

# The Origins of Rock 'n' Roll

The Commodification of Folk Culture  
as popular culture

# The Music Business Before Radio/Internet

- Live Performances
- Sheet Music
- Records
- Radio introduced in 1920s



Harry James and band perform at Hershey  
Park Ballroom, 7/25/1945

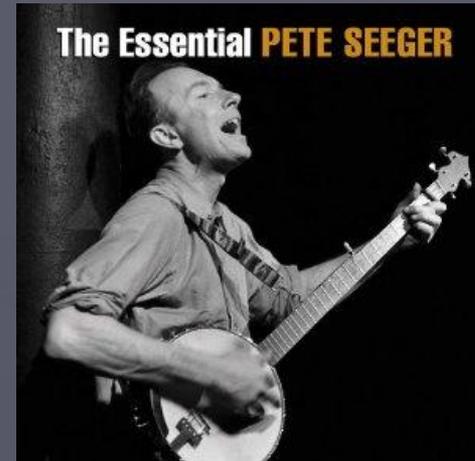
# Factors leading to the rise of Rock and Roll

- Movement
  - Increased mobility in era after World War II
    - Cars
    - Economic prosperity
      - Travel
- Accessibility
  - Cheaper records
    - \$1.00
  - Cheaper Record players
    - \$15.00
- Technology
  - Improved recording technology



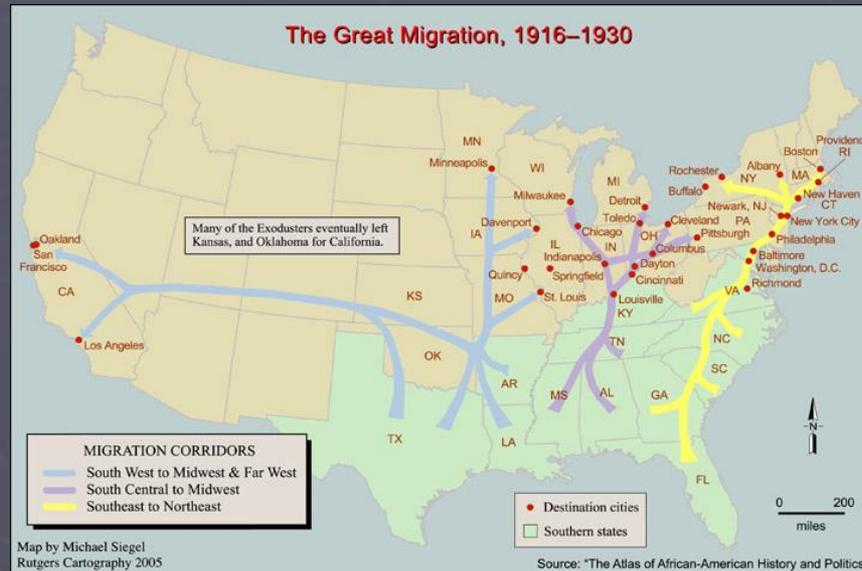
# Cultural Roots of Rock n' Roll

- African Work songs
  - Originating in West Africa
- Country Music
  - Appalachian English and Irish
  - Use of string instruments
- Southern Gospel
  - Call and response music
- Rhythm and Blues
  - Fast beats
  - Multiple instruments



# Diffusion of Southern Culture

- Southern Migration 1900-1960
  - 28 Million Southern born Whites and African Americans migrate out of the south
    - 1950 Especially
    - African Americans for to 8 major Cities



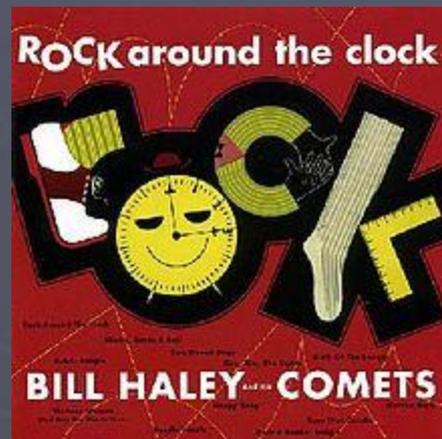
# Finding an Audience

- Original reception by lower classes
  - Individual basis
- Baby Boomers
  - Social system restructured
    - Kids staying in school longer
      - Past 13-14 yrs old
    - Looking for music to call their own
- Popularity of Television in 1950s
  - Radio left looking for stuff to fill slots left by programs leaving for television



