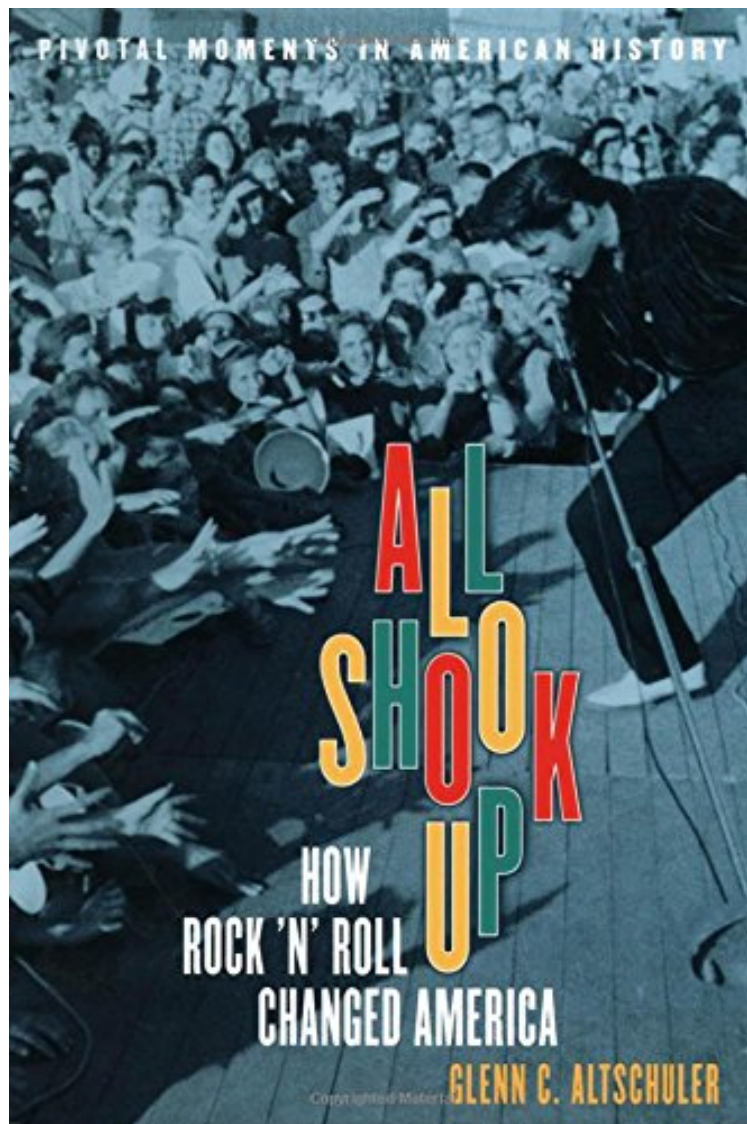


(Mobile library) All Shook Up: How Rock 'n' Roll Changed America (Pivotal Moments in American History)

## All Shook Up: How Rock 'n' Roll Changed America (Pivotal Moments in American History)

*Glenn C. Altschuler*

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**Glenn C. Altschuler : All Shook Up: How Rock 'n' Roll Changed America (Pivotal Moments in American History)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All Shook Up: How Rock 'n' Roll Changed America (Pivotal Moments in American History):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Examining Change through the Lens of MusicBy Rebecca S

Dobrinski In *All Shook Up*, Glenn C. Altschuler examines the changing times of the 1950s through the lens of popular music. During the 1950s it seemed that nothing was truly safe from change. McCarthyism and anti-communism changed labor unions and politics. Suburban construction changed the demographics of cities. A tired seamstress on a bus changed how people used public transportation. The swivel of a man's hips and the twang of a guitar changed music forever. Altschuler focuses his chapters on rock n roll's affects on specific aspects of social culture in the 1950s. He describes how white kids listened to and danced to music performed by black artists. He also shows the different ways black artists either catered to white audiences or tried to assimilate into white culture. Coinciding with the publication of the Kinsey Report, rock n roll lyrics came under even more scrutiny, with parents and lawmakers believing that the music was responsible for teenagers experimentation with sex. Rock n roll music was blamed for generational conflicts and teenage rebellion. Some people even linked the lure of rock n roll to communist conspiracies. However, I think Altschuler is giving too much responsibility to this single aspect of popular culture. While I believe in the power of music as well as the importance it plays in modern teenagers search for identity, I hesitate to give music as much responsibility for social change as he does. By singling out rock n roll music and giving the genre such weight in affecting the lives of teenagers, the country should have experienced the highest rates of unmarried teenage pregnancy, a complete turn around into a communist country, high rates of incarceration and lawlessness, and a frenzied orgy in every small town. However, this did not happen in the 1950s. What did happen was that rock n roll played a role in an environment that was ripe for change. It is another item on the list that made the 1950s such a significant decade. Within the context of anti-communism, McCarthyism, the Interstate system, suburbanization, television, conspicuous consumption, the automobile, the Cold War, and technological advances, it is an important factor that would not be as significant without looking at the decade as a whole and the 1950s-1960s as an era. Music was a social lubricant and a personal identifier in many cases, but was not the catalyst for the social changes the US experienced in the 1960s. It set the groundwork for a musical revolution, but so did musical technology like the electric guitar. Altschuler defines rock n roll as strictly a teenage phenomenon, but music transcends generations. It may not have happened in every household, but I'm sure that some parents enjoyed rhythm and blues music or bought Elvis records. In his Epilogue, Altschuler chooses Bruce Springsteen as the heir apparent to the 1950s music, but then he explains that Woodstock was the natural progression for a generation that came of age on rock n roll. I fail to see the segue way between the 1950s and Woodstock or Woodstock and Springsteen. The Woodstock generation were simply too young to have been as affected by the advent of rock n roll.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Discovered hidden meaning in song lyrics  
By Ronald A. Delorenzo  
Having been a teenager in the 50s, I found many sections of the book interesting. I especially enjoyed learning some of the hidden racial messages in songs I once thought to be simple love songs. I would recommend the book to anybody who lived during that time and/or who is interested in the background information of the early stars of Rock 'n' Roll and/or the politics behind the music business.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars  
By THOMAS M  
MWOLOLOGood

