



# Beginnings: 1890-1900



- **1877:** Thomas Edison invented of the phonograph followed by the "graphophone," which became the basis of the Columbia company. Both inventions used a cylinder record which captured sound in a groove.
- **1888:** Edison's "improved phonograph"
- Both machines were for sale or lease to the public. The primary market was intended to be businessman, lawyers, court reporters

# The First Peak, 1900-1925

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- **1899:** the coin-operated phonograph started with some songs on cylinders, and were put into the arcades
  - **Gramophone :** developed by Emile Berliner using discs made of hard rubber
  - **1896:** Berliner partnered with Eldridge Johnson, who designed an improved gramophone player for the Berliner company. In a short time, the two joined forces to create what would become the Victor Talking Machine Company.
  - **1889:** Berliner established a branch of his company in London, His Master's Voice, or HMV
  - **Three companies (Edison, Victor, and Columbia)** were the Big Three in the record and record player businesses in the United States, while HMV and the various subsidiaries set up by Edison and Columbia dominated the market in Europe.
  - **1900:** 3 million records sold in the U.S. alone.
  - **The record industry** was one of the most important in the world.

# The Original Disc-Talking Machine.

A FEW POINTS  
ABOUT THE

# BERLINER GRAM-O-PHONE

Without doubt the best amusement producer and entertainer on earth.

**Its simplicity** is such that a four-year-old child can operate it perfectly.

**It is substantial and solid.** There are few parts to it and these few seldom, if ever, require any attention.

**It is low priced—Fifteen Dollars** (including 3 Records)—and we guarantee it to reproduce

songs, choruses, bands, etc., etc., with more clearness and accuracy than any hundred dollar machine on the market.

Our records are indestructible, and will stand any amount of rough handling without danger of injuring them; they are so compact that **fifty-two Gram-o-phone Records** occupy less space than **eight wax cylinder records.**

Our records are the only ones on which you can get the **Greatest Sousa's Band** production. All others claiming to have Sousa's Band records are **FAKES**, pure and simple, and Sousa will substantiate this statement.

Each record is signed by the maker, and the signature is reproduced in fac-simile on every copy.

The Gram-o-phones and Records are made in Montreal; the factory is at 367-371 Aqueduct Street—It is **GUARANTEED** for three years.

**Mr. E. BERLINER** was awarded a medal by the *City of Philadelphia* for the invention of the **GRAM-O-PHONE.** Like most valuable inventions, the Gram-o-phone has imitators—machines using the methods of the inventor—put on the market under a name to deceive an unsuspecting public; ask the name of the inventor of the "fake" machine—it has none—The Berliner Gram-o-phone was invented by the undersigned—all **flat record** talking machines other than the Gram-o-phone are fakes, pure and simple.

**E. BERLINER,**  
2316 St. Catherine Street, MONTREAL, CAN.

Telephone Up 3418.



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**EMANUEL BLOUT,**  
Gen. Manager for Canada.

