

# History of Rock & Roll

1950s



SUPPRESSED

A NEW  
GE

The Elvis 'Roll'  
Frowned Upon  
by Churchmen

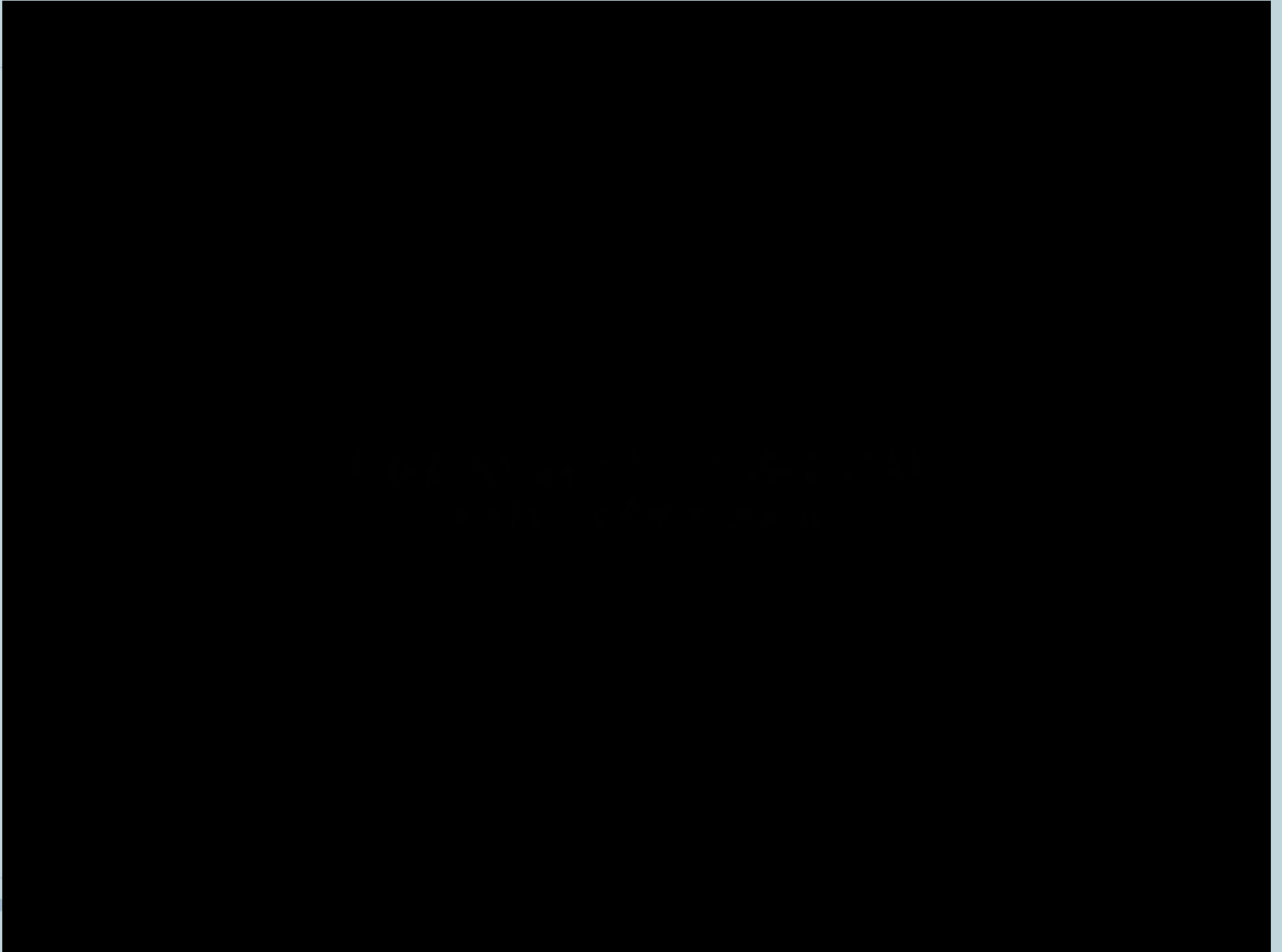
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# Music of the 1940s



# Roots of Rock & Roll

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- ▶ During the 1920s & 1930s, many white Americans enjoyed seeing and listening to African-American jazz and blues.
  - ▶ Many objected to the music as performed by black artists but found it acceptable when performed by whites.
- ▶ A few black R&B musicians achieved crossover success with whites and blacks but more were rewarded with poverty and obscurity.

