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How We Got to Rockin' 'round the Clock

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How did we get to rockin' 'round the clock?

Tracing the origins of rock and roll
from the 1200s to 1955



Note: Song snippets accompany many of the slides.

What is rock and roll?

- Alan Freed coined the term in 1951
 - Disc jockey on Cleveland station WJW
- Described it as a “river of music” in 1956
 - Rock and roll “absorbed many streams: rhythm and blues, jazz, ragtime, cowboy songs, country songs, folk songs” all contributing “to the big beat”
- An evolutionary process that rolls along
 - Heavy metal
 - Grunge
 - Hip-hop
 - Sampling



From Alan Freed's list: Rhythm and Blues

- Term used to describe upbeat music performed mostly by African American artists
- First recognized by Billboard magazine in 1942
- Jerry Wexler coined the term in the late '40s
 - Replaced the phrase "race music"
 - Wexler had a long career as a music producer with Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and many other R&B and rock stars including Led Zeppelin and Bob Dylan



Artists charting R&B hits

- Louis Jordan, R&B's most popular artist of the 1940s
 - **Choo Choo Ch'Boogie** 1946
 - Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens 1946
 - Saturday Night Fish Fry 1949 and School Days 1950
 - Featured in "soundies" - - music clips that foreshadowed music videos
- Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup
 - **That's All Right** 1946 influenced Elvis Presley
 - Covered by Marty Robbins, the Beatles, Rod Stewart
 - Toured with Bonnie Raitt in 1974
- Ivory Joe Hunter
 - Pretty Mama Blues 1948 and Since I Met You Baby 1956



Artists charting R&B hits

- Wynonie Harris
 - **Good Rockin' Tonight** 1948
- John Lee Hooker
 - Boogie Chillen 1949
 - Soundclip in The Blues Brothers movie 1980 as the band travels to their appearance as the Good Old Boys at Bob's Country Bunker
- Paul Williams and His Hucklebuckers
 - **The Hucklebuck** 1949 instrumental
 - Covered by Chubby Checker 1960 with lyrics "wiggle like a snake, waddle like a duck... that's what you do when you do The Hucklebuck"



More R&B as a rock and roll tributary

- Ruth Brown
 - **Teardrops from My Eyes** 1950
- The Treniers
 - Their raucous stage shows in the early 1950s foreshadowed rock and roll
 - Appeared in movies *The Girl Can't Help It* 1956; *Don't Knock the Rock* 1956; *Calypso Heat Wave* 1957
- B.B. King
 - **You Upset Me Baby** 1954
 - "... Well I try to describe her. It's hard to start. I better stop now because I got a very weak heart.. You upsets me, baby."
 - Included in the three-CD *Roots of Rock and Roll* compilation covering 1946-54



Alan Freed: Jazz

- **Billie Holiday**, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie
- Clyde McCoy
 - Orchestra leader / jazz trumpeter who co-founded DownBeat Magazine in 1934
 - His trademark song **Sugar Blues** from 1930
 - Performed through the years by **Ella Fitzgerald**, Fats Waller, Bob Wills and others
 - Made Billboard's country chart in 1941 illustrating music's cross-over effect
 - Member of the Hatfield – McCoy feud
- Nat King Cole
 - Released 32 R&B chart hits 1942-53 including **Route 66** in 1946
 - This version by the late Glen Frey of The Eagles released in 2012



