Decade 1950 to 1959

Developments

1950  The population is set at 23,202 in its 8.44 square miles. The metropolitan population is at least 30,000.

In attempts to publicize itself over the years and emphasize its central location, Harlingen has used the following monikers: Hub City, The Pivot City of Paradise Valley, The Capital City (also later Capital City), Junction City, Hub of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and The Key City. In 1950, 19 subdivisions with 535 lots are being developed.

5/19/50  The concept for an international bridge in the vicinity of Los Indios is laid out by its "founding fathers" who want to set up the San Benito Bridge Co. On 5/28/59 about 30 men and women meet in San Benito to form a corporation to build a bridge under the name San Benito International Bridge Co. Harlingen subscribers to the $250,000 enterprise are O.F. Bakhaus, R.O. Bork, E.C. Breedlove, W.F. Devine, George W. Duncan, James F. Hefner, Ben Levine, and Mrs. Tillie Sondock.

This year two and three bedroom frame houses are being erected on W. McKinley, W. Cleveland, and in Finwood Heights. Similar Taylor-Bilt homes are going up in the Woodlawn Addition while Jack Choate is erecting small frame houses in Harrison Manor No. 2 on E. Monroe.

4/18/50  A temporary pontoon bridge is stretched across the arroyo to service Rio Hondo for the next few years until the new lift bridge is built. On 4/29 the old one lane steel bridge is demolished to allow passage of the canal dredge.

10/26/50  The new dredge, C.S.E. Holland, under contract to Bauer-Smith Construction Company of Port Lavaca arrives at Rio Hondo. It will complete the last 6 ½ miles of canal from Rio Hondo to Harlingen. It is the second dredge on the job.

6/15/51  The Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway from Corpus Christi to Brownsville is completed when the dredge J.J. Mansfield excavates the last land blocking the channel and the opening to Port Harlingen is effected. The E. and M. Bohuskey Construction Company of Harlingen is awarded a $102,000 contract to erect a 650' dry wharf, a 100' bulk wharf, storage facilities, and internal roads for the port. These will near completion seven months later.

6/21/51  The Defense Department seeks $15,462,000 to construct Harlingen facilities at the All-Valley Airport. It is to be transformed into a school for Air Force navigators. In the end $14,721,000 is appropriated as part of the defense spending bill, $100,000 of which will be used to repurchase real estate sold since the army air field closed.

10/22/51  Frank J. Carden, who came to the Valley in 1929 and purchased pre-Port Harlingen area land on 12/20/30, donates 30 acres for a right-of-way to the port. When he came to this non-descript site with his wife and six children their belongings sent by train were unceremoniously deposited in the scrub plain.

12/1/1/51  The Southern Pacific Railroad makes its last Brownsville to McAllen passenger run.
1952  In this year and again in 1956 the city makes major annexations that bring it to its 1960 size of roughly 31 square miles.

2/27/52  Port Harlingen facilities are completed and dedicated, and its first cargo shipment arrives at one of seven docks. It has a 500 by 400 foot turning basin dredged to a depth of 12 feet and tied to a 125' wide channel down the Arroyo Colorado for 26 miles to the Intracoastal Waterway.

4/1/52  The once deactivated military air field turned into a city-owned regional one is reactivated as the Harlingen Air Force Base. While the original Harlingen Army Airfield cost just over $20 million, the reactivation this year will cost $15 million. Its mission is to train navigators, an urgency brought on by the initiation of the Korean War in June 1950. At its peak there are 3,500 military personnel and 600 civilians. The annual payroll comprises $15 million.

1952  The only named streets as yet in the developing Laurel Park area are Parkwood Drive (now South Parkwood), 16th Street, and Elmwood Drive. John McKelvey is the developer.

In this year construction permits valued at $4,540,859 are issued.

1953  Authorized this year and opened in September 1955 is the Harlingen State Tuberculosis Hospital on Rangerville Road. It serves 20 south-most Texas counties and costs $2,368-2.5 million to construct. The facility has 600 beds. Its first patients are received 1/9/56, but it does not reach its full occupancy of 550 until 6/57. Dr. Ellison F. White is its superintendent from its start, and at least through 1960. When it celebrates its 7th anniversary with an open house on 1/11/63 Dr. White notes that 3,738 patients have been treated including 40 children under 12 and that the current in-patient number is 402.

7/54  The $2 million Valley Baptist Hospital and Sams Memorial Children Center combination is under construction. The goal is a completion date by late 1956. This month sees the official dedication of Harvey Richards Field with its small terminal and 3,650' runway.

1954  The Valley Diagnostic Clinic in Harlingen commences service to South Texas. It covers a wide range of medical specialties including rheumatology, internal medicine, nephrology, cardiology, radiology, gastroenterology, dermatology, endocrinology, occupational medicine, and family practice. Still going strong in 2004 it celebrates its 50th anniversary. At that time 21 doctors are practicing at the clinic.

1/21/55  The city is still in negotiations with Missouri Pacific in an effort to remove the old passenger depot in order to extend Van Buren Street and allow its traffic to cross the tracks.

1/56  The new Valley Baptist Hospital on Ed Carey Drive is completed and occupied at a cost of $2.25 to 2.5 million. It occupies an 18.5 acre site. In 1959 the Reber Memorial Radiation Clinic is added through the gift of John O. and Louranne Reber in memory of their sister Winnie Reber. On 5/16/59 the hospital opens a heliport facility.

By this year the number of telephones in the city and Valley has risen greatly. Harlingen is assigned the dialing prefix GA-3. By 1969 this is simply 423 and 425 has been added.
By 1976, 428 has to be added and, as growth continues, 421 in 84-85, 412 in 91-92, 440 97-98, and 430 by 00-01.
To the east and southeast of the Austin School the Lake Mansions Addition comes into being. It contains modest homes aimed at the enlisted servicemen’s market. The city presently encompasses 31 square miles.

1957 Construction permits for a value of $6,329,072 are issued.

1/29/59 Mayor C. Worth Wood announces a 25 year lease for city-owned land of 1,489 acres for the Harlingen Air Force Base.

