Bob Dylan: The Early Years

1941 – Robert Zimmerman is born in Duluth, Minnesota.

1956 – While attending high school in Hibbing, Minnesota, Dylan forms the Shadow Blasters, a short-lived Rock and Roll band.

1957 – Forms the Golden Chords, a Rock and Roll cover band.

1958 – The Golden Chords perform “Rock and Roll is Here to Stay” at a show in the school auditorium. It is so loud that the principal cuts off Dylan’s microphone.

1959 – In Dylan’s yearbook, beneath his picture and probably indicating an ambition for life, it states “Robert Zimmerman — to join Little Richard.”

1959 – Attends the University of Minnesota, becomes interested in Folk music and reads the autobiography of Folk legend Woody Guthrie.

January 1961 – Travels to New York City to visit Guthrie, who becomes a mentor to Dylan.

September 1961 – Performs at Gerde’s Folk City for the first time. Robert Shelton of the New York Times writes about the show, helping to launch Dylan’s career.

September 1961 – Signs contract with Columbia Records.

August 1962 – Changes name to Bob Dylan.

May 1963 – Releases The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan, which includes such classics as “Blowin’ in the Wind” and “A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall,” establishing Dylan as a major Folk artist.

March 1965 – Releases Bringing It All Back Home, his fifth studio album and first to feature electric instruments.