*Billie Holiday sings
Summertime;
Ella Fitzgerald
Sugar Blues*

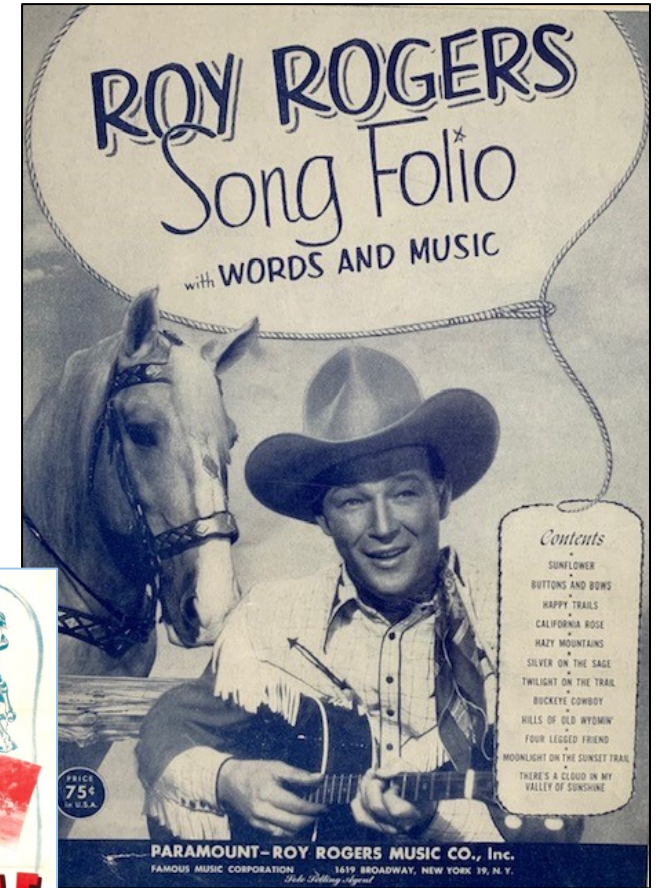
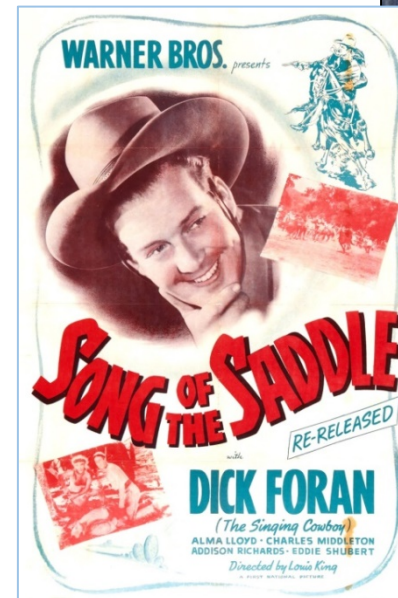
Alan Freed: Ragtime

- 1895-1918
- Scott Joplin
 - Maple Leaf Rag
 - The Entertainer featured by Marvin Hamlisch in The Sting 1973
- Jelly Roll Morton
 - His King Porter Stomp became popular with big bands
- George Botsford
 - Later became a Tin Pan Alley composer
 - **Black and White Rag** 1908
 - This version by Asleep at the Wheel 1992



Alan Freed: Cowboy songs

- Singing cowboys
 - The most famous: Gene Autry and Roy Rogers
 - Tex Ritter version of **Boll Weevil** 1945 first recorded in the '20s and later by Burl Ives and Walter Brennan as well as by R&B artist Brook Benton 1961
 - Sons of the Pioneers **Cool Water** 1947
 - Dick Foran from Flemington, N.J.
- Western movies
 - Cowntown
 - Moonlight on the Prairie
 - Song of the Saddle
 - Melody Trail



Alan Freed: Country

- Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys known for Western swing
- Ernest Tubb **Walking the Floor Over You** 1941
 - Performed at St. Paul's Fitzgerald Theater in the early 1980s
- Hank Snow I'm Moving on 1950
 - Covered by Ray Charles 1959 and Elvis Presley 1969
- Hank Williams **Cold Cold Heart** 1951
 - Covered by Dinah Washington (jazz) and Tony Bennett (pop)
- Johnny Cash **Hey Porter** 1954
 - Listed among both the top country *and* rock artists of all time
 - I Will Rock and Roll with You (If I Have to) 1994



Alan Freed: Folk songs

- John and Allan Lomax recordings in Texas, Appalachia and the Deep South
- The Carter Family recording in Virginia, Kentucky, Texas and Tennessee
- Woodie Guthrie / The Great Depression
- Activist Pete Seeger and The Weavers
 - **Goodnight Irene** 1950
 - Written by Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter 1933
and recorded by the Lomaxes (as was the Boll Weevil song)
- Mexican
 - **La Bamba** popular wedding song from Veracruz
- Celtic and other regional folk music

