

ROCK and ROLL AN AMERICAN STORY

THE STORY BEGINS...

1930s/1940s

1936 ROBERT JOHNSON RECORDS PIONEERING BLUES TRACKS—In 1936 and 1937, Johnson makes a limited number of recordings...

1936 BILLBOARD MAGAZINE PUBLISHES HIT PARADE—The Hit Parade is established to chart commercial success by tracking sheet music sales.

1942 THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS STRIKE—In a two-year strike, union musicians refuse to make new commercial recordings until record companies agree to pay royalties on sales.

1943 THE GREAT MIGRATION Between 1916 and 1970, more than 6 million African-Americans move from the South to the North, Midwest, and West.

1944 SISTER ROSETTA THARPE RECORDS "STRANGE THINGS HAPPENING EVERY DAY" Written as a spiritual, the song crosses over and becomes a hit on the secular "race records" chart.

1945 WORLD WAR II ENDS—The victory of the Allied forces marks the beginning of a period of prosperity and change in the U.S., including the rise of the suburbs, the emergence of the teenager, the new age of television, and more.

1947 LES PAUL INNOVATIONS—Les Paul records "Lover (When You're Near Me)," on which he layers multiple guitar tracks, pioneering the technique of overdubbing.

1948 HANK WILLIAMS Between 1948 and 1953, Hank Williams places 11 songs in the Country top 10, including "Hey, Good Lookin'" and "Your Cheatin' Heart."

1949 RCA VICTOR INTRODUCES THE 45 RPM VINYL RECORD—The 7-inch 45 rpm single quickly becomes an important format through which millions of Americans hear popular songs.

1950s

1951-1952 THE CATCHER IN THE RYE AND MAD MAGAZINE PUBLISHED J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye (1951) and Mad magazine (1952) reveal a growing youth identity based on a rejection of adult values and a widening "generation gap."

1952 ALAN FREED'S MOONDOG CORONATION BALL—This Cleveland event with a racially diverse audience is widely considered the first Rock and Roll concert.

1952 AMERICAN BANDSTAND FIRST AIRS AS BANDSTAND—Bandstand premieres locally in Philadelphia, featuring teenagers dancing to recordings of popular songs.

1954 ARMY-MCCARTHY HEARINGS—Senator Joseph McCarthy, known for accusing people of being communists, emerges as a leader during the "Red Scare," a facet of the Cold War that fosters deep paranoia, suspicion, and fear among Americans.

1954 BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION DECISION—The U.S. Supreme Court rules that racial segregation is unconstitutional in public schools.

1954 FIRST COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE TRANSISTOR RADIO INTRODUCED The portability and convenience of the new transistor radio extends the reach and possibilities of radio.

1954 ELVIS RELEASES FIRST SINGLE—Elvis Presley's first record includes "That's All Right," a cover of an African-American Blues song, and "Blue Moon of Kentucky," a Bluegrass song by a white artist.

1955 BLACKBOARD JUNGLE ("ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK" IS A NO. 1 HIT)—This film about juvenile delinquency features a Rock and Roll soundtrack.

1956 THE FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY ACT—Expanding the interstate system to 41,000 miles, this act allows people to live farther away from city centers, resulting in suburban growth.

1957 BUDDY HOLLY PLAYS THE APOLLO THEATER IN HARLEM The Apollo Theater is among the most celebrated venues on the "chitlin' circuit," where black artists play to primarily black audiences.

1959 BERRY GORDY STARTS MOTOWN RECORDS—The founder of Motown Records borrows \$800 to start his first record label and is en route to becoming one of the most important African-American entrepreneurs in U.S. history.

1960s

1960 CHUBBY CHECKER INTRODUCES "THE TWIST" The dance that accompanies Checker's version of this Hank Ballard song becomes a sensation, gaining national attention when Checker appears on Dick Clark's American Bandstand.

1963 PUBLICATION OF THE FEMINE MYSTIQUE—Betty Friedan's challenge to traditional female roles is a milestone in the women's liberation movement.

1963 MARCH ON WASHINGTON—More than 200,000 Americans participate in a historic march to promote civil rights, which features Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

1963 JFK IS ASSASSINATED President John F. Kennedy is fatally shot while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas.