# The Beginning

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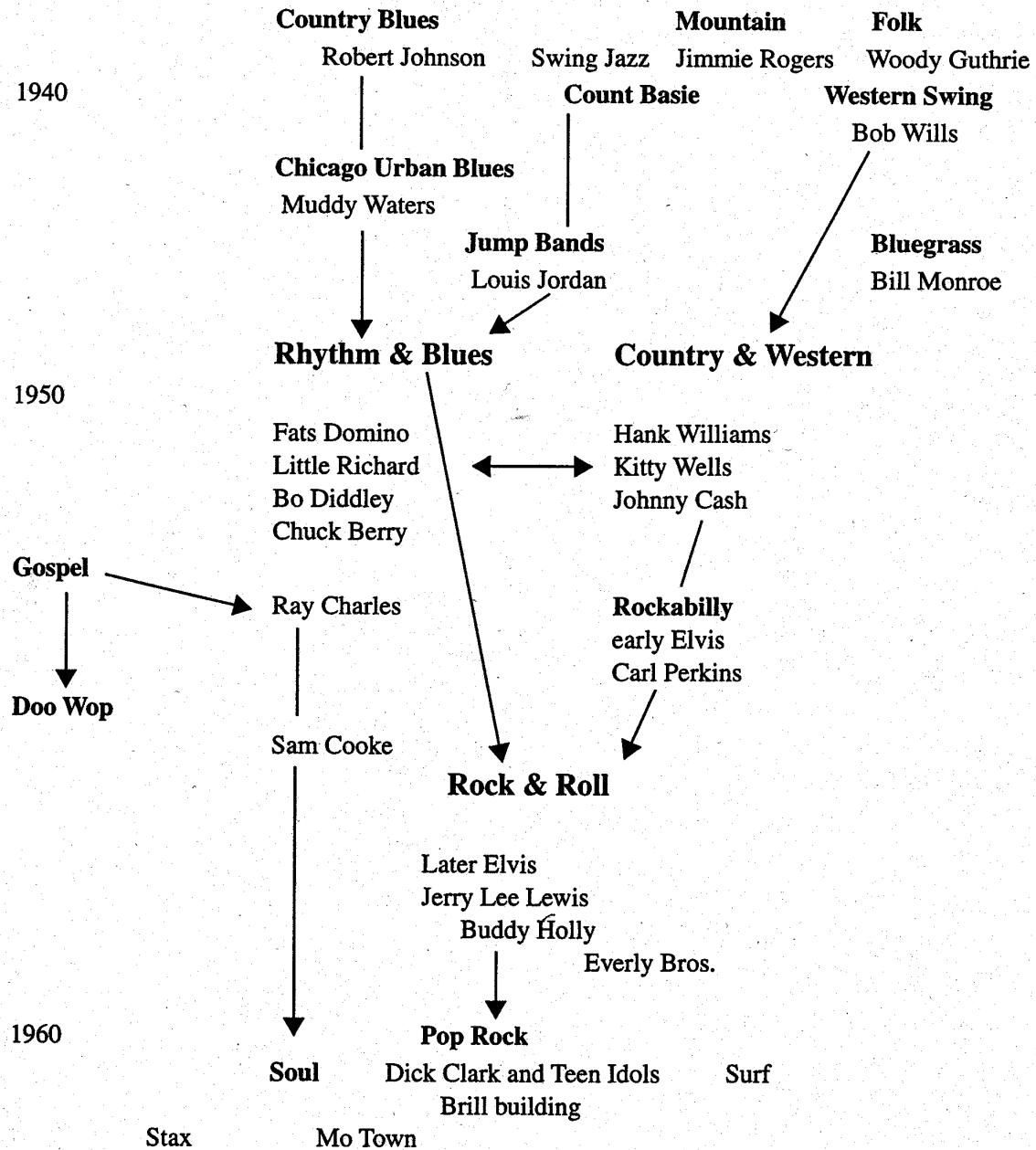
- ▶ Rock and roll first emerged in the 1950s.
- ▶ Early R&R was heavily influenced by **African-American music, in particular rhythm and blues (R&B)**
  - ▶ Rock and Roll was also influenced by blues, country, jazz, folk and gospel.
- ▶ Although R&R was greatly influenced by R&B, the genre also changed as it was performed by white musicians.
  - ▶ **White musicians sped up the tempo and introduced a faster pace that appealed to young, high-energy audiences.**
- ▶ Early Rock and Roll music was characterized by saxophone and piano, later the electric guitar became more prevalent.



Chuck Berry



# Origins of Rock & Roll

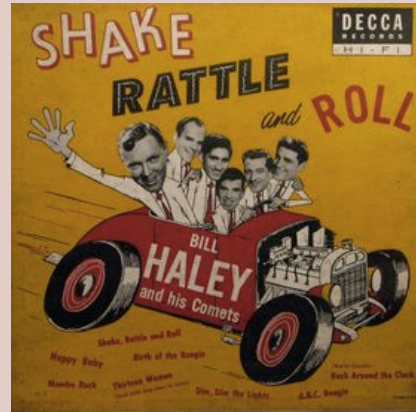


# Popularization of Rock & Roll

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- ▶ African-Americans had been playing rock and roll for years but white audiences knew little about them because **radio stations had been segregating music for years.**
  - ▶ “Race records” were aimed at predominantly black audiences and rarely if ever played on white radio stations.
- ▶ By the mid-1950s, rock and roll had become wildly popular across the color line. A number of factors contributed:
  - ▶ **This was in part because white teens secretly tuned in to black radio stations to hear the new sound.**
  - ▶ **Scrambling to fill airtime due to increasing competition from television, white radio networks were more willing to turn to music which was outside of the mainstream, including up-and-coming rock and roll artists.**
  - ▶ **Rock and roll was also made popular with white listeners thanks to the widespread phenomenon of white singers making covers of previously recorded black songs.**