$600,000 construction funds are set for the planned Harvey Richards Municipal Airport expansion six miles west of the city. One half of this amount will come from the FAA and one half from the Harlingen Airport Board, whose chairman is C. Grant Kloperstein. Others on the board are J.R. Fitzgerald, Harvey L. Richards, A.J. Wittenbach, E.D. McDonald, H.W. Bahnman, and D.B. Blankin. No local tax monies will be involved. With the purchase of 160 additional acres a runway of 4,900’ is constructed.

7/3/59 City's annexation of 1,900 acres is contested by 44 farmers who pursue the case to the State Supreme Court.

9/17/59 Approval is given for three subdivisions: Tanglewood, Unit 1, 7 lots between Bowie and 7th on the south and Grimes on the north; Whitehouse Circle No.2--site between 21st and 25th Streets, north of Washington; Bonneville Terrace, 80 acres north and west of New Combes Road and Montezuma Ave. For the period 1947 through 1959 inclusive, Harlingen has had 71 subdivisions platted, approved, and recorded.

**Agriculture/Ranching**

8/1/50 The cottonseed house and adjacent conveyors are destroyed in a fire at the Rangerville Coop Gin.

1951 Year of the Big Freeze hurts the agricultural economy of the area, especially citrus. By July 1952 following three bad freezes in two seasons the citrus tree population in the Valley is reduced from 14 million to 3.6 million. By 1960 it will rise to 5.75 million on 70,000 acres. The freeze does allow the switch from yellow varieties of grapefruit into the Ruby Red variety.

6/51 The $1 million cotton oil mill on Wilson Road is nearly complete according to manager Luthur Wyrick. It is owned by 13 cooperative cotton gin organizations which operate 32 gins. It will have the capacity to process 130 tons each 24 hours and store 20-25,000 tons of cotton seed.

11/23/51 The Valley Mid-Winter Fair opens in Harlingen.

1953 (spring) Harlingen receives permission from the Houston Cotton Exchange to purchase the country's first bale of cotton of the year. At a meeting at the Little Creek Motel the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce agrees to take over the first bale contest. The Special Cotton Committee of the C of C guarantees the grower of the first bale $2,500. It has done so from this year and then auctioned it. The cash prize rises to $3,000 by the 1990s and then to $5,000 by 2003.
In 1953 the Algodon Club is also organized to publicize and promote the cotton industry through social activities. The Maid of Cotton was chosen each year for many years then this ended in the 1970s.

It is this year that the Atchison Citrus Center opens for business. In November 1967, owners Mr. & Mrs. John Atchison Jr. will open a new facility on Business 83 near FM 800. It will be the exclusive supplier of gift fruit for Sakowitz of Houston. He manages 500 acres in citrus and sells under the Key Brand label. Mr. Atchison will die at age 92 on July 25, 2008 in League City. A graduate of Harlingen High School in the early 1930s he attended San Marcos Baptist Academy and Texas A&M University. He returned to the Valley in 1946 with his wife Lorene after serving in WWII. He was a Rotary Club member, past president of the Lions Club of Harlingen, and a deacon of the First Baptist Church. He was survived by a son, daughter, and grandchildren.

6/25/54 Hurricane Alice makes landfall 20 miles south of Brownsville then sweeps northwest following the river. Falcon Dam, completed in 10/53, is filled with this major rainfall event. Normally projected to take 3 to 4 years to fill to capacity, the water level rises from 252' to 292' with this one storm. Drought-stressed farmers now have sufficient water for irrigating their crops.

1956 Texas Courts this year took over all RG River water rights and commenced a 15 year period to adjudicate 3,500 claims. After the final judgment 1,400 landowners were parcelled water rights, cities guaranteed at least a minimum amount, and a watermaster appointed to run the system.

1957 Although most cotton gins have closed in Harlingen it remains the Valley center for cotton seed processing with the South Texas Cotton Oil Company, Southwestern Cotton Oil Mill, and the Valley Co-op Oil Mill.

1958 Texas Citrus Mutual is organized with J. L. Boggus elected its first president. Crop insurance is instituted and just in time for the 1/30/59 freeze that decimates three million of the 12,000 million Valley citrus trees.

**Government/Politics—City, County, State, National**

1950 Gene McCullough is Mayor, 1950-52. Under his administration the city finalized the change to a city manager form of government and a new library and city hall came into being. On ¼/50 W. a. Hensley becomes police chief and serves until 2/6/52.

4/50 The City Hall at 202 E. Van Buren is being demolished. While the new one is being built the city temporarily places its offices in the Plaza Hotel. On 3/16 the Fire Department moved into temporary quarters in the old CP&L building at Commerce and Monroe. By this date it has 22 full time paid firefighters and 40 volunteers. In its equipment list are a 750 gallon pumper, a 125 gallon booster and a 75' aerial ladder truck. The City contracts with the Harlingen Public Housing Authority authorizing it to borrow from the Federal Government.

10/50 Warren A. Taleaferro is named chief air raid warden for the Harlingen district.
1950  The new City Hall designed by C. Lyman Ellis and constructed by J.B. Hughes of Brownsville opens at 118 E. Tyler with the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce by 1951-52 to use its annex at 411 S. Commerce. The building of 15,678 square feet and furnishings cost $235,380. In this year there is a $90,000 bond issue to build a baseball stadium seating 3,500 and field.

Fire Station No. 1, 121 W. Jefferson, built as a $90,000 central facility and by 2002 valued at $910,720, opens this same year and is named the E.C. Bennett Station in honor of the early chief. R.C. Berna serves as fire chief for the period 3/15/50 until 3/15/51 when W. T. Hamilton takes over. Erma Mae Bunting is hired as a dispatcher and thereby becomes the first woman employee of the fire department.

The same amount is expended to construct Harlingen Stadium (also at times called Cardinal Stadium) at the old Fair Park. Its builders encounter the foundations of the long-gone sugar mill. The removal delays the construction timetable. In February 1950, 200 citizens contribute a total of $25,000 to establish a Class A professional baseball team for the city. The team in the Big State League is called the Harlingen Capitols. There are 90,000 paid admissions on the 1950 season. In 1955 it still has a home-owned professional baseball team playing in its 3,500 seat facility, the largest in the Valley. The team folds after this year.