**Beware of Trashy Imitations.**

# HMV

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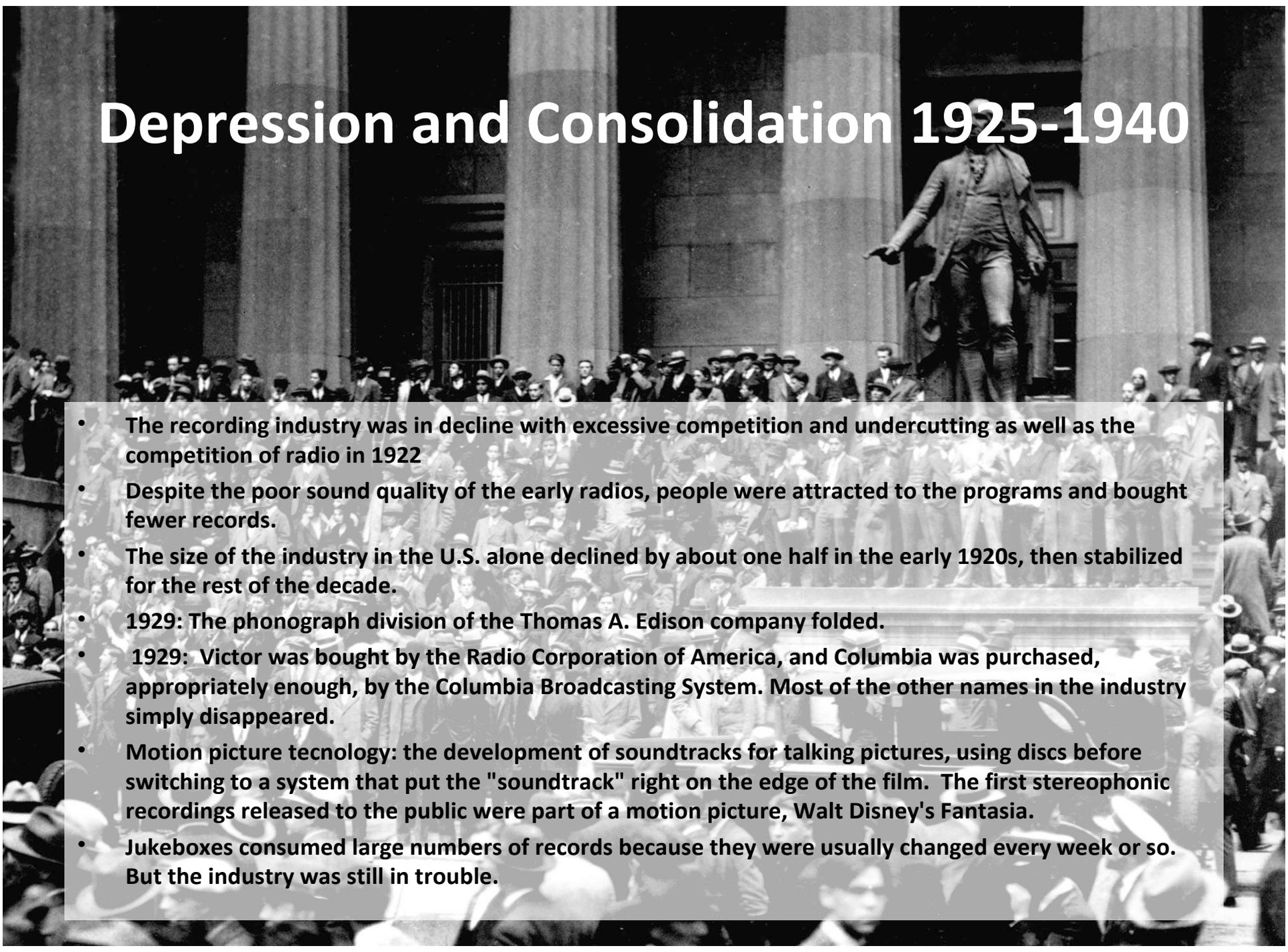
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# Depression and Consolidation 1925-1940



- The recording industry was in decline with excessive competition and undercutting as well as the competition of radio in 1922
- Despite the poor sound quality of the early radios, people were attracted to the programs and bought fewer records.
- The size of the industry in the U.S. alone declined by about one half in the early 1920s, then stabilized for the rest of the decade.
- 1929: The phonograph division of the Thomas A. Edison company folded.
- 1929: Victor was bought by the Radio Corporation of America, and Columbia was purchased, appropriately enough, by the Columbia Broadcasting System. Most of the other names in the industry simply disappeared.
- Motion picture technology: the development of soundtracks for talking pictures, using discs before switching to a system that put the "soundtrack" right on the edge of the film. The first stereophonic recordings released to the public were part of a motion picture, Walt Disney's Fantasia.
- Jukeboxes consumed large numbers of records because they were usually changed every week or so. But the industry was still in trouble.