# Bill Haley and the Comets



- ▶ Style combined Western swing, boogie-woogie, and R&B
- ▶ Some success with R&B covers
  - ▶ 1954 – **“Shake, Rattle, and Roll”** (a Big Joe Turner song)
- ▶ Followed this up with “Rock Around the Clock” which helped make “rock” part of the national language





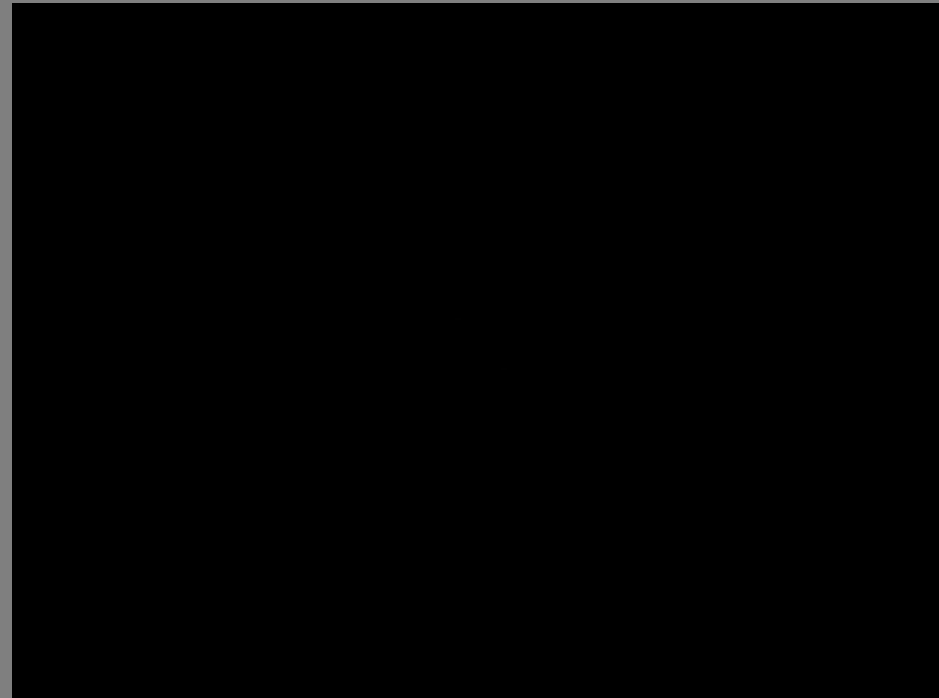


# Major label recording practices in the early 1950s

- ▶ Major labels made a practice in the early 1950s of:
  - ▶ **Re-record minor hits released by small companies.**
    - ▶ **Turned them into smash hits by making them less daring and gearing them towards white middle America by changing potentially offensive lyrics.**
      - For instance, *Shake, Rattle and Roll*:
        - Bill Haley's version: "Wearing those dresses, your hair's done up so nice; you look so warm, but your heart is as cold as ice."
        - Big Joe Turner's original lyrics: "When you wear your dresses, the sun comes shining through; I can't believe my eyes that all of this belongs to you."
    - ▶ **Hired an attractive male teen idol to perform**
    - ▶ **Designed and marketed songs for a mainstream white audience**

# Famous Covers

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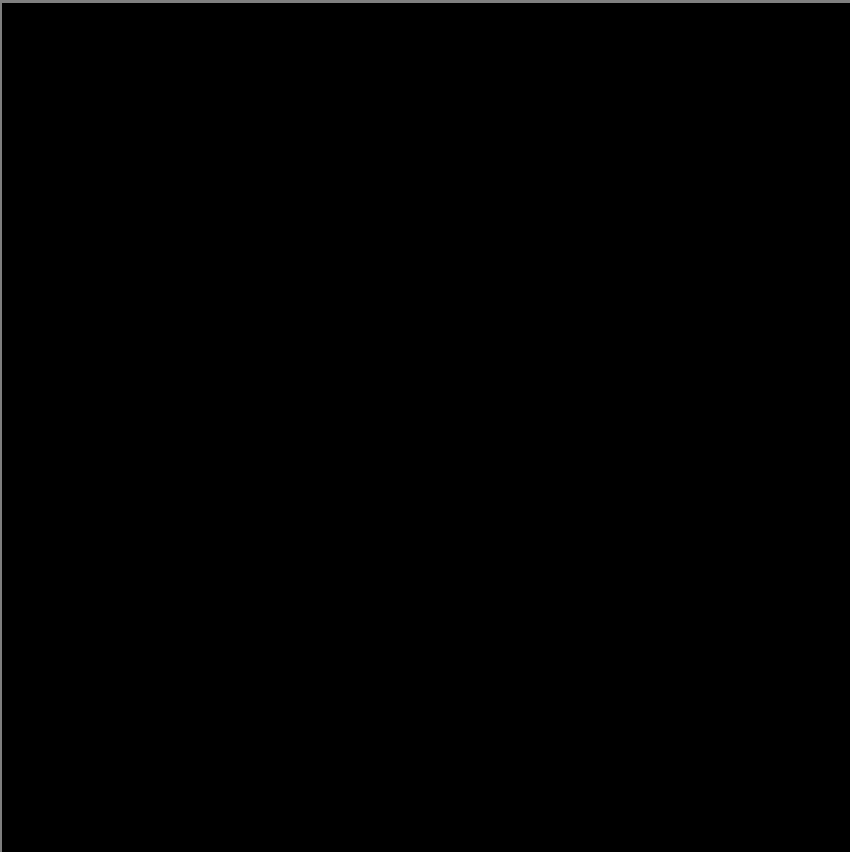
# Famous Covers