This year the Harlingen Water Board votes to spend $60,000 to improve seven system facilities. The daily capacity of the city's two water plants will be brought up to seven million gallons. The two reservoirs are the 36 acre one in the city and a 120 acre one located on the Harlingen All Valley Airport. A 16" main from the airport water plant is built to connect to the city one, and the airport one has its filtration capacity increased to 700,000 gallons per day. The 13th Street canal is put underground and a box flume 5' x 5' is constructed from North Piece Street to Jefferson to feed Lake Harlingen with its 10 million gallons per day capacity. There are 4,188 metered customers on the system.

10/50  At a Pioneers Day celebration on 11/18/50, Fair Park is re-named Lon C. Hill Park, in honor of the city founder. Senator Tom Connally gives the dedicatory address. The Burgomaster of Harlingen, Holland, Anthoney E. Henema, is an honored guest along with Harlingen's first mayor, Ike B. McFarland of Houston, and James L. Allhands of Dallas, who was a railroad engineer and historian of the 1900-20 era. The associated Valley Mid-Winter Fair opens with a record first day attendance of 12,000.

Local housing in Harlingen for 40 to 50 families of Negro servicemen at the HAFB presents a problem. A committee is formed to look into the matter.

10/20/50 R. J. Brule, appointed as city manager effective 2/1/49, resigns.

12/15/50  Attorney Gene F McCullough commences his term as mayor, completing it on 12/15/52.

12/23/50  The contract is let for the new memorial library. Its cost is $65,231 plus air conditioning expenses. The building fund sits at $75,000, $30,000 of which is from the City.

1950-51  Building permits peak at $3,723,445 in 1950 and slip badly to $1,477,705 in 1951. In 1950 the true value of real property and personal is $68,178,261; by 1959 this has risen to $128,509,000. The city has a 2% gross receipt tax on gas, electric, and telephone utilities. Receipts of this tax in 1950 are $22,650 and $69,605 by 1959.
Expenditure for city operations including debt servicing, increased from $482,922 in 1950 to $1,251,318 in 1959.

This year Roberto Campos Sr. becomes the first Hispanic to join the Harlingen Fire Department. He had served in the Navy in the South Pacific in WWII. He would retire as assistant chief in 1987. In 1989 his son, Roberto Campos Jr., would also become a firefighter with the department.

3/9/51 500 attend the dedication of the Soldiers’ Memorial Plaque at the L.C. Hill Memorial Library

6/1/51 The city moves into new offices on Polk between 1st and 2nd Streets. This is a relief from the two room facilities it has occupied in the Plaza Hotel for 2 ½ years. The new $92,000 central fire station is also occupied. The old Southern Pacific passenger depot is leased by the city to house the police headquarters, jail, and corporation court.

8/51 This year the city welcomes a new facility. The Lon C. Hill Memorial Library (now city administrative offices) opens at 502. E. Tyler. The air-conditioned facility with its 51,000 square feet is built incrementally at a total cost of $107,052. The building fund was first started as a project of the Rotary Club as a war memorial and was later enhanced by the city's $35,000 contribution. These were supplemented by individual donations of $5,000 each by H.E. Butt, Hill Cocke, and J. Lewis Boggus, and $20,000 by Lon C. Hill, Jr. and family. Individuals who greatly assisted the project were R.C. Prior, Dr. Ernest H. Poteet, M.H. Connelly and W.B. Briscoe. For the children's room the Harlingen Junior Service League purchased the shelving and furniture. The stacks contain 11,336 volumes; in 1921 the library had 11 books. The collection will rise to 14,000 by1952, 25,000 by 1956 and more than 37,000 by 1960. On 9/29/51 the city will establish the Harlingen Public Library Board and provide for a librarian for the system. The official dedication is 12/9/51 with M.H. Connelly presiding, Gene McCullough mayor attending, and Hill Cocke, Rotary president participating. An Alice C. Jennings Music Memorial is set up at the library. Gifts are made by the Rotary Club and the Music Lovers Club. The first architects are Cocke, Bowman and York for the $69,545 structure. In 7/60 a screened porch costing $5,575 is added. Additional changes designed by Bowman, Swanson, and Hester are made at a cost of $31,932. By 1966 the library's operating budget is $19,380.

1952 Charles A. (Cut) Washmon is Mayor (12/15/52-12/15/56), when the Harvey Richards Field, Harlingen's municipal airport is opened on August 3, 1954 (but dedicated in November) in what is now the Harlingen Country Club in Palm Valley (26.2 N/97.76 W). It has a small terminal and initially a 3,650' runway. A 1963 directory shows that it then had two paved runways with the primary one (19/35) being 4,900' asphalt, a third runway, taxiways, an apron, several hangars, and a terminal building. Operators listed were the Elliott dusting Service, Elliott Aviation Co., Valley Flying Service, and Young Flying Service. It is updated in 1959. Air travel times from Harlingen to major Texas cities are: Houston 3 hrs 22 min., San Antonio 2 hrs 32 min., and Dallas-Ft.Worth 4 hrs 50 min. In addition the city is being served by four bus lines: Greyhound, Missouri Pacific, Union, and the Valley Transit Co.

Under Mayor Washmon the city annexed land in all directions, opened Tyler and Van Buren Streets across the railroad tracks, and approved expressways and bypasses for the city.
This year also John L. Guseman is appointed police chief (2/16/52) and will serve until 9/16/58. Guseman's background included being sergeant in the San Antonio Police Department and previous to that a guard in the federal Leavenworth Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas.

8.44 square miles lie within the city limits. This year 4,754 Harlingen homes are classified as standard while 2,746 are substandard. In 1942 there were 3,734 homes of which 1,800 were classified as substandard.
The baseball stadium is reconstructed to better accommodate the professional team.

2/27/52 The very first commercial barge arrives at Port Harlingen. A $150,000 project of the Harlingen Municipal Water Board is underway to install a 12 inch water main to Port Harlingen. It is also in 1952 that a city election authorizes the issuance of revenue bonds to fund the expansion of the water system. The original bond issue of 1945 was refunded ($811,000) in order that an additional $575,000 of bonds be issued. With the reactivation of the air base the City supplies it with 1 ½ million gallons of water per day.

3/52 Low Rent Housing Project is initiated at a cost of $883,000.

6/52 Five of six bond issues are approved by the electorate. $1,861,000 is earmarked for major street and drainage improvements, another branch fire station, park improvements, and new sewer plant.