To Alan Freed's River of Music, let's add

- Ethnic music
- Tin Pan Alley
- The Great American Songbook
- The big bands
- Swing and boogie
- Doo Wop
- Gospel
- Blues

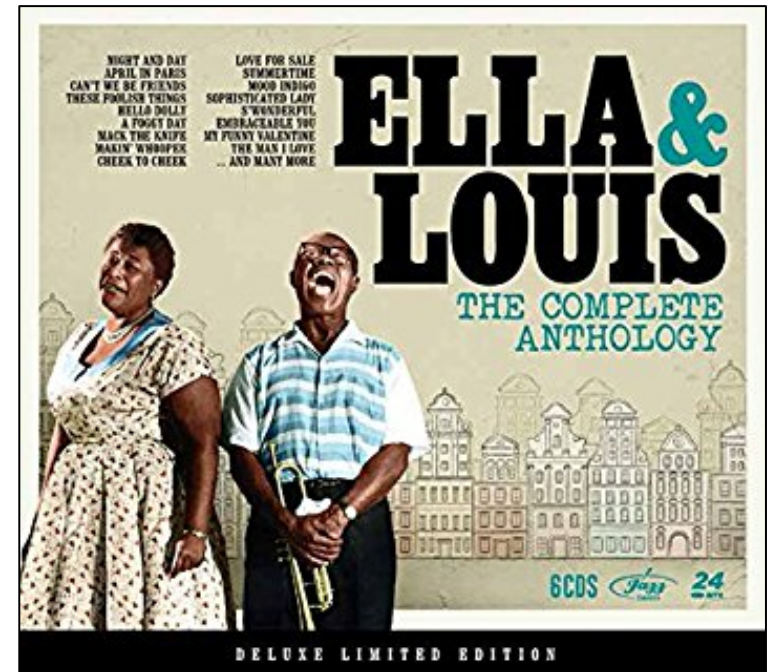


Ethnic music

- African call and response chants heard in the farm fields of the south
- German with the button accordion played from Minnesota to South Texas
- French
 - Louisiana Cajun music rooted in the French-speaking Acadians in Canada
- Cuban
 - Ran Kan Kan by Tito Puente featured in 1992 The Mambo Kings movie set in the early 1950s with Desi Arnaz Jr. playing Desi Arnaz Sr.
 - Guantanamera protest song with lyrics taken from a poem by Cuban Jose Marti killed in battle against the Spanish in 1895; Celia Cruz's version heard on The Mambo Kings soundtrack

Tin Pan Alley (late 1800s to early 1900s)

- Bill Bailey 1922 recorded by many artists over the years
 - Louis Armstrong
 - Ella Fitzgerald
 - Sarah Vaughn
 - Brenda Lee
 - Bobby Darin
- **Glow Worm** taken from a German operetta
 - Mills Brothers hit in 1952
- Way Down Yonder in New Orleans
 - From the Roaring Twenties to Freddie Cannon's #3 hit on the Billboard chart in 1959



The Great American Songbook

- Harold Arlen
 - **Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea**
 - First recorded by Cab Calloway 1931
 - George Harrison version released posthumously on Brainwashed album 2002
- Irving Berlin
 - **Dancing Queen** 1935;
 - Recorded by Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett in 2014
- Johnny Mercer
 - **Goody Goody** recorded by Benny Goodman and his Orchestra 1936
 - On Chicago's Night and Day Big Band album 1995
- Other composers include George Gershwin; Rogers and Hart; Jerome Kern; Cole Porter; Sammy Kahn

