From the streets to academia: a librarian’s guide to hip-hop culture

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to identify a variety of titles and resources to offer both public and academic librarians guidance in establishing and maintaining a definitive core collection of past and present materials.

Design/methodology/approach – The annotated bibliography includes CD recordings, films, documentaries, serials, monographs and web sites on rap music and hip-hop culture. The entries chosen were culled from rap music periodicals, reference works, catalogs and journals.

Findings – These resources showcase the innovation of rap’s formative years. They trace the broad scope of rap musical styles and document and critique hip-hop culture.

Originality/value – These selected titles capture distinctive periods in hip-hop history and help librarians stay current and conscious of what to include in their collections as rap becomes more mainstream and more respectable.

Keywords Music, Popular culture, Audiovisual media, Audio media

Paper type Literature review

The genre of rap music and hip-hop culture, now in its fourth decade emerged from humble beginnings in New York’s South Bronx, before spreading quickly downtown to the nightclubs, then out to suburbia and into mainstream popular culture. The mass appeal is the music-oriented subculture that is driving record sales, box office sales, product endorsements, fashion and sold out concerts. Overwhelmingly dominated and consumed by youth, this artistic and cultural innovation speaks a language and conveys a manner that young people relate to and understand. Today hip-hop is a multi-billion dollar entertainment and cultural industry that has evolved into a medium facilitating self-expression and influencing styles of dress, language and mannerisms that can no longer be dismissed as merely a passing fad or cultural movement waiting to fade like the disco era of the mid 1970s. Instead, hip-hop is a dominant cultural force and legitimate art form that merits scholarly inquiry and discourse for its impact on issues of race, gender, and culture.

For those unfamiliar with rap and hip-hop or for those unclear of its meanings, hip-hop refers to a culture comprised of several art forms: graffiti, disc jockeying (DJing), break dancing, rapping (emceeing) and recently fashion that offered urban black and Latino youth relief from inner-city crime, poverty and street-gang violence. Most attribute hip-hop’s beginnings to the commercial release and success of the rap song Rapper’s Delight by the Sugar Hill Gang in 1979. Selling in excess of 10 million records worldwide, the Sugar Hill Gang propelled rap out of the parks and playgrounds and into a ubiquitous phenomenon.

From movies to television to the radio the names of some recognizable rap artist and personalities include Oscar winners Will Smith and Queen Latifa, rappers turned actors Eminem and 50 Cents, and Grammy winners Kayne West and Lauryrn Hill. It is hard not to notice rap these days. With the Recording Academy (The Grammy’s), Smithsonian, publishing houses, and multi-national corporations taking hip-hop seriously, libraries once unwilling to buy materials relating to rap music are now establishing collections to please the general library patron and the rapidly emerging scholarly interest in academia. This article identifies a variety of titles and resources to offer both public and academic librarians guidance in establishing and maintaining a definitive core collection of past and present materials including electronic, CD recordings, serials, films and documentaries and monographs on rap music and hip-hop culture. These resources were selected because they showcase the innovation of rap’s formative years and represent a wide coverage and broad scope of rap musical styles and in some way document and critique the culture.

These selected titles capture distinctive periods in hip-hop history. As the genre and its trends evolve and rap becomes more mainstream and respectable identifying what is appropriate for public and academic libraries becomes a challenge. To stay current and conscious of what to include, librarians can consult a variety of selection tools such as rap music periodicals, reference works, catalogs and journals, bibliographies, discographies and even patron requests. But it is the Source, Vibe, XXL and other music periodicals that provide the most current information on rap artist and recordings.
CD recordings

The albums selected for this article illustrate the diversity of rap music styles and eras. Although this list is not exhaustive, it includes albums that have had an impact on music and hip-hop culture.

50 Cent (aka 50) (Curtis Jackson) (2003), Get Rich or Die Tryin’, Slim Shady/Aftermath

A Queens’s native, 50 Cent’s rise to fame goes something like: shot nine times, incarcerated, stabbed, dropped by Columbia Records, signed by Eminem’s record label Slim Shady, then releases Get Rich or Die Tryin’ (selling 872,000 records in the first five days, becoming the best-selling debut album since the tracking system began in 1991). 50 Cent discusses everything from drugs to violence; and from sex to murder – Parental Advisory.


Originator Afrika Bambaataa is responsible for some of rap’s recognizable beats, hooks and stylistic innovations. Restoring his previous released singles to their uncut versions Looking for the Perfect Beat is a collection of his greatest hits. Songs include both versions of Throwdown, and the highly influential Planet Rock, and Looking for the Perfect Beat.

