

# LIFE

PART I OF A MAJOR 'LIFE' SERIES  
**AMERICA'S ARTS AND SKILLS**  
THE TRADITIONS THAT SHAPED U.S. TASTE



**FRIGATE'S FIGUREHEAD**

**20 CENTS**

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CONTINGENT OF BOUNDING DANCE FANS AT EASTER SHOW IN BROOKLYN'S PARAMOUNT THEATER GREET ROSTER OF ROCK 'N ROLL STARS PERFORMING LATEST SONGS ON STAGE

## A QUESTION OF QUESTIONABLE MEANINGS

The heavy-beat and honking-melody tunes of today's rock 'n roll have a clearly defined ancestry in U.S. jazz going back to Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith of 30 years ago. Once called "race" records, and later "rhythm and blues," the music was first performed by Negroes and sold mostly in Negro communities. During the past years as the big record companies concentrated on mambos and ballads, the country's teen-agers found themselves without snappy dance tunes to their taste. A few disk jockies filled the void with songs like *Ko Ko Mo*, *Tweddee Dee*, *Hearts of Stone*, *Earth Angel*, *Flip, Flip, and Fly*, *Shake, Rattle and Roll*, and the name rock 'n roll took over. On a list of 10 top juke box best-selling records last week, six were r 'n r.

But parents and police were startled by other rock 'n roll records'

words, which were frequently suggestive and occasionally lewd. *Variety*, the show business weekly, cranked out indignant stories (left) about "leerics" in the rock 'n roll or rhythm and blues songs. *Cash Box*, the juke box trade journal, countered that much of the suggestiveness was read into the songs by low-minded listeners and challenged anybody to find smut in the top rock 'n roll numbers.

By this time, however, the music had gained such an exaggerated reputation that the worst meanings could be found in the most innocent phrases. Radio, TV and record

censors listened not only to rock 'n roll but also—with good reason—to the lyrics of pop records. But hardly a teen-ager afoot had time to listen. They all seemed to be busily and blithely rockin' and rollin' around.



**DEMONSTRATION** is given for Arthur Murray in one of his New York studios. Murray and wife (*center*) studied rock 'n roll routines, watched for dance tips.



**ADMIRATION** shows on the Murrays' faces as they watch rolling dancer rock partner. Murrays concluded that new craze is a healthy dance for teen-agers.