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# Famous Covers

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# Sam Phillips

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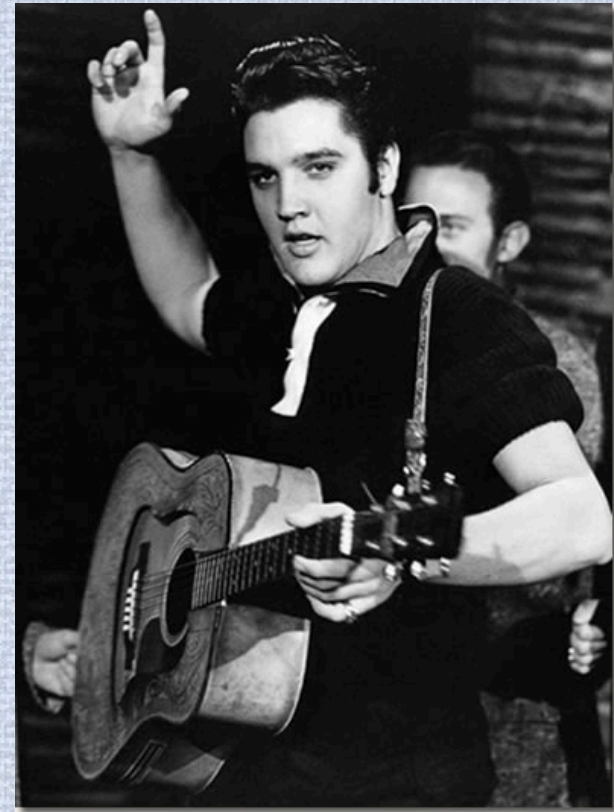
- ▶ Sam Phillips was a **disc jockey** who started the Memphis Recording Service on January 3, 1950, which was later renamed **Sun Records label**.
- ▶ From 1950-1954 he recorded black R&B artists that included: Bobby “Blue” Bland, Chester “Howlin’ Wolf” Burnett, James Cotton, Roscoe Gordon, Riley “B.B.” King, Little Milton, Herman “Little Junior” Parker, Rufus “Hound Dog” Thomas.
- ▶ Was **concerned his black artists would not be able to break through into the “white mainstream” market.**
- ▶ **Began searching for a white artist “who could play and sing in this same exciting, alive way.”**



# Elvis conquers the charts

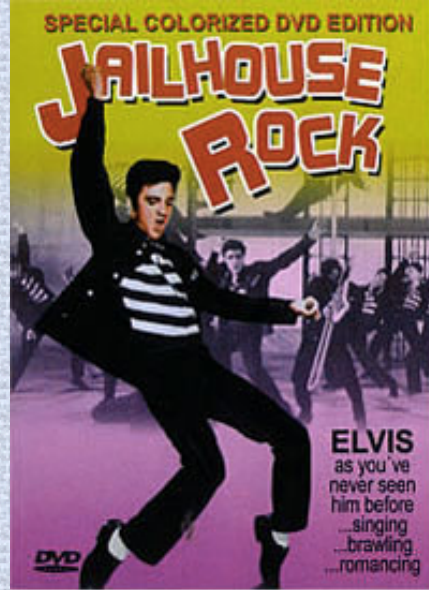
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- ▶ In 1956, Elvis had the #1 country single (“I Forgot to Remember to Forget”), the #1 R&B single (“Heartbreak Hotel”), and the #1 Pop single (“I Want You, I Need You, I Love You”).
- ▶ In 1957, he released the following hit singles: “Hound Dog,” “Don’t Be Cruel,” “Love Me Tender,” Jailhouse Rock,” “All Shook Up,” and “Teddy Bear.”





# Elvis conquers Hollywood



- ▶ *Love Me Tender* (1956), *Loving You*, *Jailhouse Rock* (1957), *King Creole* (1958), *Flaming Star* (1960), *Blue Hawaii* (1961), *Viva Las Vegas* (1964) are among the 31 motion pictures he made.