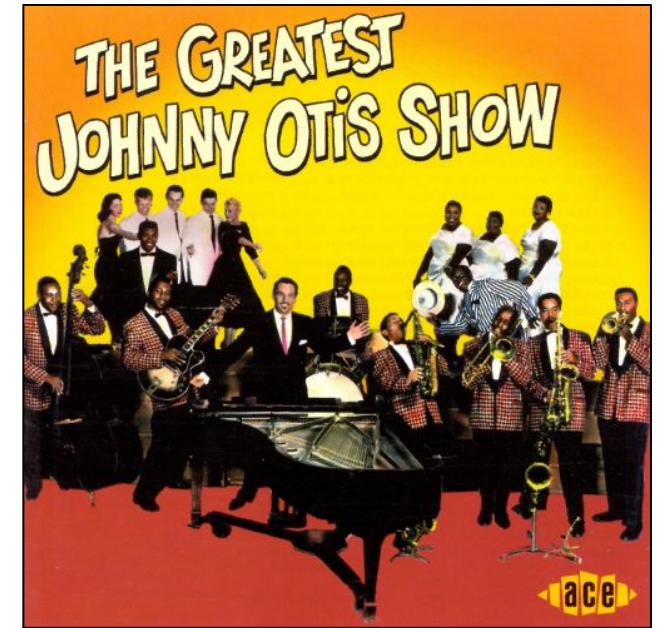
The big bands

- Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye; Benny Goodman; Glenn Miller
- Tommy Dorsey; Jimmy Dorsey **Green Eyes** 1941
- Lionel Hampton
 - **Hey! Ba-Ba-Re-Bop** 1946 charted on R&B and pop lists
- Cab Calloway
 - **Everybody Eats When They Come to My House** 1948
 - Calloway's theme Minnie the Moocher featured in The Blues Brothers movie based on a traditional folk song Willy the Weeper released in 1931
- Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadians Enjoy Yourself 1949
- Duke Ellington saluted by Stevie Wonder's Sir Duke 1976



Swing and boogie

- **It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)** 1931
 - Ernestine Anderson version of Duke Ellington's hit on her 1960 album My Kind of Swing
- **Rock 'n' Rye** 2007
 - Dave Berger and the Sultans of Swing featured in The Great Debaters movie set in the '30s
- **Boogie at Midnight** 1949
 - Roy Brown also had Rockin' at Midnight 1949
- **Cupid's Boogie** 1950
 - Johnny Otis and Orchestra featuring Little Esther
 - Greek American band leader known for Willie and the Hand Jive 1958 with its gestures and claps featured in Grease with the Born to Hand Jive scene
 - Esther Phillips charted with R&B hits 1950-83 (Release Me 1962)



Doo Wop

- “Street corner” groups popular from the 1930s – ’50s featuring vocal harmonies
- **Sh-Boom** 1954 by the Chords and covered by the Crew-Cuts
- Bird groups
 - The Ravens with Old Man River 1948 (written by Jerome Kern for Showboat 1927)
 - The Flamingoes formed in Chicago 1952
 - The Orioles Crying in the Chapel 1953
 - Recorded by Elvis Presley 1960 and released in ‘65
 - The Crows **Gee** 1954 featured in the movie American Graffiti
 - The Penguins Earth Angel 1954 featured in the movie Last Vegas with Michael Douglas, Robert De Niro and Morgan Freeman in 2013

Gospel

- Songs with religious fervor usually sung by church choirs
 - **The Old Landmark** covered by James Brown as Rev. Cleophus James in The Blues Brothers movie
- Artists with commercial success
 - Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Sister Rosetta Tharpe reached R&B #6 with her Gospel song **Up Above My Head** 1948
 - Mahalia Jackson Go Tell It On the Mountain 1950
 - Sam Cooke with the Soul Stirrers in the early 1950s
 - Aretha Franklin in her minister-father's church choir



Blues

- Lyrics generally with A A B format
 - Me and the devil was walking side by side
 - Me and the devil (whooo) was walking side by side
 - And I'm going to see my woman until I get satisfied
- Clarksdale, Mississippi - - birthplace of the blues
 - Robert Johnson **Me and the Devil Blues** 1938 at the crossroads
 - His Sweet Home Chicago covered by Eric Clapton and by the Blues Brothers
 - Morgan Freeman's Ground Zero Blues Club restaurant; Delta Blues Museum
 - Annual juke joint festival held there
- Muddy Waters in 1957 sang "the blues had a baby and they named the baby rock and roll"