The birth of rock 'n roll ignited a firestorm of controversy--one critic called it "musical riots put to a switchblade beat"--but if it generated much sound and fury, what, if anything, did it signify? As Glenn Altschuler reveals in *All Shook Up*, the rise of rock 'n roll--and the outraged reception to it--in fact can tell us a lot about the values of the United States in the 1950s, a decade that saw a great struggle for the control of popular culture. Altschuler shows, in particular, how rock's "switchblade beat" opened up wide fissures in American society along the fault-lines of family, sexuality, and race. For instance, the birth of rock coincided with the Civil Rights movement and brought "race music" into many white homes for the first time. Elvis freely credited blacks with originating the music he sang and some of the great early rockers were African American, most notably, Little Richard and Chuck Berry. In addition, rock celebrated romance and sex, rattled the reticent by pushing sexuality into the public arena, and mocked deferred gratification and the obsession with work of men in gray flannel suits. And it delighted in the separate world of the teenager and deepened the divide between the generations, helping teenagers differentiate themselves from others. Altschuler includes vivid biographical sketches of the great rock 'n rollers, including Elvis Presley, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Buddy Holly--plus their white-bread doppelgangers such as Pat Boone. Rock 'n roll seemed to be everywhere during the decade, exhilarating, influential, and an outrage to those Americans intent on wishing away all forms of dissent and conflict. As vibrant as the music itself, *All Shook Up* reveals how rock 'n roll challenged and changed American culture and laid the foundation for the social upheaval of the sixties.

"One of the first to do rock-and-roll the significant service of locating it within the cultural and political maelstrom it helped to create. Altschuler does so with a good ear for the music and a deft hand, making this account a pleasure to read and ponder. He is not a flashy writer, but so much the better for his storytelling, which shows intelligence and narrative discipline.... Altschuler surpasses the admittedly sparsely populated field in the nuanced way he places the music within the conflicts--racial, sexual, commercial, and political--that it variously helped to encourage, exacerbate,

and (occasionally) ameliorate. Altschuler tells a story of liberation and fear, of inspiration and exploitation, of repeated attempts to homogenize a form of cultural expression that sprang from somewhere so authentic in Western youth culture that it proved bigger and more powerful than any combination of its myriad opponents."--Eric Alterman, Atlantic Monthly"A well thought out, well researched work, peppered with evocative archival photos and full of terse, sharp comment and considerable feel for the music and its performers."--Toronto Globe and Mail"In All Shook Up, Glenn C. Altschuler vividly demonstrates that Rock 'n' Roll--as music, lyric, and gesture--provides the guide, the Ariadne's thread, through the labyrinth of social, cultural, generational, and sexual upheaval that was post-World War II America."--Kevin Starr, author of Americans and the California Dream"While incorporating extensive research and quotes from the most astute rock music critics, past and present, he manages to craft prose that will suit a general audience."--Library Journal"A book rich with shocking and humorous anecdotes.... Also offers insight into the often complicated racial and legal issues surrounding rock 'n' roll in the 1950s."--AP Weekly"A soulful, scholarly, and thoroughly fascinating examination of the transforming power of rock and roll in American culture. Brandishing the chops of a loving fan and a scrupulous historian, Altschuler nimbly tracks the rock-propelled revolutions in manners and morality that first rumbled forth from the 1950s, a decade that seems ever more the epoch of Elvis not Eisenhower. His is a finely tuned, perfectly pitched appreciation of the rhythms of a music that became not only a soundtrack but a heartbeat to American life."--Thomas Doherty, Brandeis University"Includes enough tantalizing tales along with thumbnail sketches of the forefathers and key moments from the annals of pioneer rock to keep the narrative lively and flowing.... This PhD is such an enthusiastic fan, my '50s generation awards him our ultimate accolade: he's obviously a 'Good Rockin' Doc.'"--Miami Herald"A fascinating and important look at a pivotal decade in American history.... Put on those old 45s and curl up for an enlightening and eminently readable story."--PW Daily"A remarkably thorough short history of the birth of rock and roll and its cultural contexts. Glenn Altschuler manages to weave the stories of musicians and record producers, cultural critics and legislators, psychologists and sociologists, businessmen and teenaged consumers into a lively, astute narrative of cultural change. The result is not just an especially informative history of rock, but an important cultural history of the 'long' 1950s."--Tom Lutz, author of Crying: A Natural and Cultural History of Tears and American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History

About the Author  
Glenn Altschuler is Thomas and Dorothy Litwin Professor of American Studies and Dean of the School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions at Cornell University. He is the author of several books on American history and popular culture, including Changing Channels: America in TV Guide.