

Rock and roll started
the end of
segregation in the
1940s



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If there was no racial segregation in the United States during the 1940's rock and roll may not have been created. Rock and roll had an overwhelming influence on how white teenagers and black teenagers began to intermingle with each other. The rock and roll "movement" forced bigot Major Record labels to change their business practices, ultimately helping end segregation in America. Rhythm and Blues originates from African Americans.

Back in the 1940s rhythm and blues was becoming more popular, widespread, and starting to blend with country music thus creating Rock and Roll. Because rhythm and blues is considered "black" music, rock and roll unfortunately adopted the same ignorant fate. This "black" music was not welcome in white communities and life styles. Whites at the time where listening to white performers usually accompanied by a big band with non-offensive lyrics about naive teenage love. Racism was still very predominant in the 1950s.

During these times, it was tolerable to have businesses serving only white people or only black people. The major record companies of this time where no exception from this practice. The first generation of rhythm and blues and rock and roll musicians who became popular during these times frightened most parents. Artists such as Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, and Little Richard played music with lyrics relating to sex, school, provocative dancing and rock and roll itself. The record companies even substituted the terms rhythm and blues records with "race records," describing recordings by African American artists that were not gospel or jazz.

The white society protested rock and roll encouraging people not to buy this music. It was too late; the road that led to rock and roll was paved with gold, and certain people noticed this. The major record labels of the 1950s, Columbia, RCA Victor, Mercury, Capitol, and Decca, were losing money to these new record labels and African American businesses. Therefore, in retaliation to losing money, the major record companies offered their own rock and roll from white artist.

Rock and roll artist began breaking race barriers. Buddy Holly (white artist) played Apollo Theater, a famous Mo-Town "black" club, which was unheard of back then. White teenagers also challenged society's racism by attending concerts at "black" venues to watch black artist like, Chuck Berry and Little Richard. These "black" artist were not allowed to play "white" venues but the overwhelming power of rock and roll was not going to stop these teenagers.

The end of racism segregation may have started with rock and roll then later spilled into the streets, schools, and most importantly politicians. Whites and blacks developed rock and roll, created by mixing rhythm and blues with country. Rock and roll drove white teenagers to listen to black radio stations and go to black theaters, helping break the race barrier. The money these teenagers were spending on records and concert tickets helped African American businesses grow. The Major Record companies had to compete for this money so they were forced to integrate rock and roll and its artist, black or white. This helped start the end of the racial segregation in the United States.

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