8/1/52 The Le Moyne Gardens Housing Project is purchased by the City Housing Authority and $100,000 will be spent to rehabilitate its 63 buildings and 200 medium-priced units.

1953 (summer) The $500,000 lift bridge over the Arroyo Colorado opens. It connects the west side of FM 106 to Rio Hondo and allows for tall waterway traffic to reach Port Harlingen. It is the only such engineered bridge of its type in Texas.

This year the city has only four improved parks—Lon C. Hill, Diaz Plaza, Bowie and Travis. The city creates a Parks and Recreation Board for the purpose of acting as advisors in order that a concerted effort be given to the beautification and development of the parks and a complete recreation program be offered by the fast-growing city.

2/4/53 Robert Lewis is managing the Madison Hotel when a kitchen fires occurs in it.

10/18/53 Falcon Dam is completed. President Dwight Eisenhower flies into the HAFB on the presidential plane Columbine. He is greeted there by many dignitaries led by Gov. Alan Shivers before motoring to Mission to spend the night at the Shary Mansion. His motorcade through Harlingen is viewed by 70,000. The next day the President meets with Mexico President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines to dedicate the five mile wide dam.

11/1/53 The Harlingen Air Force Base graduates its first Basic Observer Navigator Class, 53-AN. The class of 23 is under the command of Col. James F. Oliver, Jr.

The years 1951 through 1953 were drought ones for the Valley. The Water System was under duress. It purchases a 25 acre site near Rangerville and in 1951 constructed a 170' 16" diameter well close to the canal. In 1953 two additional wells are dug on the site and three more on an adjacent tract leased from H.D. Seago. The total from the wells creates a supplement of nine million gallons per day, but their use ceases after Falcon Dam fills. By 1953 the Water Plant's expansion plans are completed adding 2 million gallons per day to its capacity.
7/54 The low, wooden two lane $2,750,000 Queen Isabella Causeway to South Padre Island from Port Isabel is completed and will be dedicated on 7/3/55. This opens the door for accelerated island development and for Harlingen to benefit from tourists in transit to the island.

1954 The Water Board purchases 52 acres of land in the Rangerville area in order to obtain more water rights. Lake Harlingen's 30 million gallon capacity, a three-day supply, was considered inadequate, so engineers were hired to make recommendations. This year see bond issue funds used used to develop the 40 acre parcel of Pendleton Park purchased in 1953.

1955 Real estate taxes have remained fairly constant over the last seven years. Property is assessed at 70% of real value. Rates per $100 have run:

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1955 The estimated population is 31,000, up from 23,000 in 1950. The number of city employees has grown only slightly, from 187 to 208 for this same period. Larry M. Crow, Jr., city manager, notes a 6.48 employee to 1000 people ratio now compared to a 6.48 one in 1950.

1/1955 Joe Madison Kilgore (1918-1999) commences his 84th Congress term as U.S. Representative from the 15th Congressional District of Texas. This encompasses Harlingen. He will serve until 1965.

1955 The Water Board purchases 94.34 acres on South Dixieland Road from Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Prichard at $500 to 550 an acre. In 1964 it will purchase an adjacent five acres from A. D. Ross for $1000 an acre. These parcels will serve as a city water reservoir.

1956 Frank Parker is Mayor (12/15/56-12/15/58). Under him plans were laid for extensions of the sewer system, the widening of Tyler and Harrison Streets, and implementation of expressways. J.L. Head Fire Station No.4, 1656 Sam Houston is erected. On 3/56 the W.C. Anderson Fire Station opens at 2112 North Commerce Street. It is named after William C. (Andy) Anderson who first owned Andy's Confectionary Store at 123 W. Jackson then went on to Andy's Drive Inn at 220-22 E. Jackson and Wings (Manhattan) Grill at 206 W. Jackson. He served as a City Commissioner 1939-53. This station will be closed in 1993 when the Grimes station is erected and the Anderson personnel are shifted to that station. It is currently Aguilar's Salvage Store. Seven months later the A.B. Chapa Fire Station at 1202 W. Van Buren opens. This small building will be outmoded by new sizeable equipment and closed in the late 1980s. A.B. Chapa also served on the City Commission.

121 barges with 159,299 long tons of freight utilize Port Harlingen.
In this year there is a Cameron County bond issue to purchase right of ways for construction of expressways. HWY 77 is started in 1959 and completed in 1961 while HWY 83 is started in 1963 and completed in 1971 at a cost of $9,735,000.

1/9/56 The TB Hospital on Rangerville Road is dedicated. Built at the cost of $2,368,000 it initially serves only tuberculosis patients, but in 1971 other respiratory diseases individuals are served. By January 1, 1975 it will have had 9,225 admissions.

1/28/56 Open for business is the newly paved 14 block section of South F Street ending at the Municipal Golf Course.

3/56 The area of city parks rises to 28 acres.

11/27/56 The city dedicates Fire Station No. 3 wear the north end of Commerce Street as the W. C. "Bill" Anderson Fire Station in recognition of his long service to the community.

12/31/56 Building valuations have fluctuated somewhat over the last three years. In 1954 they were $4,044,818, 1955 $3,558,708, and 1956 $3,979,657. Once again the city citizens approve funds for water system improvements, this time for $750,000. This will increase the downtown plant's capacity by 3 million gallons per day bringing it to 8.7 million. The Board adopted a new policy for developers to pay the cost for main extensions to new subdivisions.

1957 As Expressway 83 is widened in West Harlingen this necessitates the rearrangement of part of the municipal golf course. The south side airstrip is removed at what is now between the 7th and 13th fairways. Plans for what was to be Sam Botts Park on the very south end are discarded.

Port Harlingen revenues are $16,784 and its expenses $14,000. Building permits of $6,329,072 set an all-time record. 300 homes are built in the city. The previous high was in 1952 at $4,540,859. In 1956 permits totaled $3,979,657. The old jail on Commerce Street is still in use. Gavino Aguilar acts both as jailor and dog catcher for the city. He and his family live on the first floor while prisoners, primarily drunks sleeping it off, are on the second floor. The Aguilars prepare food for the prisoners, who are served twice daily. When Mr. Aguilar dies in July 1957, his son Robert takes over for a short duration. The building is then used for a dog pound.