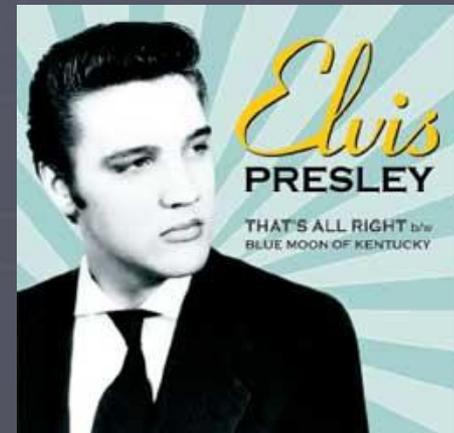
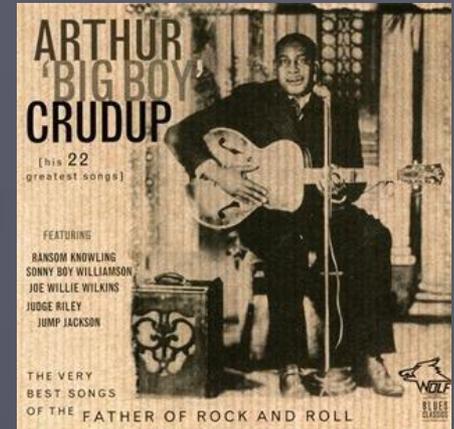
# Re-Invention of Rock 'n' Roll

- White guitar version of R&B
  - “Rock around the Clock”
    - 1955 Bill Haley and the Comets
    - 1st Rock song to be #1 Hit
      - By 1959 almost all #1s were Rock Songs



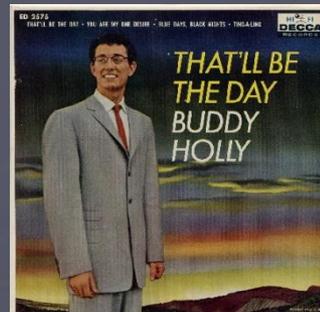
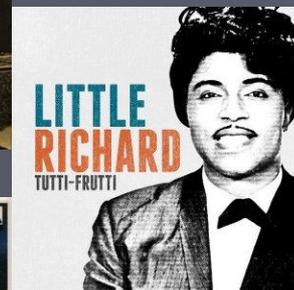
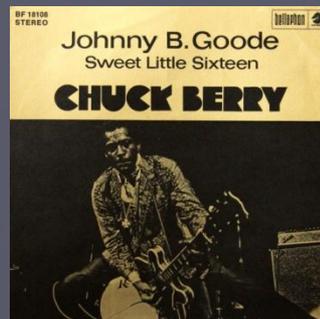
# The First Rock 'n' Roll Superstar

- Elvis Presley
  - Born in Mississippi
  - Developed as a musician in Tennessee
    - “Memphis was the only city Elvis could have come from” – David Lanegran
    - Influences were all African American Musicians
  - Started at Sun Records
    - Playing music originally written by African Americans
    - Taking African American culture and finding a way to sell it to a difference audience



# Spreading Influence of Rock 'n' Roll

- Chuck Berry (first hit '55)
  - Moved from St Louis to Chicago
  - Songs mostly for teens
- Little Richard (first hit '55)
  - From Macon, GA
  - Covered by Pat Boone
- The Five Satins (first hit '56)
  - New Haven, CT
  - Doo Wop music
- Buddy Holly (first hit '57)
  - From Lubbock, Tx
  - Country turned rock musician
- Record companies in Detroit, Chicago, and New York eager to sign artists