Beastie Boys (1986), Licensed to Ill, Def Jam Recordings

Becoming the first successful white rappers, their debut album Licensed to Ill sold one million copies and was the first rap album to top the US pop chart. While most rappers rapped over sampled and mixed beats, the Beastie Boys added a new flavor in that mix: rock riffs combined with hip-hop beats and scratches. What’s amazing about this CD is how many songs became classics – Fight for Your Right, Brass Monkey, Paul Revere, Hold It Now, Hit It and Slow and Low. You cannot know hip-hop with out knowing something about the first white rap group.

Big Daddy Kane (Antonio Hardy) (1988), Long Live Kane, Cold Chillin’ Recordings

Big Daddy Kane’s 1988 debut album, Long Live Kane, was ahead of its time. A classic from hip-hop’s most golden years songs Raw, Just Rhymin’ with Biz, and Ain’t No Half-standin’ are the certified anthems. While Long Live the Kane, Set It off, I’ll Take You There and Word to the Mother (Land) demonstrated his Afrocentric consciousness.

DMX (Earl Simmons) (1998), It’s Dark and Hell Is Hot, Def Jam Recordings

Raw street rap marked DMX’s first album, It’s Dark and Hell Is Hot, DMX (Earl Simmons) has a distinctive vocal growl that emphasizes his tight lyrics and melodic beats. This approach is clearly apparent in DMX’s Ruff Ryders Anthem, which became a widely heard rap anthem. His honest telling of his own life and experiences has endeared him to his fans. He is real as well as talented, altogether a classic.

Dr Dre (Andre Young) (1992), The Chronic, Death Row Records

Dr Dre’s classic The Chronic appealed to both mainstream and hip-hop audiences who enjoyed the West Coast sound. His style garnered his work a lot of radio time and exposure for his gangsta sound. Dre combined hip-hop, jazz, funk and soul to create his own special sound. In concert with Snoop, Dre produced Nuthin’ but a “G” Thang, one of the best songs on Chronic. This album also gave us the Grammy-winning Let Me Ride.

Eminem (aka Slim Shady (Marshal Bruce Mathers III)) (1999), Slim Shady, Shady/Aftermath/Interscope Records

The relatively unknown Eminem burst to the fore with the 1998 release of his second album, Slim Shady. It focused on his dysfunctional family life and his disdain for mainstream pop culture. His lyrics are vile and witty, caustic and clever. The album sold well – about three million copies in the next year.


Eminem’s third album, Marshall Mathers, continues the vile and homophobic lyrics of Slim Shady. It sold two million copies its first week on its way to triple platinum. In this release Eminem insults everybody from Will Smith to President Clinton to Christine Aquilera.

Eric B. & Rakim (1987), Paid in Full, 4th & Broadway Island Records; (1988) Follow the Leader, MCA; (1990) Let the Rhythm Hit ‘Em, MCA; (1992), Don’t Sweat the Technique, MCA

Eric B. & Rakim, one of the best DJ/MC duos ever, came along as hip-hop was emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They ushered in a hypnotically seductive style spiked by Eric B’s beats and laced with intricate rhymes. Lyricist Rakim’s trademark phrases, “Pump up the volume” and “It ain’t where you’re from it’s where you’re at,” left an indelible mark on rap. Revolutionizing hip-hop and music in general, their records achieved legendary status.

EPMD (1988), Strictly Business, Priority Records

EPMD’s (Erick Sermon and Parrish Smith) 1988 debut album, Strictly Business, was released during the clearance-free sample heyday when artists did not have to pay royalty payments for using another artist’s music. Classic songs include You Gots to Chill, Let the Funk Flow, and It’s My Thing, as well as Bob Marley’s I Shot the Sheriff.

Fugees (1996), The Score, Ruffhouse Records

The Fugees’ Wyclef Jean, Lauryn Hill, and Pras introduced a new sound in the mid-90s with their sophomore album The Score. Appreciate this album for the variety of musical influences of soul, reggae, gospel and blues. With four hit singles and 17 million copies sold worldwide, a Grammy and probably their last album as a group, this is a must for any collection.

Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five (1994), Message From Beat Street: The Best of Grandmaster Flash, Melle Mel and the Furious Five, Rhino Records

The Message by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five focused on social themes and created a revolution! Its chorus – “Don’t push me,’cause I’m close to the edge/I’m trying not to lose my head/Sometimes it makes me wonder how I keep from going under” – focuses on urban decay in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. Not always so serious, however,
Grandmaster produced not only the party sounds of Freedom and The Birthday Party, but also the epic raps, Step off and Showdown.