# Jailhouse Rock

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# Quotes about Elvis

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- *Elvis was the only man from Northeast Mississippi who could shake his hips and still be loved by rednecks, cops, and hippies. -- Jimmy Buffett.*
- *[Elvis] is the deity supreme of rock and roll religion as it exists in today's form. Hearing him for the first time was like busting out of jail. I thank God for Elvis Presley... Elvis recorded a song of mine, that's the one recording I treasure the most. – Bob Dylan.*
- *Without Elvis, none of us could have made it. -- Buddy Holly.*



# Elvis - Major Influences

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- ▶ Consider the musical/racial climate in Memphis – all of this was a huge influence on Elvis' music (country and R&B, black and white cultures mesh)
- ▶ Elvis brought these varied styles into rock and roll and created a sub-genre of rock & roll = rockabilly



# Rockabilly

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- ▶ **Combination of country and R&B, but with more weight on the country elements (hillbilly, honky-tonk, bluegrass & country)**
- 



# Buddy Holly (1936-1959)

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- ▶ Born Lubbock, TX
- ▶ Formed Western swing band in high school; worked as back-up band for Bill Haley
- ▶ Modelled his vocal style after Elvis after meeting at gigs
- ▶ *That'll Be The Day* was a hit in 1957 and was followed by a rapid string of 7 hit records with band The Crickets.
- ▶ Killed in plane crash in 1959 - "The Day The Music Died"





# Jerry Lee Lewis (1935- )

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- ▶ Born in Ferriday, Louisiana & started playing piano age 9 and in his early years, performed in church.
- ▶ Primary musical influences - boogie-woogie piano, New Orleans R&B style.
- ▶ Often categorized as rockabilly, but more in common with Little Richard for his unique piano-driven sound
- ▶ Recorded “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On” in 1957. Went wild kicking out the piano stool on the *Steve Allen Show*.
- ▶ Nicknamed “The Killer” for his outrageous on-and-off-stage antics.









# Great Balls of Fire

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- ▶ Known for his:
  - ▶ Percussive, boogie-woogie piano style & honky-tonk/hillbilly vocals
  - ▶ **Frantic performing style** (i.e., lighting his piano on fire while playing!)
  - ▶ **Blatantly sexual lyrics**
  - ▶ **Scandal:** In December 1957, he wed his 13-year old second cousin, Myra Gale Brown, (while still married to his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife – he was 22 at the time) starting a scandal that hurt his career -
    - > tour cancelled, blacklisted from radio, live performance fees fell from \$10 thousand per night to \$250,
  - ▶ boycotts



# Little Richard (1932- )



Little Richard in a 1957 performance

Other notable hits included: “Long Tail Sally” and “Good Golly Miss Molly”

- ▶ Born Richard Wayne Penniman in Georgia. Driven out the house at a young age by his father (who rejected his son’s homosexuality)
- ▶ Influenced heavily by the church/gospel music (uncles, grandfathers were preachers)
- ▶ Discovered by producer Bumps Blackwell who was looking for a “new Ray Charles” for Specialty Records.
- ▶ On September 13, 1955 Richard recorded “Tutti Frutti.”
  - ▶ *The lyrics were changed from “Tutti-frutti loose booty” to “Tutti frutti all rooty” because Blackwell felt they were over the line. (Tutti-frutti was a slang term meaning a “gay male.”)*



# Chuck Berry (1926-2017)

The “father of rock ‘n’ roll”

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- ▶ Born in St. Louis. Influences included Nat King Cole, T. Bone Walker, and Muddy Waters.
- ▶ In 1955, Waters discovered him at a small blues club in Chicago and introduced him to Leonard and Cliff Chess of Chess Records.
- ▶ In September 1955, he recorded “Maybellene,” a remake of the country hit, “Ida Red (May)” which reached #5 on the pop charts and #1 on the R&B charts.









# Berry's hits (1956-58)



Berry doing the “duck walk.”

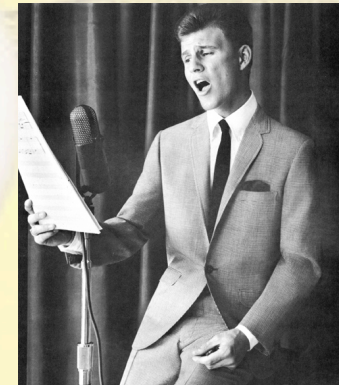
- ▶ Hits included “Roll Over, Beethoven,” “School Days,” “Johnny B. Goode,” and “Sweet Little Sixteen.”
- ▶ Influenced numerous guitarists including Jimi Hendrix and Keith Richards.
- ▶ Had legal troubles in 1960 and would never regain his popularity.
  - ▶ **Arrested under the Mann Act after questionable allegations that he'd had sex with a 14-year old waitress who he had then transported across state lines to work as a hat check girl at his club. Berry appealed his initial 5-year sentence, which was then reduced to 3 years.**
- ▶ When he was released, he continued to perform and tour but never with the same acclaim as in the '50s.