1/6/57 Construction has begun on the new $298,000 bridge to cross the Arroyo Colorado at F Street. It will take about a year to complete. The same contractor, Dodds and Wedegartner, Inc. of San Benito who built the 1926 bridge it will replace, are building this one. It will have two one-way concrete sections, each 300 feet long, with 28’ roadways and four-foot sidewalks. The old bridge will be dismantled and re-erected across the arroyo at Rio Hondo. [It was utilized for 20 years until a new bridge was built.] Well ahead of schedule the bridge opens for traffic on 7/11/57.

12/57 City Manager since January 1951, L.M. Crowe resigns.

1958 Clifford H. Purdy is chairman of the board of the Arroyo Colorado Navigation District created in 1927 when a $500,000 bond issue was approved. A second bond issue in 1946 was for $625,000 making an indebtedness of $1,125,000, now reduced to $404,000. The original tax assessment of 60 cents per $100 valuation has dropped to 35 cents and will be 30 cents in 1959. Located at the port are the Magnolia Petroleum Co., Gulf Refining, Mid-South Chemical Co., and the Valley Grain and Elevator Co.
J.J. Rodriguez, the grocery store owner, becomes the second Hispanic elected to the City Commission.
The City Water Plant addition is constructed and put into service. Indications are that a pumping station will be needed at the Dixieland Road site.
C. Worth Wood is Mayor, 1958-60. His wife, the former Bobba Weaver is a Harlingen native, a charter member of the Cameron County Bar Auxiliary and member of the First Baptist Church.
Marshall F. Rousseau is appointed chief of police (11/1/58) and serves until 1/15/70 when he accepts an appointment by President Nixon to become a U. S. Marshal for the Southern District of Texas. Rousseau had worked under Chief Anglin working his way up to captain over time before resigning to become deputy sheriff in Port Isabel and then taking on the job as chief in Harlingen.
In this year the Fire Department erects a fire drill tower on a large lot on Markowski Street.
1/15/58 To fill the job of city manager, Douglas Henslee comes from Beeville where he has been city manager since 1952. He will resign 8/15/59.
6/58 Five of six issues are approved by voters in a $1,861,000 bond election. Funds will go for branch fire stations, park improvements, and a new sewer plant among others things.
12/58 C. Worth Wood is elected mayor and serves from 12/15/58 to 12/13/62.
5/13/59 Budgeting and work underway to obtain 80' right-of-way to widen Rangerville Road, FM 1479.
6/11/59 The low water wooden bridge across the Arroyo Colorado at Port Harlingen is completed. It replaces the wooden one destroyed last fall in a flood.
6/21/59 The city announces a budget of $1,531,166 with $1.95/$100 tax valuation to stay the same as 1958.
7/27/59 The Charles M. McKelvey Army Reserve Center building at 1920 E. Washington is dedicated. It is named after the Harlingen native who died, 3/3/45, in combat in World War II near Florence, Italy. His son, John Walker McKelvey was 6 months old at the time. The lieutenant's mother, Mrs. John W. McKelvey, Sr. along with her sister, Mrs. Jack Busa, attend the ceremony headed by the Secretary of the Army.
7/8/59 Fred Flynn urges the Capital Improvement Board to re-submit $30,000 bond issue for municipal golf course improvements to the electorate who defeated it in 1955 while passing six other proposals.
10/10/59 The Harlingen Public Library re-registers 17,700 cardholders in order to automate its system.
11/1/59 Marshall Bingham from Altom City takes over as city manager.
12/21/59 Over the last three years the value of city issued building permits have remained fairly constant. In 1957 they were $6,329,072 of which $2 million were for the high school and public housing. In 1958 the figure was $4,142,649 and for 1959 $4,531,438. This latter included permits for 252 houses valued at $2,514,720 or an average of $9,979 per unit.

Business/Commercial/Industrial
1950  The Matzs, owners of the old Sam Houston School building, undertake a two-year renovation of the building in order to convert it to a modern office building. It then becomes the Matz building with 32,000 square feet on its 42,000 square foot lot. In 2002 it is owned by Harco Properties, Inc., Jerry Harbin, president.

Luby's opens downtown. Nine years later it will move to the Coronado Village Shopping Center.

This year the city is being served by four bus lines—Greyhound, MoPac, Union Bus Lines, and Valley Transit. There are six trucking outfits—Alamo Express, Brown Express, Jones Motor Freight, MoPac Freight lines, Red Arrow, and Robinson Truck Lines.

An indication of how the city has progressed is the passenger changes over the years for Valley Transit. In 1942, its first full year, it served 634,433. In 1943 this figure rose to 1,701,463; 1944, 2,292,317; 1945, 2,467,382; 1946, 2,320,517; 1947, 2,951,236; 1948, 3,710,141; and 1949, 3,543,885.

5/11/50 The Texas Railroad Commission grants the Southern Pacific Railroad permission to stop running Valley to San Antonio passenger service. It did cease in the following year.

7/50 By this date Barney Goodman of Kansas City, Missouri either owns or operates the Madison Hotel. Also under his wing are eleven other hotels nationwide including the Cortez and Donna Hotels in the Valley.

1950-74 The Alberti Seafoods Processing Co. selling "King-O-Shrimp" and "Sea Breeze" Brands will pack products in Harlingen. Its owner Lawrence Alberti of Chicago is to die at age 67 on 10/16/60. When, in 1974, Alberti shuts its doors and a year later Western Shellfish at 708 N. Commerce does also, Cecil Carruth is left with his largely useless Harlingen Cold Storage Building at 804 North Commerce. For a time his Texas Frozen Foods Corp. processed frozen shrimp and citrus juice. The large building contained cold storage vaults, a shrimp processing plant, a citrus juice extraction plant, and a citrus peel dehydration plant along with Rio Freezer, Inc., cold storage.

At one point with Texas Frozen Food Corp., Alberti Seafood Processing, and Russell Trading Co. operating in Harlingen, together they would comprise the city's largest industry. One slogan to evolve was "Serving the Nation's dinner table from Harlingen, Texas."

1951  This year is the first for the weekly Harlingen Press. With Sam W. Burns as its publisher it is survives until 1976. Burns operated the Quality Press at 114 N 4th Street. It advertised offset lithography printing.