Ice Cube (O'Shea Jackson) (1990), AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted, Priority Records
His debut solo album, AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted, immediately identified Ice Cube as a great rap storyteller. Building on his commentary in NWA's Straight out of Compton, his lyrics refer to themes of street life, women, drugs, gangs, and kids. Hit songs on this album include Endangered Species Tales from the Darkside featuring Chuck D from Public Enemy, Who's The Mack? and It's A Man's World featuring female emcee Yo-Yo.

Ice Cube (O'Shea Jackson) (1991), Death Certificate, Priority Records
In Ice Cube's second album Death Certificate, his lyrics continue to emphasize injustice and urban problems. Stories told here have evolved into classics of rap. They focus primarily on the ghettos of South Central LA, but have resonance throughout the USA. He brings in funk from the 1970s – a style widely copied. Production qualities are excellent. Both of Cube's albums are completely amazing from start to finish.

Many credit Ice-T as one of the founding fathers of gangsta rap. His 1987 release Rhyme Pays established his credentials as such. By the time he released his third album, Iceberg/Freedom of Speech ... Just Watch What You Say, parental complaints about explicit lyrics caused him to step back. However, he soon responded with some of his most acerbic, divisive and strongest material resulting in OG Original Gangster in which he conveys scorching street violence and the hustling street life. He produced his own “greatest” compilation, Ice-T – Greatest Hits: The Evidence, including 6 'N the Mornin and I'm Your Pusher.

Considered a hip-hop classic, Reasonable Doubt, Jay-Z's debut album is a reflection of his life. Touching on many subjects the album has complexity and depth. The songs Can't Knock the Hustle and Regrets are reflective and Friend or Foe philosophical. This album foreshadows Jay-Z's rise to legendary status.

With the release of his sixth album, The Blueprint, Jay-Z confirms his legendary status with songs Izzo, Girls, Girls, Girls, Never Change, and Song Cry. While both albums, Reasonable Doubt and The Blueprint stand out as his two finest, keep in mind he does have 12 other albums to his credit.

Jungle Brothers (1988), Straight out the Jungle, Warlock Records
The Jungle Brothers’ release, Straight out the Jungle is a landmark hip-hop album that represented a time of Afrocentric pride and cultural heritage. Their What's Goin on, sampling of Marvin Gaye's track, Black Is Black, Jimi Hendrix and On the Run delved into the problems of the inner-city life.

Kanye West (2004), College Dropout, Roc-A-Fella Records
Hip-hop producer Kanye West takes the stage in his debut album College Dropout. He mixes humor with spirituality and social consciousness. Nothing is taboo, even Single black females addicted to retail. Beats are solid and lyrics right on. Kanye sounds thoughtful and humane, more than the usual rapper. A real album highlight is Jesus Walks. (“They say you can rap about anything except for Jesus, that means guns, sex, lies, videotape, but if I talk about God, my record won’t get played, huh?”).

Kanye West (2005), Late Registration, Roc-A-Fella Records
While not as exciting a production as College Dropout, Kanye's follow-up album, Late Registration, is no slouch. Lyrics are similar, but the musical sound is mature, actually incredible. The soulful Heard 'Em Say (featuring Maroon 5's Adam Levine) goes up against the street-oriented Crack Music and Gone (featuring Cam’ron). Both old and new fans should be happy with this production.

Kurtis Blow (Curtis Walker) (1994), The Best of Kurtis Blow, Mercury
One of the forefathers of hip-hop and one of rap's first superstars, Kurtis Blow is the first commercially successful solo rap artist to have a rap single Christmas Rappin distributed by a major record label and the first twelve-inch rap single The Breaks to be certified gold. Although The Breaks is his most popular track, The Best of Kurtis Blow shows his versatility with such songs as Tough, Hard Times, Party Time, and his highest charting hit Basketball.

The formerly homeless KRS-ONE (Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly Everyone) emerged in the 1980s as a rapping and teaching phenomenon. His gangsta rap Criminal Minded album was one of the first of its genre, realistically depicting tough life in urban America. Shaken by the shooting death of DJ Scott La Rock, however, KRS-ONE's next release, By Any Means, emphasized the dangers of violence among the young. Its single, Stop the Violence Movement, became an anthem. A follow-up album, Ghetto Music: The Blueprint of Hip-Hop, balanced violence and non-violence using jazz and hip-hop. Its themes of distrust of police, a failing education system, and the importance of guns to young blacks are quite evident. This is old school hip-hop. His Entertainment in 1990, while good listening, did not live up to the previous three albums.