# The Major Labels' Influence on Rock 'n' Roll

- ✓ **Covered versions of rock and roll hits**
- ✓ **Created and mass produced teen idols**
- ✓ Major labels manufactured “rock and rollers” = white, good looking, teen idol types

- ▶ Frankie Avalon
- ▶ Fabian
- ▶ Bobby Rydell



- ✓ **Hired songwriters to pen the perfect rock n' roll songs that would speak to teen audiences**
- ▶ They crafted pop songs with teen themes, rock 'n' roll sound.
- ✓ **Created specific dances to accompany popular songs**







THE  
**BIG SHOW  
TO-NITE**

*COME ONE!  
COME ALL!*

FRIESVILLE  
**PALLADIUM**  
*Beginning*  
FRIDAY NIGHT

**DANCING**

*Jimmy Saxe NITE*



# American Bandstand (TV show)




- ▶ Began broadcasting from Philadelphia in 1957. Aired until 1989!
- ▶ Featured local teens dancing to the new rock 'n' roll music.
- ▶ Projected clean-cut, safe, mostly white image of rock and roll to appeal to sponsors and adults.
- ▶ The show helped launch the careers of teen idols and musicians alike & created & promoted dance crazes








AMERICAN  
BANDSTAND

**DANCE CRAZE** MAP 1-108  


**BUNNY HOP** →   
*Ray Anthony and his orchestra*

 **THE CREEP** *Stan Kenton and his orchestra*

**CHARLESTON** →   
*Pee Wee Hunt and his orchestra*

 **HOKEY POKEY**  
*Ray Anthony and his orchestra*



# The Reaction to Rock

about. Furthermore, the Pentagon is in no way interested in tall tales about visitations from outer space." When this reporter attempted to confirm the quote, Mr. Brambilla

the ongoing group continues that much information of this sort is being suppressed and that the American public has a right to know.

**Pentagon Claims Ignorance**

## Around the Theatrical World

# Does Rock and Roll Cause Delinquency?

Eight more arrests were made Sunday during a rock-and-roll show at the State Theater as the management was forced to hire 10 off-duty policemen to maintain order.

Ted Harris, operator of the theater, hired 10 extra policemen for the Sunday shows after the four men he had hired Saturday night were snowed under with trouble.

Saturday night three persons were

Saturday night a riot call went out when members of the audience resisted two policemen on private duty at the theater. Patrol capt. John I. Stages, in charge of Squad B, took personal command of the situation. No further arrests were made after Stages and eight additional men arrived to quiet the crowd.

Arrested during the Sunday performances were: Patrick Mem-

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# Civic Reaction

- ▶ Rock is...
- ▶ unwholesome
- ▶ obscene
- ▶ morally corrupting
- ▶ encourages racial integration

*It's a "primitive quasi-music that can be traced back to prehistoric cultures."*

*"Any adult who has watched the animated bodies of bobby-soxers at a rock 'n' roll record "hop" cannot help wondering if their minds are being twisted like their torsos."*

*"The rock and roll fad is conducive to the lower nature of man and therefore can have an influence on the average teenager to perform certain actions classified as wrong or sinful."*

## Freed Caused Riot Here, Too

Alan Freed, former Cleveland rock 'n' roll disk jockey and dance promoter now under fire in Boston, is no stranger to riots. His "Moondog Coronation Night" here ended in a riot too. On that night — March 21, 1952—25,000 people tried to get into the Arena when tickets were available for only 8,600. Police shut the doors but a rampaging mob broke them down. Two were hurt before order was restored. Chief Frank W. Story recalled the night of the Moondog today saying "We let Freed

The image shows the masthead of the Toronto Star newspaper, dated Tuesday, June 3, 1980, for 20 cents. It includes a 'METRO WEATHER' section with a forecast of mostly sunny tomorrow, high 22°C, and low tonight 12°C. To the right is a 'SUMMER in the city' guide section, labeled 'A complete guide Section E', featuring a photograph of a city scene.

## Ontario Place riot may spark rock ban

By Don Dutton and John Spears Toronto Star

Ontario Place might cancel further rock concerts in the wake of a four-hour riot last night, manager Bruce Longhurst says.

Longhurst held an emergency meeting with some of his senior staff after 400 rock fans rioted last night — the second outbreak of violence in a week by Ontario Place rock crowds.

The fans, locked out of the waterfront park because of overzealous crowds, wrecked a police cruiser and pulled police with hooks and broken glass.

Some of the 400 rioters lobbed 20-pound rocks over a high gate as to the cruiser's roof and windshield, smashing the glass and crushing body panels.

An Ontario Provincial Police spokesman at the scene said six OPP officers received cuts and bruises. Four Metro policemen also suffered minor injuries and one fan broke an ankle when he jumped from a 10-foot fence he had scaled to get inside.

30 arrests

Metro police and Toronto Harbor Police each sent two boats to Ontario Place, where they patrolled the 100-metre by 100-metre area from water during the concert. At least one swimmer was pulled out of the water by a Harbor Police boat.