1964 THE BEATLES APPEAR ON THE ED SULLIVAN SHOW A record 73 million viewers tune in to watch the Beatles make their first appearance on American television.

1967 SUMMER OF LOVE—In a few months that epitomize the countercultural spirit of the "hippie" generation, as many as 100,000 young people descend on San Francisco.

1967 ARETHA FRANKLIN RELEASES "RESPECT" Franklin's No. 1 hit becomes a lasting statement of self-empowerment both for women and African-Americans.

1967 FM RADIO RISES—On November 23, Rolling Stone magazine publishes the article "AM Radio Is Dead and Its Rotting Corpse Is Stinking Up the Airwaves," written by Tom Donahue.

1968 JAMES BROWN RELEASES "SAY IT LOUD—I'M BLACK AND I'M PROUD" James Brown's song holds the number one spot on the R&B singles chart for six weeks, embodying the spirit of Funk to come and becoming an anthem of black pride.

1969 VIETNAM DRAFT The U.S. military draft process changes when the government institutes a lottery system to determine the order of call to service.

1969 WOODSTOCK—Billed as "An Aquarian Exposition: 3 Days of Peace & Music," Woodstock attracts half a million concertgoers to a farm in upstate New York.

1970 KENT STATE SHOOTINGS—Four college students protesting the escalation of the Vietnam War are shot and killed by the National Guard on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio.

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1971 SHAFT PREMIERES This film about an African-American private detective is the first major motion picture to feature an original score composed entirely by an artist associated with Soul music.

1971 CONCERT FOR BANGLADESH—George Harrison, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Ravi Shankar, and others perform two benefit concerts at New York's Madison Square Garden to raise money for aid and awareness of the refugees from a civil war in Bangladesh.

1971 CAROLE KING RELEASES TAPESTRY—The longest consecutively charting album by a female solo artist until 2012, Tapestry showcases the rise of the singer-songwriter, and reflects the growing spirit of female empowerment that emerges with the women's movement.

1971 26TH AMENDMENT PASSES—This amendment lowers the voting age from 21 to 18. Prior to this time, many young soldiers were conscripted into service without being able to vote—a situation that fueled the student antiwar movement during the Vietnam conflict and the rise of a politicized youth culture.

1974 NIXON RESIGNS—Facing impeachment in Congress for his role in the Watergate scandal, Richard Nixon becomes the first president in U.S. history to resign.

1976 THE SEX PISTOLS RELEASE "ANARCHY IN THE U.K."—The lyrics to this single reveal the growing anger and frustration among young people facing Britain's economic depression.

1977 NYC BLACKOUT A power outage hits New York City at a time of a heat wave and a protracted financial crisis.

1977 SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER The film, starring John Travolta, portrays the music, dancing, and culture of the Disco era.

1979 SONY INTRODUCES THE WALKMAN—The first portable audiocassette player hits the market and has a major impact on how people consume music.

1980s

1981 MTV LAUNCHES Debuting with the video for the Buggles' "Video Killed the Radio Star," MTV goes live. Soon music videos are a focus of artist creativity and MTV provides a platform to showcase them.

1982 MICHAEL JACKSON RELEASES THRILLER Thriller becomes the best-selling album of all time and establishes Michael Jackson as a global icon.

1983 THE COMPACT DISC IS INTRODUCED IN THE U.S.—The CD's size and portability immediately attract users—within five years CDs exceed sales of LPs.

1985 "SUN CITY" RELEASED—This song, written by Steven Van Zandt and recorded by Artists United Against Apartheid, challenges the institutionalized practice of apartheid in South Africa.

1986 RUN-D.M.C. COVERS "WALK THIS WAY"—One of the first collaborations between Rock and Hip Hop artists, the Run-D.M.C. cover of this Aerosmith song is often credited with helping Rap break into the musical mainstream.

1987 GUNS N' ROSES RELEASE APETITE FOR DESTRUCTION Guns N' Roses are welcomed by many as the return of "real" Rock and Roll to a landscape inhabited by so-called "hair metal bands."

