

## ***Shout Sister Shout! Timeline***

**(1910 – 1970) The Great Migration.** Approximately 6 million African Americans move from the rural south to northern, midwestern, and western cities in search of economic opportunities and to escape racial violence and Jim Crow segregation.

**1915** – Rosetta Tharpe was born in Cotton Plant, Arkansas.

**1925** – Rosetta and her mother move to Chicago, where they perform religious concerts.

**(1929 – 1939) The Great Depression.** Following the stock market crash of 1929, the U.S. plunged into a decade-long economic depression, the worst in our nation’s history.

**1930s** – Grown out of African American spirituals, Gospel music has become popular.

A key figure in the development of Gospel was Thomas A. Dorsey (1899 -1993). Referred to today as the father of Gospel Music, Dorsey pioneered the form in Chicago. Before devoting his career to the development of Gospel, Dorsey, the son of a Georgia Baptist preacher, was a prolific blues and jazz composer and pianist. Secular music's energetic rhythms and primal growls heavily influenced Dorsey's sacred composing style. (Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/songs-of-america/articles-and-essays/musical-styles/ritual-and-worship/african-american-gospel/>)

**1938** – Rosetta records her first four sides (singles) for Decca Records, backed by Lucky Millinder’s band. Her recording “Rock Me” written by Thomas Dorsey, was a smash hit, and she was soon performing with mainstream superstars like Cab Calloway and Bennie Goodman.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=260hXID0Yo0>

**1952** – Gibson introduces the Les Paul model solid body electric guitar. This allows guitars to be amplified at greater volumes, leading to the guitar being used as a soloist instrument.

### **(1939 – 1945) World War II**

**1944** – Records “Strange Things Happening Every Day” which some call the first Rock ‘n Roll record. The song featured a boogie-woogie piano and Tharpe’s lead guitar skills. This was the first gospel record in Billboard Magazine’s Harlem Hit Parade.

Listen to her recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-88l-MOKgkl>

**Early 1950s** – Tharpe teams up with Madame Marie Knight to record a few straight blues records. This foray into secular music damages her credibility with her gospel audience.

**1951** – Jackie Brenston releases “Rocket 88” which many consider the first rock ‘n roll record.

Listen to his recording here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=260hXID0Yo0>

Can you hear similarities between Sister Rosetta’s and Jackie Brenston’s song structures?

**1955** – The movie “Blackboard Jungle” is released and features white musicians, Bill Haley and the Comets, performing “Rock Around the Clock.” The song went to #1 on the Billboard charts and helped popularized rock ‘n roll to mainstream, white audiences.

**1973** – Sister Rosetta Tharpe dies at the age of 58.