A Harbor Police spokesman said the boats were patrolled with hooks, adding "We took more broken glass out of the boats than I could believe."

Police charged 18 persons with offences ranging from obstructing police to possession of dangerous weap-

ons, bottles, rocks and knives and from drunkenness to causing a disturbance and mischief to private property.

Ontario Place officials closed the gates about 7:30 p.m., with about 1,500 people still in the crowd, inside to hear Rushmore band, Teenage Head, was estimated at about 12,000. That is considered more than a full house for the Forum and the surrounding grassy banks where many act to watch performances.

A Metro police spokesman at 14 Division said this morning that many

# The Teenage Menace in Film

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...what must a good girl say to "belong"?

# HIGH SCHOOL HELLCATS

THE FACTS ABOUT THE TABOO SORORITIES THAT GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT!

starring **YVONNE LIME · BRET HALSEY · JANA LUND**

Produced by **CHARLES BUDDY ROGERS · EDWARD BERNDS · MARK & JAN LOWEL**  
Directed by **CHARLES BUDDY ROGERS**  
Story and Screenplay by **CHARLES BUDDY ROGERS · EDWARD BERNDS · MARK & JAN LOWEL**  
A **JAMES H. NICHOLSON & SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF** Production • An **AMERICAN-INTERNATIONAL** Picture.



## THRILL-CRAZED SPACE KIDS BLASTING THE FLESH OFF HUMANS!



# "TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE"



Before—a beautiful girl. One moment later—a skeleton!



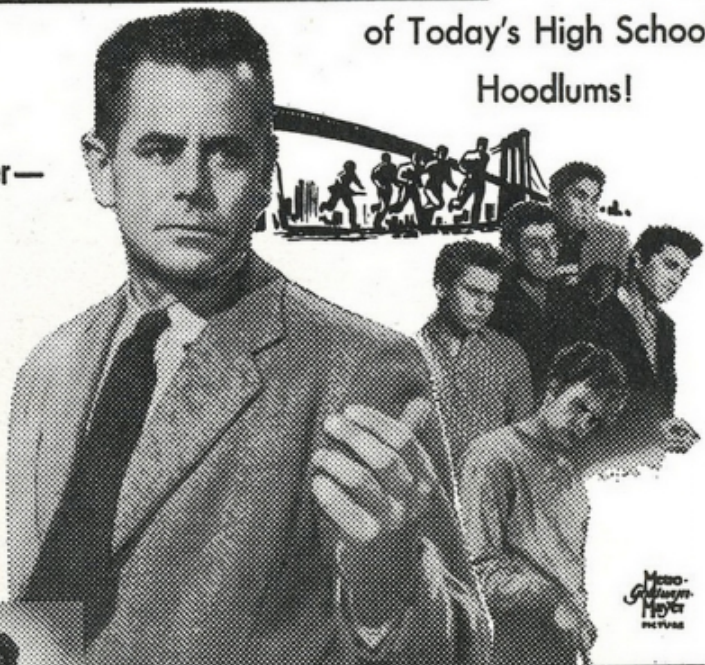
STARRING **DAVID LOVE · DAWN ANDERSON · HARVEY B. DUNN · BRYAN GRANT · TOM LOCKYEAR**  
WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND DIRECTED BY **TOM GRAEFF** DISTRIBUTED BY **WARNER BROS.**



**IT'S REAL...IT'S TIMELY!** A Shock Story

of Today's High School  
Hoodlums!

"I'm a teacher—  
my pupils  
are the  
kind you  
don't turn  
your back  
on, even  
in class!"



# Blackboard Jungle

starring **GLENN FORD**  
**Anne FRANCIS • Louis CALHERN**  
with **Margaret HAYES**

Screen Play by **RICHARD BROOKS** • Based on the Novel by **EVAN HUNTER** • Directed by **RICHARD BROOKS** • Produced by **PANDRO S. BERMAN**

**THE HOODS OF TOMORROW!**

**THE GUN-MOLLS  
OF THE FUTURE!**

The  
"Baby-  
faces"  
who  
have  
just  
taken  
their  
first  
stumbling  
step  
down  
Sin  
Street,  
U.S.A.!



# "The Delinquents"

with **TOMMY LAUGHLIN**  
**PETER MILLER • DICK BAKALYAN**

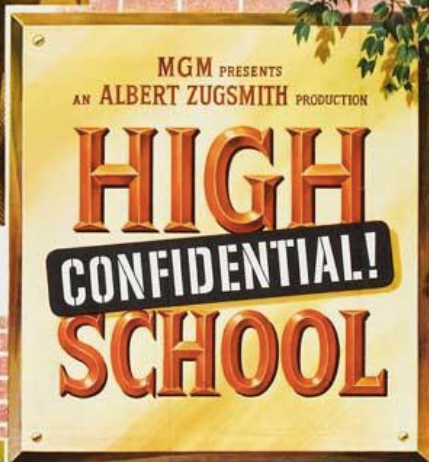
Written and Directed by **ROBERT ALTMAN** • An Imperial  
Production, Inc. Presentation • Released thru UNITED ARTISTS



Behind these "nice" school walls...