The wide influence of the blues

- Memphis
 - W.C. Handy “Father of the Blues” traveled the Mississippi Delta in early 1900s
 - Settled in Memphis and performed on Beale Street
 - W.C. Handy Home and Museum, Blues Hall of Fame (and other music museums)
- Chicago
 - Chess Records and artists including Howlin’ Wolf **How Many More Years** 1951
 - Chess label also the home of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Lee Andrews and the Hearts
- England
 - Young British musicians influenced by African-American GIs
 - Eric Clapton’s Me and Mr. Johnson 2004 album sold 2,000,000 copies worldwide
 - Rolling Stones’ Blue and Lonesome 2017 Grammy Award-winning album in the traditional blues category

Sharing the sounds

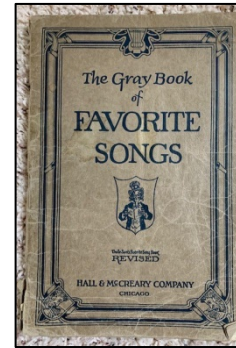
- Concerts and tours
 - Performances: the minstrels; the **National Honor Band** formed in 1798; the Rolling Stones still touring today
 - Venues: the Surf Ballroom in Iowa; the Lambertville Music Circus in New Jersey which transitioned to rock and roll in the late 1950s and '60s
- Sheet music notations
 - The hocket (late 1200s); shape notes; the printing press
- Player pianos
- Recorded music
 - Thomas Edison's phonograph 1877
 - 78 rpm record debuted in 1898



The National Honor Band performs the Washington Post March

Publications sharing the words

- The Gray Book of Favorite Songs 1914
- DownBeat magazine
 - First published in 1934 by Clyde McCoy
 - Dedicated to “jazz, blues and beyond”
 - Now available in print and electronic versions
- Song Hits 1937
 - Launched in 1937
 - Sub-heading noted it offered “correct lyrics by permission of copyright owners”
- Hit Parader
 - Founded in 1942
 - Provided lyrics to “top tunes”



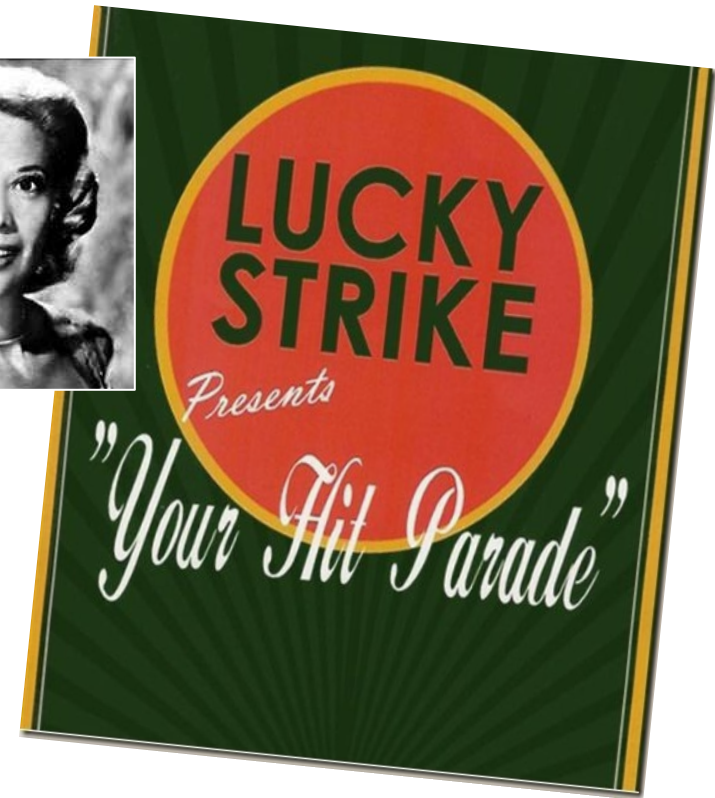
The influence of 20th Century technology

- Radio
 - KDKA in Pittsburgh in 1920
- The transistor developed in the 1940s
- Television
 - Ted Mack's Amateur Hour in 1948
- Electric guitar
 - Les Paul and the solid body electric guitar in the 1940s
 - First used multi-track recording: e.g. **How High the Moon** 1951 with Mary Ford
- 33 1/3 rpm LP introduced by Columbia in 1948
- 45 rpm record introduced by RCA Victor in 1949