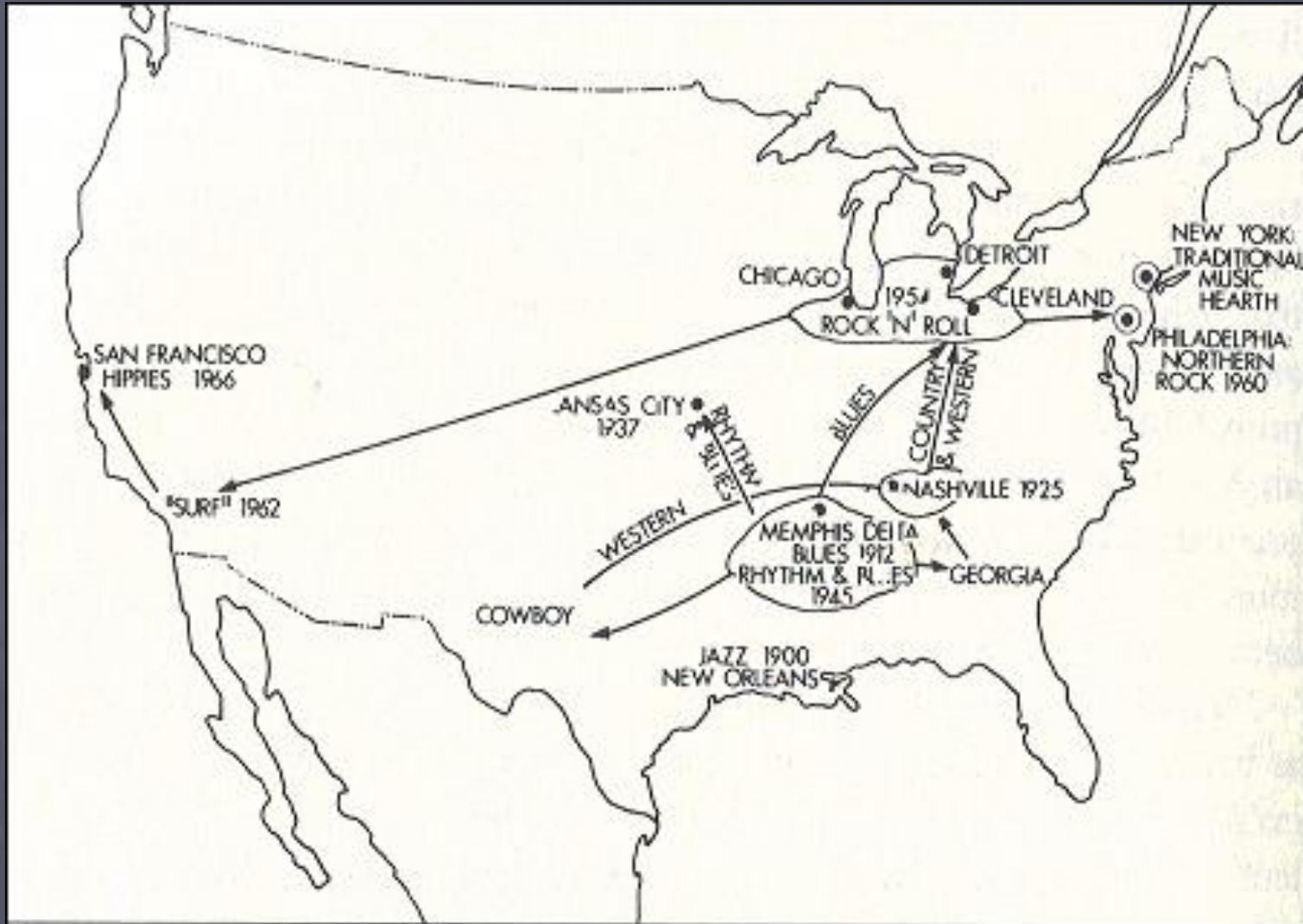


# The British Invasion

- The Beatles
  - Started out in Liverpool, England
  - Came to the United States in 1964
  - Began diffusion of British rock music to the United States
- Globalization of cultural trait and packaged as a way to sell
  - Regional differences based of tastes and regional cultures



# Spatial Diffusion of Rock 'n' Roll



# The continued spread of Rock 'n' Roll

## Major Rock Time Periods, Styles and Communities

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Communities and Musical Styles</b>
<u>1955-1960</u>	New Orleans (Jazz and R&B) Chicago (Blues) Memphis (Rockabilly)
<u>1961-1965</u>	New York (Folk) Los Angeles (Surf Music) Detroit (Soul)
<u>1966-1970</u>	San Francisco (Psychedelic) London (Blues and Complex Rock) Nashville (Country Rock)
<u>1971-1975</u>	Austin (Country Rock) New York (Punk Rock) London (Art Rock)

# Sources

- Hanson, Jim. "Diffusion of Rock N' Roll."  
GeoFest. Macalester College, Saint Paul. 11  
Oct. 2014.