you think these movies accurately reflect teen life in the '50s? Why? Explain.

 4. How do you think adults would feel about these movies?

X. The Lasting Influence of '50s Rock & Roll

- a. At a time of widespread racial segregation, rock & roll broke the color line in music.
- b. Teens played a major role in adopting/popularizing the new musical style (this involvement continued and expanded in the '60s and beyond.)
- c. Rock & roll continued and blossomed into many different styles of rock in the '60s and beyond.