Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller met in Los Angeles, California in 1950 and began writing music together right away. Leiber served as lyricist while Stoller, a classically trained but jazz and R&B loving composer wrote the music. In 1952 the pair was invited by Johnny Otis to write some songs for his teenage R&B singer from Montgomery Alabama. Their first song for him “Hound Dog” is one of the most beloved and influential songs ever written. It was a hit when released in 1952 and has been covered recently on American Idol. In 1953 the song was recorded by Elvis Presley and Stoller began its run at the Virginia Theatre on Broadway. The show was directed by Jerry Zaks with choreography by Joey McMillan and featured an orchestra of Big Band size. It was one of Stoller and Leiber’s greatest hits. The production played for 2,036 performances and was nominated for 5 Tony Awards, including best musical. Professional productions are still playing in theatres around the world, most recently in China. Today, cover art is a mixture of both illustration and photography and often reflects the theme of the album or the artist’s personal tastes.

The Music Makers
While Leiber and Stoller wrote the music, there were many different groups and artists who recorded their songs.

The Coasters were considered to be the first rhythm and blues groups to make records into a complete and rolled. They combined gospel and blues for a unique sound. The group was signed by Atlantic Records in 1951 and soon after recorded their hit “Love Potion #9”.

The Coasters (1956–1961) The Coasters released a string of hits written by Leiber and Stoller, including “String Along” (“Young Blood”, “Charlie Brown”), “Yakety Yak” and their most famous recording, “ Poison Ivy”. The group changed their name when they signed with Leiber and Stoller’s label, Spark Records. The Coasters were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987.

The Drifters were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986. The group was originally formed by then lead singer Ben E. King, who went onto record Leiber and Stoller’s “Stand By Me” and “Spanish Harlem” as a solo artist. The Drifters were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988.

Notable Notables
The fifties and sixties were a time of change, not only in music, but in the world. Below are some of the people who made great contributions to our society.

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