Former Fugees member Lauryn Hill’s debut solo album *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* is a unique collection of many genres including reggae, rap, and old school R&B. Classic songs on the album include: *Ex-factor, Can’t Take My Eyes off You, Every Ghetto, Every City* and the title track of the album, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. She received ten Grammy nominations for the album and took home five awards. It is the first rap album in history to win album of the year.

LL Cool J (James Todd Smith) (1996), *All World, Def Jam Recordings*

LL Cool J (stands for Ladies Love Cool James), a teenager when he signed with Def Jam, has a discography just too long on to mention here. But from his 1985 debut album *Radio* on through to *I’m Bad to Mama Said Knock You out*, LL topped the rap charts and left his stamp on nearly every facet of hip-hop. To get your fix of LL, I recommend you get his greatest hits – *All World* – where all phases are represented.


Known for his dance moves, harem pants and pop appeal, MC Hammer released over 30 million records. *Let’s Get It Started* went triple platinum. *Please Hammer Don’t Hurt ‘Em* sold 17 million copies and was at the top of the US charts for 21 weeks, while *Too Legit to Quit* went five-times platinum. Although there are no profound lyrics and only hype beats, these albums capture a moment when rap went pop.

Mc Lyte (Lana Michele Moorer) (1988), *Lyte as a Rock*, First Priority Records


At 20 Nas released his debut album *Illmatic* and redefined East Coast hip-hop with a quick tongue and versatility. The album looks back at his life in Queens public housing and the violence associated and surrounding it. Showcasing his lyrical talent this album is a must have.

The Notorious BIG (aka Biggie Smalls, aka Big Popa) (Christopher Wallace) (1994), *Ready to Die*, Bad Boy Entertainment/Arista

Brooklyn's Biggie Smalls revitalized East Coast rap in the 1990s at the same time West Coast gangsta rappers took hold of hip-hop. His debut album *Ready to Die* was an instant classic. Unfortunately, it was his only album. After a 1997 awards party in California, Biggie was gunned down on the street. The album highlights his charismatic way with stories. In tracks like *Everyday Struggle*, he raps about the hard life in Brooklyn. *Juicy* is a rags-to-riches song, while *One More Chance* is a song about how he gets the ladies.

NWA (1988), *Straight outta Compton*, Ruthless Records

“You are about to witness the strength of street knowledge” – the intro to NWA’s second album *Straight outta Compton*, created a gangsta rap revolution, influencing countless raps to come. While mistakenly thought to be the first gangsta rap album, *Straight outta* is the best of the genre. It is frightening but riveting, thought-provoking and unapologetic. NWA celebrated the ills of street life in LA. and Compton. Of the eight group members, Dr Dre, founder Ice Cube, MC Ren, and Easy-E came to the fore. Even minus the benefit of radio-air-time or media coverage, the group’s searing social commentary created an underground sensation. Brutally honest, the album’s pain and anguish in rapping about the alienation and racism faced by black youth resonated. NWA’s strong *100 Miles and Runnin’* is missing from the unprecedented and beautifully crafted *Straight outta Compton*, but is on the group’s greatest-hits compilation. Parental discretion advised!

Outkast (2003), *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below*, Lafiace Records

From Atlanta, Georgia, this southern rap duo defined the sound of Atlanta rap and the south’s legitimacy in hip-hop. High School classmates Andree 3000 and Big Boi with their Southern accents expanded rap music beyond the thug street life culture with the release of their fifth album *Speakerboxxx/ The Love Below* mixing Southern flavors with funk, soul and rap.

Public Enemy (aka PE) (1988), *It Takes A Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, Def Jam Recordings

With *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, Public Enemy pushed the bounds of hip-hop artistically and culturally. The group’s lead rapper Chuck D created an inventive and irresistible sound. Contributing also to Public Enemy’s aura was its hype man Flavor Flav. His humor complemented the group’s militant sound. While some feel the album could have been tighter, overall it trumped this criticism and became a powerhouse rap sound.

Public Enemy (aka PE) (1990), *Fear of a Black Planet*, Def Jam Recordings

Emerging from some controversial times, Public Enemy released in 1990 *Fear of a Black Planet*, probably the most focused rap album to date. It builds on and even transcends the sound of *It Takes a Nation*. A great work, it offers songs dealing with hope (*Brothers Gonna Work It out*), interracial dating (*Polly wanna crakka*), and bigotry (*Burn Hollywood Burn*). Chuck D, a master of the five-minute rap, is at his best in *Welcome to the Terrordome*.