3/6/51 H.E.B. opens a 15,000 sq.ft. store at 821 W. Harrison. It has a lunch counter and fountain. By May 1956 the store will have been expanded to 21,000 sq. ft. and then to 43,000 by January 1968. By then the latter has automatic doors and advanced checkout counters.

1951 (fall) Raymond Cyrus Hoiles and his Freedom Newspapers, Inc. purchase the Valley Morning Star, the Brownsville Herald, and the McAllen Monitor for $2 million. The VMS has 70 employees, $270,000 payroll, 140 carriers, and 18,000 square feet in its new plant. It was this year that Hoiles founded Freedom Communications long after his 1935 purchase of the Santa Ana Register in Orange County, CA. In 1999 the newspaper group was to acquire the Mid-Valley Town Crier (Weslaco). By 2003 the Freedom group...
was the country's 11th largest newspaper company. It owned 28 dailies, 37 weeklies, and 8 television stations, all having an estimated value of $1.3 to 2 billion. This is when Freedom Communications, Inc. solicited bids for the sale or merger of the family-owned company. CEO Alan Bell noted that the board of directors authorized investment banker Morgan Stanley to seek offers. This would establish a market value for the company. This was done and allowed some family members to be bought out without sacrificing the company.

This year The Sportsman dealing primarily in small boat sales commences operating. It will eventually have outlets not only in Harlingen but also San Benito and McAllen.

3/26/51 The First National Bank of Harlingen moves to a new attractive six story building at 202 E. Van Buren. By 1959 its deposits reach over $30 million. Its officers at that time are: E.C. Breedlove, Chairman; Evan Hurst (37 years a banker), vice-chairman; E. Clinton Breedlove Jr., president; J.B. Brady, executive vice-president; Jack B. Jones, vice-president; and C. Neal DuBois, cashier.

Bahnman Realty Inc. starts in business. From 1972, Connie De La Garza, later Harlingen mayor, becomes its owner.

Sometime this year the handsome new Texas Reserve Building at 306 E. Jackson is ready for occupancy. Eventually over 20 tenants are in the two-story structure. The lot held until 1947 the home of W.E. and Marie Bradford. He may have been a painting contractor.


This same date sees the first issue of the Harlingen Press. It features only local news and is published by Sam W. Burns, owner of the Quality Press, 114 N 4th Street. The Rio Hondo Press will be consolidated into the Harlingen Press as of November 21, 1952.

1951 (end) U.S. Census of Business retail trade figures indicate Harlingen retail sales from 1939 through 1951 each year exceed those of the Valley's two other major cities—Brownsville and McAllen. For the 12-year period Harlingen average sales exceed Brownsville average by 22% and McAllen's by 55%. Harlingen sales rise from $7.353 million in 1939 to $41.174 million in 1951. The biggest leap comes between 1947 when sales tally $19,482,000 to $32,864,000 in 1948.

1951-52 The Valley Drug Corp. is to build the handsome art deco style warehouse at 421 North 1st Street.

1952 KGBS becomes KGBT. It becomes a 50,000 watt radio station and the first with full time Spanish language programming after a series of transactions. In 1953 it expands with the acquisition of radio station KSOX in Harlingen. On 1530 kHz, this first 50,000 watt station in the Valley was originally constructed by former Harris County Judge and Houston Mayor, Roy Hofheinz. McHenry Tichenor, whose original radio station KGBS, then KGBT, was on 1240 kHz purchased KSOX from Hofheinz and moved into the studios and offices at 1519 West Harrison and used the frequency 1530 kHz. A different KSOX was later to start up in Raymondville. In 1957 a new TV studio was added to the radio building by chief engineer Alfred R. Beck of the station. He was succeeded by Jim R. Mattison who was then chief engineer from 1964 until March 1979.

Texas International Airline operates from Harlingen. In 12/55 it is given permission by the CAB to provide four a day plane service from Harlingen to Dallas with stops in San
Antonio and Austin. It pulls out 12/74 and returns in 4/75. In May 1979 it leaves again. Later it is merged into Continental Airlines, which commences flights into Harlingen in the 1990s.

This year Andy's Model Market at the corner of Business 77 and 1st Street begins its operation.

The circulation of the *Valley Morning Star* is 12,850, the *Harlingen Press* 1,100, and there is a weekly Spanish language newspaper, *El Tiempo*.

5/7/52 The Valley Transit Co. opens its remodeled terminal on Monroe Street. It is also utilized by the Union Trailways Bus Co.

1953 Mrs. Genevieve Robinson is managing the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel and Bob Lewis, the Madison Hotel featuring its Cabana Room.

3/16/53 A $250,000 fire around the 103 address of W. Jackson destroys or damages seven businesses. The A. H. Weller Estate had leased space to Rogers Studio, Wilson Sporting Goods Store, Valley Sewing Machine Service, Anderson's Jewelry Store, Palace Barber, Pate Bros. Men's Furnishings, and Max's Shoe Repair Store.

6/53 James R. "Jimmy" Cocke commences working for his father, Hill Cocke's firm, Valley Ready Mix Concrete Company. In March 1967 at age 36 Jimmy will become president of the company.

10/53 KGBT sends out its first television signals. Its studios are on West Harrison before it builds in the 1990s a new enlarged facility on Expressway 83 just east of Bass Blvd. By this time it has been sold to the Liberty Corp., a company headquartered in Greenville, SC and which, by 2004, owns 15 television stations. KGBT will service the Harlingen-Brownsville-McAllen area utilizing 88 employees by 2004.

12/1/54 Hygeia starts operation in Corpus Christi and in 1955 builds offices and warehouses there on a seven acre tract.

Retail sales total $50,256,000. 8,400 families have a disposable income of $37,558,000 or $4,471 per family.

1954 For the year, total retail sales tallied $50,256,000. This is a 185% increase over those registered for 1945.

E.E. Alcott and partner Bob M. Knight Sr. open their new modernistic Nehi Bottling plant on 77 Sunshine at E. Washington. The name over the door reads “Royal Crown Cola” for their leading product. In 1950 they had purchased the cotton field and adjacent land upon which the plant was sited. Two years later they sold a portion of the area to Frank Dickerson who then developed the modest-priced housing on Cardinal and Chapparal Drives.

