punk and heavy metal. The result was music featuring distorted guitar and a fuzzy sound caused by amplifier feedback. The lyrics were filled with apathy and angst. Arguably the most popular grunge band was Nirvana, whose frontman Kurt Cobain (1967–1994) died of a drug overdose in 1994.

Cobain’s death seemed to signal the end of the grunge era, and the post-grunge sound evolved. This was a more radio-friendly, pop-sounding form. Popular post-grunge musicians include Tori Amos (1963–), Foo Fighters, Creed, Collective Soul, Alanis Morissette (1974–), Fiona Apple (1977–), and Jewel (1974–).

**Twenty-first century**

By the end of the twentieth century, the rock genre was splintered. For early rock enthusiasts, the genre was a form of rebellion, a way to question authority and rally the young. By the 1980s, the cable channel MTV had infused the genre and all its subcategories with a sense of commercialism. Rock and roll purists considered this a sellout, an unforgiving compromise. At the start of the twenty-first century, the heirs of pure rock continued to make their own kind of music.

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**John D. Rockefeller**

John Davison Rockefeller was born on July 8, 1839, the second of six children in a modest farming family in **New York**. The Rockefellers moved to **Ohio** in 1853. Two years later, young Rockefeller left high school to enroll in a six-month college business course. He finished the course in three months and then spent six weeks looking for work. He found a job as an assistant bookkeeper. Within months, he was promoted to cashier and then bookkeeper.

In 1863, Rockefeller and a partner, Maurice Clark, entered the oil refining business, which had become a major industry in Cleveland. They found a new, experienced partner in Samuel Andrews (1836–1904), and together they founded an oil company. Within two years, the partners (of which there were now five) disagreed about management, so Rockefeller bought out the others and opened a new company with Andrews. In 1870, the two men joined forces with several other investors and developed the Standard Oil Company.
By 1872, Standard Oil had controlling interests in nearly every other oil refinery in Cleveland, plus two in New York. Five years later, Rockefeller controlled 90 percent of the American oil industry and was among the twenty richest men in the world. In 1882, he established the Standard Oil Trust. A trust is an organization of several businesses in the same industry. By banding together, the trust controls production and distribution of a product or service, thereby limiting any serious competition. (See Monopolies and Trusts.)

Rockefeller knew America depended on oil for its daily existence. Families and businesses used it to heat their homes and buildings; factories needed it to run their machines. By establishing his trust, Rockefeller forced consumers to pay whatever price he wanted to charge for his oil.

Exposed
Some Americans, though weary of the situation, accepted Rockefeller’s trust; others took action. At a time when corruption was infiltrating every aspect of life from politics to big business, a group of journalists made it their job to uncover and publicize that corruption. Pioneers of investigative journalism, these writers were called muckrakers (muck-raking means digging up dirt). One of the most popular among them was Ida M. Tarbell (1857–1944). Tarbell wrote for the popular magazines of the day, including McClure’s, a literary and political journal.

Tarbell began her investigation into the Standard Oil Company in 1902. Her findings and report were published in nineteen parts in McClure’s from November 1902 to October 1904. In 1904, she published the entire account in book form under the title The History of the Standard Oil Company.

Tarbell’s exposé focused on Rockefeller’s involvement with the railroad industry. With so many new railroad lines, competition was fierce. In an effort to compete, railroads tried to undercut each other by charging lower and lower shipping rates. Although this was good for compa-
nies that relied on the railroads, it was devastating to the railroads themselves. Unable to make a profit, the railroads formed a monopoly to stabilize shipping rates. This monopoly was called the South Improvement Company.

The railroads knew they needed support if their monopoly was to work. Rockefeller, being the wealthiest and most frequent shipper, was the obvious choice among customers. He agreed to support the South Improvement Company on the condition that he be given preferential treatment. This meant he received hefty rebates (refunds) not only for each shipment he sent, but also for the shipment of competing products. So any oil or kerosene, from whatever source, that the railroads shipped brought Rockefeller a rebate.

The South Improvement Company announced a steep increase in freight charges, which incurred the wrath of business owners who depended on the railroads. The protests that followed the announcement brought the situation into the public eye, and it was then that Tarbell discovered Rockefeller’s involvement in the scheme.

Although it came too late to help many of the smaller, independent oil businesses, Tarbell’s exposé increased public pressure to put an end to Rockefeller’s unethical behavior. The public had been aware of the robber baron’s basic lack of honesty, but Tarbell’s report gave concrete evidence as to Rockefeller’s greed and willingness to exploit others. By 1906, anti-Rockefeller sentiment was at its highest, partially because President Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919; served 1901–9) publicly accused him of criminal acts.

The federal government had seven lawsuits pending against Standard Oil by 1907, claiming it was twenty times bigger than its closest competitor. In 1908, the government launched its biggest suit against Standard Oil, determined to break up the oil trust. It would take three years, but on May 15, 1911, the government ordered Standard Oil to dismantle and separate into thirty-four smaller companies, each with its own board of directors. The trust was broken. By this time, Rockefeller had already been retired for fourteen years.

**Man of contradictions**

Rockefeller was seen as a contradiction. Although he was a dishonest and greedy businessman, he was a deeply religious man who donated millions of dollars to charitable causes. To the University of Chicago he
donated approximately $35 million. In 1901, he founded the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, known in the twenty-first century as Rockefeller University. The following year, he established the General Education Board (GEB), whose mission was to promote education in America without regard to race, sex, or creed (religious belief). Between 1902 and 1965, the GEB distributed $325 million for improvement of education at all levels. It was out of the GEB’s work with children’s clubs that the 4-H youth movement developed, and it is still active today.

Rockefeller founded the Rockefeller Foundation in 1913, which gives financial assistance to public health, medical education, scientific advancement, the arts, social research, and other endeavors.

**Family man**

Although known as a brutal businessman who would stop at nothing to get what he wanted, Rockefeller was a dedicated family man. He and his wife had five children, and the land on which their home stood in New York is now part of the garden of the Museum of Modern Art.

Rockefeller died in 1937 in his Florida home at the age of ninety-seven.

**Rodgers and Hammerstein**

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II were both successful music writers by the time they teamed up in the 1940s, but nothing prepared audiences for their first effort in 1943. With *Oklahoma!*, the duo produced a new genre, the modern American musical, and revolutionized Broadway. Over the course of their seventeen-year collaboration, the two worked on nine musicals, six of which were huge, enduring successes.

**Hammerstein**

Hammerstein was born in New York City on July 12, 1895. He came from a famous theatrical family. His father, William, was the manager of the Victoria, New York’s leading vaudeville house, and his uncle was a Broadway producer.

Hammerstein was a law student at Columbia University when he approached his uncle, the producer, about giving him a job. He then