Queen Latifah (Dana Elaine Owens) (2002), *She’s a Queen: A Collection of Hits*, Universal Records

The veteran rapper Queen Latifah paved the way for other female rappers such as Da Brat, Foxy Brown, and Lauryn Hill. Her 1989 hip-hop *All Hail the Queen* put her on the charts. She continued to play with this genre for 15 years, at which point she produced her greatest hits collection, *She’s a Queen*. After some cleaning up to avoid an explicit lyrics sticker, the album highlights her talent particularly in the duets *Mama Gave Birth to the Soul Children* with De La Soul and *Ladies First* with Monie Love. Those listeners who prefer their Queen unedited can turn to the unaltered *Ladies First*. 
and other singles featured on All Hail, Nature of a Sista and
Black Reign.

Run DMC (1984), Run-DMC, Def Jam Recordings,
(1985), King of Rock, Def Jam Recordings, (1986),
Raising Hell, Def Jam Recordings
Run DMC, one of the leading rap groups, helped win hip-
hop's acceptance into the popular mainstream. With the song
Walk this Way, the group brought the street sound into mass
acceptance. The eponymous Run DMC album was the first
album to go gold, and their King of Rock album was the
first in rap to break into the platinum ranks. This success
fueled the multi-million sales of their Raising Hell release, the
first rap album to go multi-platinum. Each of these three is a
bedrock of rap music.

Salt 'N Pepa (1993), Very Necessary, London/Polygram
The trio Salt 'N Pepa, (Cheryl “Salt” James, Sandy “Pepa”
Denton and DJ Spinderella) are explicit rappers unlikely to be
popular with church-going audiences. They sing of men they
like with a sensuality that will appeal to sexually active
teenagers. Girls can enjoy also Salt's right-on putdowns of
bad-behaving men. Their hit album Very Necessary brought
Salt renown as the most successful female group of the early
1990s.

Slick Rick (aka MC Ricky D) (Ricky Walters) (1989),
The Greatest Adventures of Slick Rick, Def Jam
Recordings
Hip-hop's great lyricist and storyteller Slick Rick is like no
other. Smoothly distinctive, he became a legend with his work
on Doug E. Fresh's Show. His own debut album, The Greatest
Adventures of Slick Rick highlights his narrative gifts. It is one
of the best from rap's golden age and storytellers who
followed used it as a touchstone.

Snoop Dogg (aka Snoop, aka Snoop Doggy Dogg)
(Calvin Broadus) (1993), DoggyStyle, Death Row
Records
DoggyStyle by Snoop, under the direction of Dr Dre,
introduced gangsta rap into the mainstream. On the album
Snoop adopted a funk sound whose pioneer was George
Clinton. DoggyStyle's explicit lyrics rightly garnered it a
Parental Advisory sticker. Snoop's special style of rap/drawl
along with his mix of rap & R & B is undeniably entertaining;
however, the album's Murder Was the Case is now an inner-city
classic. Dr.Dre also proved himself with this album's
production.

The Sugar Hill Gang (2000), Rapper's Delight, Sequel
Records
The landmark song Rapper's Delight is hip-hop's first
commercially successful single. Released in 1979, the Sugar
Hill Gang introduced rap to mainstream audiences and
forever changed the culture of hip-hop.

Tupac Shakur (aka 2Pac, aka Makaveli, aka MC New
York) (Parish Lesane Crooks) (1991), 2pacalypse Now,
Interscope Records, (1994), Me against the World,
Interscope Records, (1996), All Eyez on M, Deathrow
Records
The influential rapper Tupac created controversy from the
get-go with his debut album 2pacalypse Now. When a copy was
found in the possession of a teenager who shot a state trooper,
the album was decried as a promoter of violence. Nevertheless, future albums such as Me against the World (a
rap about parenthood and the rapper) and All Eyez on Me
(with Dr Dre) went platinum and quintuple platinum
respectively. All Eyez was his last album — released before his
fatal shooting.

Wu-Tang Clan (1993), Enter the 36 Chambers, Loud
Records
Nine rappers, incorporating a style from the traditions of the
martial arts produced Enter the 36 Chambers a classic East
coast gangsta album. With one microphone Wu-Tang
managed to create one sound with their individual styles.
They all work well as both solo rappers and as a group.
However, it is Wu-Tang Clan member, the RZA, who stands
out with his production of beats, loops and sound effects.

Films and documentaries
The following is a selection from the increasing number of
films and documentaries with hip-hop related themes. Hip-
hop related films are those movies that in some way document
or critique the music or the culture.