**A TEACHERS' NIGHTMARE!...**

**A TEEN-AGE JUNGLE!!**



STARRING

**RUSS TAMBLYN · JAN STERLING · JOHN DREW BARRYMORE**

and GUEST STARS

**MAMIE VAN DOREN · JERRY LEE LEWIS · RAY ANTHONY**

**JACKIE COOGAN · CHARLES CHAPLIN, JR. and DIANE JERGENS** AS JOAN STAPLES

SCREEN PLAY BY LEWIS MELTZER and ROBERT BLEES · SCREEN STORY BY ROBERT BLEES · DIRECTED BY JACK ARNOLD

IN **CINEMASCOPE**

**YOUTHFUL REBELS!**

...trying to crowd a lifetime of thrills into one night...

**EVERY NIGHT!**



Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Presents  
AN ALBERT ZUGSMITH PRODUCTION

**GIRLS TOWN**

LAST STOP ON THE ROAD TO NOWHERE!



Starring **MAMIE VAN DOREN · MEL TORME**  
**RAY ANTHONY · MAGGIE HAYES**

and featuring **PAUL ANKA**

MADE THE SING "Sandy Day"  
"A Time To Say"  
and the rocking title song

Co-starring the GIRLS

**CATHY CROSBY · GIGI PERREAU**

**ELINOR DONAHUE · GLORIA TALBOTT**

and **SHEILAH GRAHAM · JIM MITCHUM · DICK CONTINO**

**HAROLD LLOYD, JR. · CHARLES CHAPLIN, JR. and THE PLATTERS**

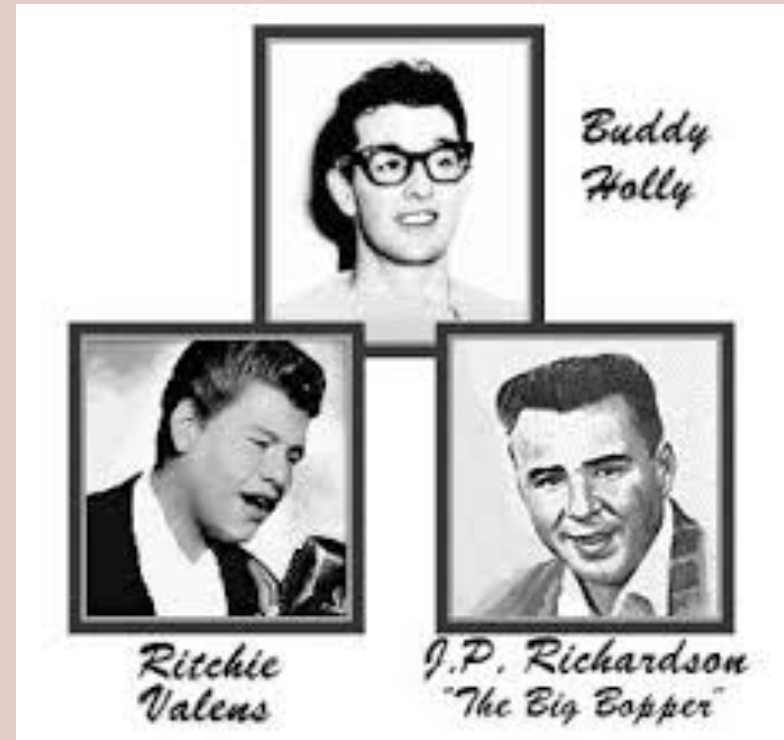
Screen Play by **ROBERT SMITH** · Directed by **CHARLES HAAS**



'50s style rock 'n' roll experienced a decline in the late 1950s-early 1960s - triggered by a series of events:

▶ **The artists themselves changed or left music:**

- ▶ Little Richard gave up singing and became a preacher.
- ▶ Chuck Berry was arrested
- ▶ Elvis Presley was drafted into the army.
- ▶ Buddy Holly, Big Bopper, and Richie Valens all died in a plane crash.



After a gig at the Surf Ballroom, Clear Lake, IA, Holly chartered a plane to Fargo, ND. The plane crashed shortly after takeoff killing the pilot, Holly, Richardson, and Valens. Deaths were immortalized in Don McClean's 1971 anthem, "American Pie."

# Rock & Roll's decline (cont.)

## ▶ Music industry & radio stations were accused of corruption (“pay for play”):

▶ Payola Scandal: radio DJs were accused of accepting cash or gifts from in exchange for airplay.

▶ **Congressional committee investigated charges that independent companies were paying DJs to play their records**

- ▶ DJs were accepting bribes for airtime
- ▶ 335 DJs testified in front of Congress admitted to having received over \$263,000 in “consulting fees.” One Chicago DJ said he received \$22,000 to play a single record!

▶ **Critics used the investigation to force small labels out of business, to push for radio reform & to attack rock ‘n’ roll.**