# The War Years and Afterward, 1941-1955

- **World War II was a worldwide tragedy but a boon for the record industry with the governments and armed services of many nations had an interest in purchasing and using sound recording equipment.**
- **The advent of vinyl : V-discs for the war effort**
- **Angered by the way radio used records without any payment to musicians, band leader Fred Waring filed suit in Pennsylvania to force the broadcasting industry to pay royalties.**
- **"Petrillo's War."**
- **With the end of the war, many in the record industry hoped for a renewed interest in music listening at home. Great technological changes were underway. During the 1930s and early 1940s, the German companies AEG and I.G. Farben had steadily improved the technology of magnetic recorders.**
- **1948/1949: the Victor and Columbia companies introduced the new 45-rpm disc for singles and the Long Playing record for albums.**

# Show Tunes and Rock and Roll!

- 1950S: The LP was a surprise hit even if it was much more expensive than the 45-rpm disc (or the older 10-inch disc, which survived until about 1955), and it was not intended for singles, which had been the main product of the music industry since its beginnings.
- LP sales were helped by the hi-fi movement, which emphasized listening to classical music (usually on LP), but also by the success of Broadway show tune and movie soundtrack albums.
- There was also some manipulation by the record companies, who discovered that when a song became a "hit" on the radio, if they simply refused to issue that song on a 45-rpm disc, the public would be forced to buy a whole album if they wanted to get that song.
- Interestingly, technologies that were invented in order to attain "high fidelity" sound quality became the focus of music where "truth" to the original performance was irrelevant
- The trend was moving away from an artist or a group performing a whole piece that was recorded exactly as it actually sounded. Popular music (rather than classical) drove this forward.
- This was also true in the new rock and roll music, where studio effects like echo and reverb became the norm. When rock entered its "psychedelic" phase in the late 1960s, musicians pulled out all the stops and began using every technological trick available to them to create exotic new sounds.

# Portable Music

- Small, efficient transistor radios appeared around 1955 and became top sellers, especially after prices came down to the point where young people could own them.
- By the end of the 1960s, battery operated portables were by far the best selling form of the tape recorder. The record industry paid little attention to the potential market for tape.
- The 8-track system was intended to be heard in the automobile--not surprisingly it was invented in the United States, where the car culture is strong. Home players could also be had, but manufacturers suspected that the tapes would be most appealing to commuters--and they were right
- The Walkman (and its imitators) helped the cassette displace the LP as the dominant form of home music technology by about 1990.
- 1960s: conglomerates form both motion picture and recording arms, since the two often complemented each other. Sales of music through the mail took off, with Columbia House emerging and the dominant firm in the U.S.
- By the 1980s, Music Television (MTV) had emerged, linking TV and records through the exhibition of music videos.



# The Digital Era

- The Phillips company, which had earlier introduced the cassette, had developed a laser disc for video recording in the late 1970s. Phillips teamed up with Sony, which had developed a digital tape recorder for making "master" recordings at about the same time.
- 1985: a CD player for \$350 or less, and prices were around \$150 a few years later. Many consumers resented being pressured to abandon the collections of LP records they had accumulated over the years.
- However, the CD eventually won over the hearts of most consumers. Sony also became a record company in the 1980s through the purchase of CBS Records (formerly Columbia). Sony followed this up in 1989 with the purchase of Columbia Pictures Entertainment.

# The Digital Era

- Through the end of the 1990s, it appeared that the next home recording medium would undoubtedly be a recordable form of CD. It took many years for these to be introduced, and many more years for them to come down in price.
- Only in the early years of the 21st century did the price of a CD burner and the blank discs compete with a cassette deck. By that time, however, the whole idea of storing sound on physical "records" was being called into question. Home computer users began sharing digitized music in a number of different formats in the late 1990s.
- The MP3 standard began to catch on, and Napster software appeared to make it possible for users to access each other's songs via the World Wide Web. The recording industry freaked and shut down Napster, but the appeal of Internet-distributed music remained