Beat Street (1984), MGM Home Entertainment,
directed by Stan Lathan
The musical, Beat Street, produced by Harry Belafonte, shone
with break dancing and rap music. The setting was New York
in the 1980s – the South Bronx of young people figuring out
the way forward. There is an aspiring DJ, his friend a
promoter, and a young dad too busy with his graffiti art to
manage his family life. It is gritty and realistic and offers
fabulous performances from the tops in hip-hop – Melle Mel,
Doug E. Fresh, Afrika Bambaataa, Kool Moe Dee, and many
more. Break dancers, Rock Steady Crew and New York City
Breakers, add to the film’s strengths as it helps its audience
understand the legitimate artistic expressions and impulses of
hip-hop.

Block Party (2005), Universal Studios, directed by
Michel Gondry
The unusual Block Party by Dave Chappelle focuses on music,
but also on the concert audience and the show’s locale. It
features a concert in Brooklyn where a great lineup of top acts
included Erykah Badu, Kanye West, Mos Def, Talib Kweli,
Big Daddy Kane, Jill Scott, Common, the Roots, Dead Prez,
and the reunion of the Fugees. The audience saw in the film
was gathered in part by Chappelle's passing out free concert
tickets in both Brooklyn and in the Ohio neighborhood where
he lives. We see this in the film. Block Party pays open homage
to the 1973 documentary Wattstax.

Breakin’ (1984), MGM Video, directed by Joel Silberg
The 1980s movie Breakin’ looks at break dancing in depth and
highlights its importance as a cultural movement in urban
America that influenced the hip-hop rage to come. The lead
character is a young, white female dancer working as a
waitress who turns to street dancing in Venice Beach.
Teaming up with others, she brings their dancing into the
mainstream. ICE-T debuts his acting skills in Breakin’. A
sequel quickly followed within seven months – Breakin’ 2:
Fade to Black (2004), Paramount, directed by Patrick Paulson
This documentary about Jay-Z’s final appearance on stage reflects his entire career. *Fade to Black* is both the name of this amazing last concert and this documentary, narrated by Jay-Z. He reflects on his long career leading to this night. Joining Jay-Z on stage was such as Beyoncé, Mary J. Blige, Foxy Brown, Damon Dash, Slick Rick, and P. Diddy.

This lively documentary looks at break dancing’s evolution and the break dancers (or B-boys and break boys) who practiced it. These kids helped shaped the look of hip-hop and made it wildly popular. Many were from the South Bronx and appeared in 1980s movies from *Wild Style* to *Flashdance*. The film contains rare archival footage and interviews with Nigga Twins, Spy, the Rock Steady Crew, the New York City Breakers, and many more.

Graffiti Rock and Other Hip Hop Delights (1984), MVD Visual, directed by Clark Santee
In *Graffiti Rock and Other Hip Hop Delights*, producer Michael Holman traces the birth of hip-hop and rap. He had created in the 1980s two television dance shows, *Graffiti Rock* and *TV New York*, hip-hop versions of *American Bandstand* and *Soul Train*. While *Graffiti Rock* was not picked up, it did air as a pilot, featuring Run DMC, Shannon, the New York City Breakers, and kids dancing in the aisles.

Hustle & Flow (2005), Paramount Home Video, directed by Craig Brewer
*Hustle & Flow* is a film that dealt with the dreams and aspirations of becoming a rap star. The theme of the film centers on Djay, a pimp and drug dealer in Memphis, Tennessee, (played by Terrence Howard) in the midst of a midlife crisis that yearns to stop pimping and become a rapper. After reconnecting with his childhood friend, Key (Anthony Anderson), who has a love of music, they take the do-it-yourself approach to recording a demo, with the hopes of shopping this demo to rap mogul Skinny Black (Ludacris).

Krush Groove (1985), Warner Home Video, directed by Michael Schultz
Based on the life of record producer Russell Simmons, the semi-autobiographical *Krush Groove* portrays the rap/hip-hop scene in 1980s New York. Simmons’ *nom-de-plume* in the film is Russell Walker as portrayed by Blair Underwood in his debut film role. The movie has Walker producing the time’s top artists – Run DMC, Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde and Kurtis Blow. Also appearing in this film are: LL Cool J, the Beastie Boys, Kurtis Blow, New Edition, and the Fat Boys. *Krush* recouped its $3 million budget in its first weekend and scored as the number one movie of the weekend.