1987 NIKE AD USES THE BEATLES' "REVOLUTION"—Never before had a Beatles recording been used in advertising.

1988 N.W.A. RELEASES STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON—The album is widely considered the birth of Gangsta Rap—a subgenre of Hip Hop that depicts inner-city lifestyles.

1988 BERLIN WALL FALLS—Television viewers around the world watch crowds of former West and East Germans greet each other as the wall that divided Berlin since 1961 is taken down.

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1990s

1990 HIP HOP'S ASCENDING HITS NEW PEAKS—A Time magazine article asserts that Hip Hop "has grown into the most exciting development in American pop music in more than a decade."

1991 FIRST WEBSITE LAUNCHES—The birth of the Internet signals the beginning of a new era. It leads to changes in music making and consumption, and a decreased reliance on the music industry's distribution system.

1991 COUNTRY MUSIC HITS THE MAINSTREAM—So much a part of the Rock and Roll story, Country music experiences a moment of dramatic crossover, led by Garth Brooks.

1991 THE YEAR THAT PUNK BROKE—Filmmaker David Markey declares 1991 "the year that Punk broke," making a film of the same name that features Sonic Youth and Nirvana.

1991 LOLLAPALOOZA BEGINS—Perry Farrell launches this festival as a farewell tour for his band Jane's Addiction.

1991 EMERGENCE OF RIOT GRRRLS—Influenced by female Punk and Rock musicians from the 1970s and 1980s, including Patti Smith, Chrissie Hynde, Joan Jett, and others, the Riot Grrrls movement takes root in the Pacific Northwest.

1992 LOS ANGELES RIOTS Six days of violent rioting engulf the city following the acquittal of four Los Angeles police officers in the case involving the beating of African-American Rodney King.

1993 EDDIE VEDDER ON TIME MAGAZINE'S COVER The cover featuring the lead singer of Pearl Jam signals to many the mainstream arrival of Grunge, which combines elements of Heavy Metal and Punk.

1994 KURT COBAIN'S SUICIDE—Cobain's passing is felt around the world. A figure of enormous cultural meaning, Cobain embodies a particular moment in time and particular youthful disenchantment.

1999 SUB POP BEGINS DISTRIBUTING MP3s—In February, Sub Pop becomes the first label to begin distributing music in the MP3 format.

1999 NAPSTER BEGINS OPERATIONS The first major peer-to-peer file-sharing site for music fans, Napster points the way to the future.

2000/2010s

2000 WHITE STRIPES RELEASE DE STIJL—The White Stripes' second album, De Stijl, is self-recorded on an 8-track analog machine in Jack White's living room.

2001 FIRST IPOD—Apple introduces the portable media player, which signals the beginning of an era in which more media can be held in compact devices.

2001 SEPTEMBER 11TH Terrorists attack the United States. Commercial airplanes strike New York's World Trade Center buildings, which fall within hours.

2002 AMERICAN IDOL—The televised talent contest quickly becomes a national obsession. Several contestants go on to have major recording careers.

2003 MYSPACE—As a place to provide music, images, and video to fans, Myspace becomes an important point of connection between artists and fans.

2004 THE GREY ALBUM In the "mashup" recording The Grey Album, producer Danger Mouse brings together Jay-Z's Black Album and the Beatles' White Album.

2005 GUITAR HERO INTRODUCED Bringing video gaming and Rock and Roll together, Guitar Hero introduces many young people to a wide array of so-called Classic Rock.

2005 HURRICANE KATRINA—Hurricane Katrina devastates New Orleans. Many question the adequacy of the government's response.

2007 RADIOHEAD SELF-RELEASES IN RAINBOWS—Radiohead makes its new recording available on a pay-what-you-want basis.

2007 CAPITOL V. THOMAS—The first file-sharing copyright-infringement lawsuit goes to trial.

2008 LADY GAGA ASCENDS TO FAME Songwriter and performer Lady Gaga comes to prominence following the release of her debut album, The Fame, and goes on to solidify herself as a pop icon.

2013 OBAMA CELEBRATES MEMPHIS SOUL MUSIC AT WHITE HOUSE—After inviting Aretha Franklin to sing at his 2009 inauguration, President Barack Obama again puts the music front and center with a tribute to Memphis Soul.

THE STORY GOES ON AT TEACHROCK.ORG