

History and roll  
originated in new  
orleans



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

History Essay By Ben Roberson During the 1950s there was significant social change taking place in America. Young people were dissatisfied with certain conservative aspects of society and their conduct reflected this.

They embraced the rock and roll culture, the new style of music and also the new styles of dancing and dress that were associated with it shocked the older more conservative people. Young people were also quick to protest against the controversial issues of the 1950s. Civil Rights, the Vietnam War and general politics provided fuel for an already blazing fire.

Mass production meant cheaper motorcycles and cars, providing the young people with freedom that was previously not within their reach. A barrier formed between the older and younger generations due to a lack of communication. This was extended by the media's inaccurate portrayal of the young people. All of these factors left the older generation trying to understand their children's behaviour.

Elvis Presley's timing was perfect, the cross over from old-fashioned music to newer styles was in full swing. The older generation saw Rock and roll as being scandalous. Elvis was one of the most popular performers and his regular dance moves such as his famous gyrating hips caused quite a uproar. However their disapproval only added to Elvis's popularity and made him a hero to the young people. These older conservative types saw Rock and Roll as the start of a dangerous trend where the morals and values that were so important to them were under threat. Rock and Roll originated in New Orleans where it was performed for a black audience in clubs, and this is a very important part of why it was considered to be inappropriate for a white

audience. Indeed many people believed Rock and Rolls sole purpose was to bring young white people down to the level of the black people.

Young people were breaking away from the ways of life and conservative attitudes, habits and past times of their parents and defining themselves through music. Marlon Brando and James Dean came to be cult idols. Marlon Brando starred in *The Wild One*, made in 1954 about a rebel bikie gang. Marlon Brando plays Johnny, the leader of the bikie gang.

In essence he expresses the values and the life style the youth aspired to. The things that aroused outrage among parents in these movies were scenes containing smoking, drinking, motorcycle riding, lack of respect for authority and disobeying parents. This movie along with the music of the time shocked many people because it promoted a different life style and different values to that of traditional life. Around this time young people began to break away from their parents. Prior to this each generation had grown up treating their parents with the utmost respect and modelling their behaviour and views on their parents. This change was made easier by the freedom brought about by access to a car, which lead to increased independence. After the war there was huge economic growth in America, this coupled with mass production of automobiles made transport relatively cheap most families were able to afford a car. The children of these families were often allowed to take out the family car, granting them more freedom to go out with friends and more privacy for couples.

This new show of independence was also evident in the young people's reaction to social issues that were taking place. Many of the young war

veterans returning from the Second World War and the Korean War found it very hard to fit back into society. Many of these veterans got heavily into both drug taking and social protest.

However it wasnt only the youth returning from war who were dissatisfied with the governments reaction to a number of issues that young people felt very passionate about, namely civil rights and the onset of the Vietnam War. Inspired by the successes of some of the more prominent black leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, idealists were encouraged to believe that a better world was possible. Protesting against the Vietnam War didnt really start until the end of the 50s and into the 60s, but a lot of people young and old