Scratch (2002), Palm Pictures, directed by Doug Pray
This documentary focuses on hip-hop and its DJs and rappers in a very entertaining way. Tracing the movement from the South Bronx in the 1970s, the film moves to San Francisco looking at the best DJs and party rockers along the way. Its director Doug Pray features legendary DJs Kool Herc, Q-bert, Grandmaster Shadow, Mix Master Mike, Rob Swift, and DJ Swamp. This is a great look at the evolution of hip-hop.

The Show (1995), Sony Pictures, directed by Brian Robbins
This documentary about rap and hip-hop then and now attempts to find out why it has become so popular. Included are interviews with some of hip-hop’s biggest names (Russell Simmons and Dr Dre reflect on fame and the ups and downs of the business), highlights of up and coming rap stars around that time (Biggie Smalls and Wu Tang Clan) and an homage to the older artists who pioneered rap.

Style Wars (1983), Plexifilm, directed by Tony Silver
This is a documentary about the rise and fall of subway graffiti in New York City in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Filmed in New York in 1982 when Hip-hop was still in its infancy, *Style Wars* dramatizes the conflict and competitions among young graffiti artists struggling to express themselves through their art. Directed by Tony Silver, *Style Wars* was one of the first documentaries to examine hip-hop culture. The documentary features interviews with members of New York City Transit Authority who, along with then Mayor Ed Koch, become the villains of the film.

Rhyme and Reason (1997), Disney Home Video, directed by Peter Spirer
The 1997 *Rhyme and Reason* is a dense documentary of hip-hop music and culture that takes on many of the controversial issues of the genre – How much of gangsta rap represents reality? Are wealthy rappers traitors when they flee to suburban mansions? *Rhyme* focuses on the West Coast gangstas of hip-hop and leaves out many of the influential East Coast rappers. It is hurt by their absence.

Wild Style (1982), Rhino Home Video, directed by Charlie Ahearn
*Wild Style* is the first movie to highlight hip-hop and its beginnings in New York City in the 1970s and 1980s. The film crystallized hip-hop and solidified the relationships between DJing, rap, break dancing, and graffiti. The film features performances by Grandmaster Flash, the Cold Crush Brothers, and Fab 5 Freddy.

Vo! MTV Raps (1988), Viacom, directed by Ted Demme
MTV’s show *Y.O! MTV Raps* first showcased hip-hop music on television, running from 1988 to 1995. Dr Dre hosted the show along with Ed Lover and Fab 5 Freddy. Live performances, rap star interviews, and rap videos made up the show. The final episode in August 1995 featured a number of high-profile hip-hop stars.

Monographs and reference works
The following texts represent some of the central works on hip-hop culture. They provide some of the most comprehensive overviews and coverage on the subject. Any of these would be appropriate for academic and public libraries.
This guide to hip-hop features articles and essays on artists, the industry and select discographies. It also includes over 3,000 reviews and ratings, highlighting the essential albums and songs from nearly 1,200 artists.

A comprehensive encyclopedia examining hip-hop culture’s 30 plus history including mostly biographical entries with approximately 100 photographs. The appendices contain a selected discography and statements regarding the appreciation and preservation of hip-hop culture, including the “Hip-Hop Declaration of Peace.”

This hip-hop anthology has captured events, and moments of the last 25 years of hip-hop’s history. The articles feature the personalities, conflicts and controversies of hip-hop. The list of contributors includes Toure, Kevin Powell, Dream Hampton, Harry Allen, Cheo Hodari Coker, Greg Tate, Bill Adler, Hilton Als, Danyel Smith, and Joan Morgan.

Based on original interviews with DJs, b-boys, rappers, graffiti writers, activists, and gang members, with unforgettable portraits of many of hip-hop’s forebears, founders, and mavericks, including DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Chuck D, and Ice Cube, *Can't Stop Won’t Stop* chronicles the events, the ideas, the music, and the art that marked the hip-hop generation’s rise from the ashes of the 1960s into the new millennium.

Darby’s book discusses themes of philosophy and hip-hop culture. Topics include violence, race and sexuality; and the power and influence of hip-hop language.

*That’s the Joint* is a collection of academic articles and essays reprinted from music magazines and books chronicling the early development, media coverage, and academic response to hip-hop. Readers will be introduced to some of the prominent authors and major themes and debates in hip-hop.

Fricke has compiled a collection of first person accounts from hip-hop pioneers, encompassing a history of the early development of hip-hop music, break dancing and graffiti, highlighted by almost 200 photographs.

With humor and insight, music critic George looks at hip-hop in relation to civil rights and soul music. He too looks at the possible blaxploitation of hip-hop by white suburban youth. He is troubled by the commercial exploitation of hip-hop as a way to reach even more consumers. George also examines the violence and misogynistic treatment of women that give hip-hop a bad name.