Over a 15 year period the city's bank deposits have grown considerably:

1940 $2,048,378  1945 $14,785,612  1950 $21,980,571  1955 $26,118,494

1955 Bank deposits total $25,790,363. Postal receipts are $323,314. The utility connections are: electric 10,335, gas 6,280, telephone 10,558, and water 6,192.

3/18/55 The Tropical Savings and Loan Association receives its charter and opens in July in the Madison Building which it will later buy and demolish in order to erect a new
facility to open by 1960. In the late 1970s it will have two branches, one on Morgan (5/75) and the other Laurel Park (10/77).

1/21/55 The re-done Carter building at 310 E. Van Buren now houses Carter, Stiernberg, and Skaggs along with Stewart Title.

4/20/55 The property at 222 E. Van Buren owned by Mrs. A. Goldammer, who resides at 822 E. Polk, and used until this year by her and her son as a grocery store has been given a major renovation. The lot was purchased in 1915 for $500. It is now called the Harlingen Insurance Building.

9/55 The restaurant business is picking up. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Frey are the owner-managers of the popular Green Gables on N. 77. Mrs. D.A. Sadler is managing the Little Creek Coffee Shop with its Pagoda Room for special events. J.W. Cunningham and K.I. Weaver are owners of Luby's New England Cafeteria at 114 N. A. Richard Bron with Jim Wheeler as manager is operating Richard's at 103 E. Van Buren. Sammy Reeder has Sammy's Downtowner at 201 E. Van Buren. Branching out by the late 50s Reeder will partner with Clyde Wallace in Sammy's Drive-In located near the new Luby's on business 77. When they later split as partners, Wallace will open Clyde’s Bar and Lounge at 1300 S. Commerce and Clyde’s Drive-In on 15th Street. Years later Reeder will build Sammy’s Red Barn on Commerce near Taft. The Sorrento at the Hacienda Motel at 1 ¾ mi W. Hwy 83 is offering Italian treats by owners Frank Pecora and Peter Gounod. This is likely the city's first authentic Italian fare. Sometime in 1956 the restaurant will relocate further west to 2 mi W. Hwy 83. By 1961 the partners are Pete Gounod, Tina Florio, and Virginia Pecora. In 1965 only the former two are listed as owners. The restaurant closes in 1979 only to reopen as Sorrento's Vineyard Restaurant in 1981, however by 1982 it is again closed. 1980 is also the year Pete's wife Rose L. Gounod closes her Gounod's Apparel and Bridal Salon at 312 E. Jackson. She had operated it since 1952.

1956 After the city condemns the railroad station building at the corner of Van Buren and Commerce, the Missouri Pacific then moves to 518 S. Commerce where it has a combined terminal and bus station. This later becomes the Continental Trailways bus terminal and is now occupied by the Acetylene Oxygen Co. (AOC). The removal of the depot and warehouses along the tracks south of Harrison Street allow through street crossing to come into being at Van Buren and Tyler Streets in late 1956. F Street is also extend to the north as far as Monroe Avenue.

George Cunningham Company, Inc., an air conditioning and heating firm, is established. Ron A. Lairsen establishes Lairsen's Style Shop on Jackson Street. It remains there until 1968 when it is relocated to the Sun Valley Mall. In 1977 it was sold to long-time employee, Martha Zamora.

4/16/56 The Harlingen State Bank is converted from a state to a national bank and on 5/28/59 is granted full trust powers. The following year its capital structure is in excess of $900,000 and its deposits $10.5 million. Its 1960 officers are: D.B. Dunkin, president; Paul M. Johnson, vice-president; J.M. Powers and Dial M. Dunkin, assistant vice-presidents; James L. Mayer, cashier; R.C. Blaylock, J.E. Tarr, and Thomas S. Young-blood, assistant cashiers. In 1967 it moves from 219 E. Jackson to a modern building on E. Van Buren. On 9/7/82 it opens a branch on 77 Sunshine Strip and on
12/4/84 at the Valley Vista Mall. D. B. Dunkin will be a moving force in getting the Texas State Technical Institute to Harlingen. Over time he will be president of the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, and youngest president ever of the Valley Bankers Association.

The Sun Valley Motel located at 1900 South 77 Sunshine Strip opens for business. It has the appeal of a tropical resort and its 1950s era office is state of the art. It opens with 77 units plus 17 apartment suites. In 1962 George Young, Harlingen Mayor 1966-70, who dies 1990, acquires the business built on part of a 7.3 acre block. Upon his death his wife Mira Young (later Mrs J. Neil Murphy) inherits it. On 11/21/03 it is announced by her that the business will close due to the intense competition of chain hotels that have moved into Harlingen in recent years. Some units have 1 to 8 bedrooms and efficiency apartments. All will be torn down "to make the property more attractive to potential buyers." On 7/20/04 around 5 pm, a fire, caused by an overheated computer that ignited nearby paper, burns out the main office and lobby. Businesses affected were the Vamonos Travel Agency, Baloo's (a bar), and Rack Daddy's billiard emporium.

The adjacent HWY 77 by-pass road soon attracts additional motels. At the southwest corner of Ed Carey Drive and 77 is the 34-unit Judy-Lin Motel in the Frank Smith Subdivision. Just north of the Sun Valley and between Oklahoma and Nevada Streets is the 30 unit Capri Motel. Where Morgan Blvd. meets 77 is a Texaco service station on a site where McDonalds now stands. Behind it, where the El Mercado Shopping complex now sits, is the 40-unit Flamingo Motel. Neighborhood kids loved to swim in the motel’s pool at a cost of 25 cents a day. Frank Dickerson is the motel’s owner with Al Thoren its manager. Nearby is Ralph F. Hayes’s Ralph’s Flamingo Café. The one-story Amberville Apartments with 21 units were to the immediate north of the motel.


Scurlock's Super Market opens in the Coronado Village Shopping Center. About twenty years later it will move to 901 North 13 Street in the Sun Valley Shopping Center.

11/27/57 Maytag Coin Operated Laundry is the first of its type in the city. At its 809 S. Commerce address it is open 24 hours a day every day.

1958 The city's major taxpayers, based on their 1957 assessed values, are CPL, $622,900; St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway, $587,670; Valley Coop Oil Mill, $463,520; H. E. Butt Grocery Co., $348,350; First National Bank, $343,360; Swift and Company Oil Mill, $292,450; Holsum Bakery, $292,050; A.L. Benoist and Company, $284,380; and the South Texas Cotton Oil Mill, $279,490.