Popular radio and television shows

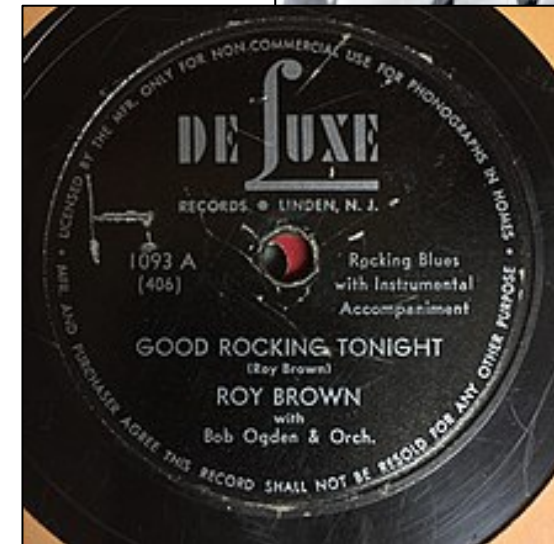
- Your Hit Parade
 - Frank Sinatra
 - Doris Day
 - Dick Haymes
 - Dinah Shore
- Grand Ole Opry and Louisiana Hayride
 - Bill Monroe
 - Hank Williams
 - Patsy Cline
 - Floyd Cramer
 - Jerry Lee Lewis
 - Elvis Presley



*Frank Sinatra sings Young at Heart;
Dinah Shore, Buttons and Bows;
Bill Monroe, Blue Moon over Kentucky*

1948: Rock and Roll emerges

- The first rock and roll record?
 - Good Rocking Tonight 1948
 - Written by Roy Brown, an originator of the New Orleans rhythm and blues sound
 - Released on New Jersey's De Luxe label noted for its R&B and early rock recordings
 - The second song recorded by Elvis Presley
 - Also recorded by Wynonie Harris, Wanda Jackson, Ricky Nelson and many others



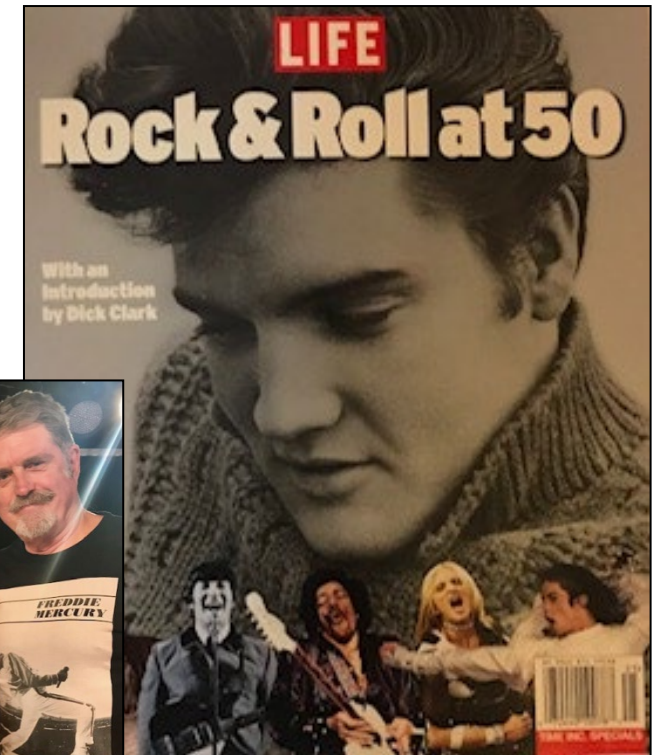
1951: Rock and Roll emerges

- The first rock and roll record ?
 - **Rocket 88** 1951 #1 R&B hit
 - Entered the charts May 12; #1 for five weeks
 - By Jackie Brentson with His Delta Cats
 - Brentson was credited rather than saxophonist Ike Turner and his band
 - Recorded at Sam Phillips' studio in Memphis
 - Phillips later becomes a central figure in rock history as owner of Sun Records