With more than 30 years of interviews, and virtually every hip-hop single, remix, and album ever recorded at their disposal the staff of the magazine *Ego Trip* has compiled a book of rap and hip-hop lists that runs the gamut of hip-hop information, breaking it down into chapters on Art, Lyrics, Production, Fashion, Names, Performances, etc. This is an exhaustive and indispensable source of true hip-hop knowledge.

Music critic and social commentator Bakari Kitwana writes of how hip-hop broke down racial barriers while promoting a national conversation. Investigating its appeal to white youths, Kitwana looks at expressed concerns that whites are appropriating hip-hop and benefiting financially from so doing. His take is that both whites and blacks can benefit by songs that identify and highlight the problems of urban youth in general. Baby-boomer parents may find this explanation thought provoking.

The *Vibe History of Hip-Hop* tells the complete story of hip-hop’s cultural movement, from its origins in the South Bronx to its explosion as an international phenomenon. Illustrated with approximately 200 photos, and accompanied by comprehensive discographies and a series of essays, this book is a review of hip-hop through the eyes and ears of more than 50 music writers and cultural critics today.

Hip Hop Matters explores hip-hop culture and the growing influence it has on American culture. With anecdotes and astute analysis Watkins tells his version of hip-hop’s history and the battles in politics, pop culture, and academia to control hip-hop.

Magazines
These are urban music magazines covering a wide range of intersection hip-hop topics with insightful article reviews, essays profiles and interviews for fans of hip-hop and for those unfamiliar with the genre. They are excellent sources for the latest artist, music and trends.
The FADER, 71 West 23rd Street, Floor 13, NY, NY 10010, http://thefader.com
The Fader is a quarterly magazine of emerging music and lifestyles. Through in-depth reporting with an urban sensibility, The FADER covers a wide spectrum of musical styles from mainstream pop to underground hip-hop.

Regarded by many as the bible of hip-hop, The Source is a monthly magazine that began as a newsletter in 1988 by two Harvard students. Today it is an influential hip-hop magazine with insightful reviews, previews, interviews and street-savvy articles on culture and politics.

URB Magazine, 6300 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1750, Los Angeles, CA 90048, www.urb.com
URB is a monthly American alternative magazine covering all aspects of hip-hop urban lifestyle and DJ culture. Based in Los Angeles, California, the magazine was founded in 1990 to provide coverage of the latest sounds, trends, DJs, clubs, and gear. URB is essential reading for keeping up with the latest trends and new artist.

Vibe is a monthly magazine covering hip-hop culture. Although the primary focus is music, urban fashion also receives treatment, and each issue contains discussions of movies, technology, sports and politics.

XXL is a monthly urban lifestyle magazine that covers all aspects of hip-hop culture. As the new voice of the hip-hop generation, XXL focuses on music, style, fashion, sports and politics.

Web sites
Library collections must include formats beyond books and periodicals. The internet provides a great array of resources on rap music and hip-hop culture. These web sites are an incredible research source for staying current with hip-hop.

Allhiphop.com, www.allhiphop.com/
A general site containing in depth reviews on hip-hop albums, and artist, editorials, news, and audio tracks.

Davey D's Hip-Hop Corner, www.daveyd.com/
This provides history and commentary from Davey D, a hip-hop journalist and scholar. The hip-hop History section contains personal definitions of hip-hop from three of its founding fathers: DJ Kool Herc, Afrikaa Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash.

Features video interviews with hip-hop pioneers DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrikaa Bambaataa; audio clips of music, photographs, and flyers.

Hip-hop Archive at Stanford University, http://hiphoparchive.stanford.edu/
This web site is designed to bring together hip-hop scholars and practitioners for the preservation of hip-hop history (archival of materials) and to extend scholarly discussion and debate. The web page will publish essays, and contains a list of conferences; courses being offered in universities; and links to other online resources.

Hip-hop Cheeba Style, www.cheebadesign.com/hiphop.htm
A site dedicated to old school hip-hop, among the legendary groups includes RunDMC, Beastie Boys and Public Enemy. The site also has downloadable classic songs in addition to an old school photo archive.

A searchable list of materials about hip-hop, encompassing break dancing, graffiti, MC's, and a new style of dress. Includes monographs, periodicals, thesis and dissertations, bibliographies, discographies, audio/visuals, encyclopedias and dictionaries.

An extensive collection of high-quality images of early hip-hop party flyers, most of which were designed by Buddy Esquire and Phase 2, a well-known graffiti artist.

Further reading

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