Pop Culture in the 1950’s
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Music in the 1950’s

● Popular music genres were rock, traditional pop, country, and rhythm & blues

● The most popular rock artist was the King: Elvis Presley, another popular artist was Chuck Berry.

● Popular country artists were Johnny Cash and Les Paul & Mary Ford

● Popular traditional pop artists were Frank Sinatra and Doris Day

● Popular Rhythm and Blues artists were The Crows and Ray Charles

Rock is popularly believed to be started in the 1950’s by Carl Perkins. Called “Rockabilly” because of the sound combination of Country and R&B.

Famous Country players like Johnny Cash played in prisons. Johnny Cash’s sound was a country sound with a rockabilly influence. Johnny Cash was famous in the 1950’s, but most country singers didn’t become popular till the next decade.

Traditional pop music was a spin on old or classic tunes that people already knew, but with artist’s own spin on it.

Rhythm and Blues artists were mostly African American, while white singers were pushed towards rock by their producers. Rhythm was a form of jazz with a more upbeat tone. 1950’s rhythm combined doo-wop, jazz, blues, and gospel.
Movies in the 1950’s

Drive in theaters became popular in the 1950’s with the younger population.

Elvis Presley “The King” of rock, released some of his own movies. These were fairly popular. A few were Jailhouse Rock and Viva Las Vegas.

Other Popular movies included
● Attack of the Crab Monsters
● A Bucket of Blood
● The Wasp Woman
● The Blob
● Not of this Earth
Beneficiaries of the 1950’s Pop Culture

-Middle class benefits the most
  -plastic credit card
  -fast food (McDonald’s)
  -amusement parks (Disneyland)

-Religious groups
  -taking advantage of the television and radio broadcasting
Tension in the 1950’s

-integration was most controversial topic

-Elizabeth Eckford: first black teenager to attend an all white high school in Arkansas

-racial segregation was ruled unconstitutional

-people spoke out about “faulty” school system, not doing their job correctly
Tension in the 1950’s (cont.)

-Traditionalists against Presley because of his “antic sexually suggestive gyrations”

-critics thought too consumeristic

-“Americans had televisions in their homes but garbage on their streets.”
Biased Outlooks in the 1950’s

-segregation moving into integration

-women becoming more important figures in the workplace

-labor force male/female: 5/2

-conservatism more prevalent

-“under God” added to Pledge of Allegiance
How 1950’s pop culture affected society

The creation of drive in theaters really gave the movie business the push it needed to become fleetingly more popular. More people watching your movies = more money = more fame.

The music of the fifties created rock, a genre that would popup again in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, but mostly in the 80s.

The music business also had an increase in popularity because there were more genres of music to listen to.
Citations