1952: Rock and Roll emerges

- Life Magazine special issue on rock history published in 2002 to note the genre's 50-year anniversary
- Dick Clark essay
 - Reference to WFIL-TV's Bandstand in Philadelphia hosted initially by Bob Horn and Lee Stewart
 - "It was instantly popular"
 - "I could tell something was happening in 1952"
- Lloyd Price **Lawdy Miss Clawdy** 1952 R&B #1



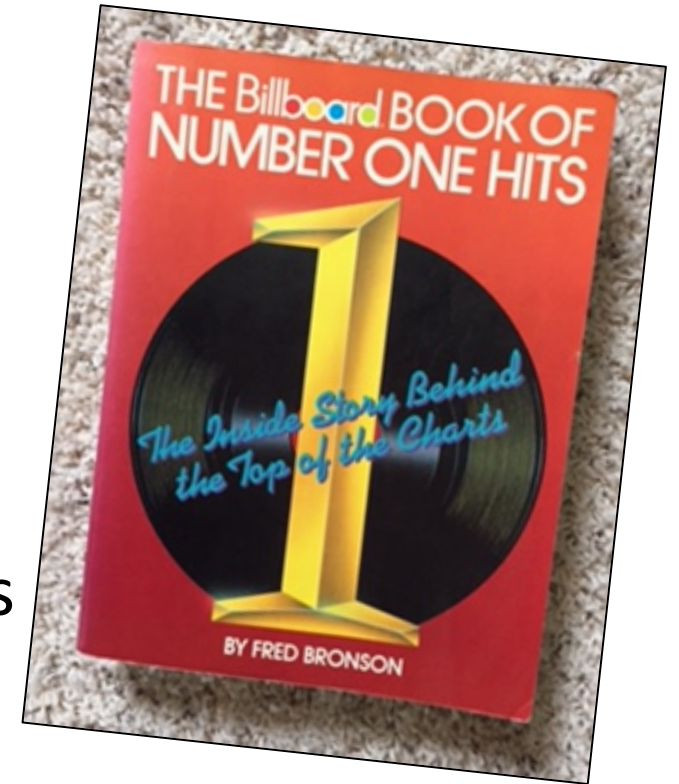
R&B in the early '50s

- Big Mama Thornton **Hound Dog** 1953 R&B #1
 - Her only hit on the R&B charts
 - Backed by “Kansas City Bill” and Orchestra aka band leader Johnny Otis who toured in the early '50s with the Rhythm and Blues Caravan
 - Written by Lieber and Stoller who also wrote Jailhouse Rock, Kansas City, Ruby Baby, Stand by Me, Spanish Harlem, Love Potion Number Nine
- Big Joe Turner Honey Hush 1953; **Shake, Rattle and Roll** 1954
- Hank Ballard and the Midnighters Work with Me Annie 1954
 - Later wrote and had the original recording of The Twist 1960



1955: Rockin' 'round the clock

- Bill Haley and His Comets
 - **Rock Around the Clock** May 1955 Billboard #1 8 weeks
 - Considered by Fred Bronson in his *Book of Number One* be the first rock and roll record
- Followed at #1 on Billboard charts by 8 middle of the road pop artists totaling 24 weeks
 - Mitch Miller **The Yellow Rose of Texas** 6 weeks
 - The Four Aces Love Is a Many Splendor Thing 2 weeks
 - Dean Martin Memories Are Made of This 5 weeks
 - Tennessee Ernie Ford Sixteen Tons 7 weeks and #1 on Billboard's country charts
 - Roger Williams, Nelson Riddle, Kay Starr, Les Baxter



1956: *Now we're rockin' 'round the clock*

- Elvis Presley at Sun Records in Memphis
 - That's All Right Mama 1954; Good Rockin' Tonight
 - First #1 hit April 21, 1956 with **Heartbreak Hotel** 8 weeks on top of the Billboard charts
 - Hound Dog / Don't Be Cruel among his five #1s in '56
 - The King of Rock and Roll on a "forever stamp" 2015
- Thank you, Elvis!