Texas Frozen Foods, with Cecil Carruth as president, shares his Harlingen Cold Storage freezing and cold storage plant with processors and packers the Western Shell Fish Co. and Alberti Seafoods Processing Corp.

Harlingen construction permits total $4,142,649.

Valley Ready Mix now employs 60 people, has a $300,000 annual payroll, and $3 million in sales.
Jeff Bell, manager of the Chamber of Commerce, notes that 2,000 to 2,500 visitors to Harlingen spend a minimum of $1.5 million. The Tourist Club membership has grown to 500 this year. It was 250 in 1955.

Harlingen has 90 manufacturing concerns with an annual payroll of $6.5 million. Retail sales in the city are roughly $56 million per year, yet Harlingen family spending income is only $40 million. The difference comes from outside buyers. The Harlingen Air Force Base is a strong economic force. It spends $23,337,000 annually or $1,945,000/month. The breakdown: military payroll $15,498,000; civilian payroll $3,017,000; housekeeping, supplies, etc. $4,822,000. The number of personnel at the base is 4,470, 3,700 of whom are military and 770 civilian.

Vernon Murphy is one of many Harlingen cotton merchants, since the city is the hub of Valley cotton movement. E.D. Griffin is co-owner of Frank Grimsell Seed Co., a supplier to cotton and other growers.

The Coronado Village Shopping Center opens.
2/9/58 A greatly remodeled H.E.B. opens at Jackson and 2nd Streets.
3/16/58 E.C. Breedlove, president of the First National Bank, reports its bank deposits to be $20,551,636, up more than $3 million since a year ago. Harlingen National Bank deposits are $7,987,644.

5/10/59 T.N. Gaines succeeds the ailing Frank Ragsdale as editor of the *Valley Morning Star*. Gaines has been with the Freedom Newspapers for 17 years and at the *McAllen Evening Monitor* the last eight.
5/10/59 General manager Ralph Julliard starts new plant and presses of the *Valley Morning Star* on South 77 Sunshine Strip near the bridge. The plant features a high capacity 9-unit Unitubular Press.

5/15/59 The $225,000 VBH nurses dormitory is dedicated.
1959 Over a 19 year period from 1940 Harlingen bank deposits grow 16.7 times compared to 10.9 times for the Valley as a whole. Comparative figures for the last two years are:

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<th>First National Bank</th>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>$22,450,976</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>$23,583,976</td>
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In a 9-month period bank deposits at the First National will leap to $30 million. Its capital stands at $2.01 million by 9/15/59.

10/8/59 South Texas Lumber Co. becomes South Texas Lumber and Supply Co. under its new owners Herbert Hudson (state senator) from Brownsville, W.A. McBride and Warren Jackson of Harlingen, Sam F. Magee of La Feria, and Larry Crockett of Donna. It operates four yards across the Valley including the one at 502 N. 1st Street. In its very earliest days it was owned by famed financier Jesse Jones then in 1910 sold to the father of Westly and Jim West who would take over its management. In June 1958 it was sold to Seydell and Heneger of Davenport, Iowa.
11/10/59 Ken Weaver, co-owner/manager, of the new Luby's is set to open the $250,000 restaurant which seats 225. It is located at 1402 E. Hwy 77. Ken and his wife Barbara are part of the Luby family, and they sign the lease before Luby’s becomes a corporation.

People

1951 Horace Moore "Tock" Uhlhorn come to Harlingen to join his brother Bill in the construction business. The youngest of six children he was born in Memphis, TN 9/13/26. He attended private Webb High School in Bell Buckle, TN and after serving in the Marine Corp, three years at the U. of North Carolina. He would marry Julie Gallaher in 1952. Their three children are Martha, Tudor, and Julie. He would then manage the Rio Grande Equipment Co. for his father-in-law and farm in Cameron County. He was an active member of St. Albans Episcopal Church, the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce, and the San Benito Rotary Club of which he was president when he was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 1978. He was to die of this malady in November 20, 1980. The 1981 Business Crusade of the Cameron County Unit of the American Cancer Society was dedicated to his memory.

1952 Thomas Henry Morrison, Jr. is administrator of the Valley Baptist Hospital on F Street. In the years to follow this effective leader will oversee the hospital's transition to its modern facilities across town near Ed Carey Drive. By 1956 it is a reality, and in 1962 administrator of the Reber Memorial Radiation Center is added to his title. In 1969 in line with the hospital's continued growth his title becomes executive director. He ably serves the community in this position until departing Harlingen with his wife Violet after 1977. He was also a president of the Texas Health Association and a recipient of the Earl M. Collier Award.

1954 Coming to Harlingen this year, Lou DeLellis, a Phoenix native, was later to be recognized for his community service. He would serve on the City Commission 1981-84, the Utility Rate Commission 1987-92, the Cameron County Emergency Services Department board 1987 and the Water Works Board where he would be chairman in 1994. This Wesley Church member was still going strong at age 68 in 1996.

1955 Oscar Newton (O. N., "Buddy") Bard begins his off and on again affair with Harlingen when he arrives here this year with his wife and children. Born on the Brown and Coleman County Line in Coleman, Texas on 1/23/21 he is to die in Harlingen on 1/25/06 at age 85. In WWII he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps where he rose to sergeant as was chief photographer at various bases, domestic and on Guam. In his long career he was loan and finance manager, educator, business owner, and real estate broker. He participated in civic endeavors, initiated the Independence Day Parades here, and was a member of the CAF. Preceded in death by with wife Sally, he is survived by Harlingen family, sons Mark and Steve Bard, and daughter Robin Datry.

8/26/55 Johnny Martin who came to the Valley in 1926 and worked for the *Valley Morning Star* for over 12 years is to die at age 51. Under 5' in stature, this colorful news photographer had a sixth sense for smelling out news stories. He leaves his wife Louise and a daughter here.
1957  Bob and Marjorie Jackson come to the city. Bob is a native of Superior, Wisconsin having been born there 7/21/21. He and Marge were married in 1945, the same year he was graduated from the University of Wisconsin Medical School. After internship and continued medical work in Kansas City, Pasadena CA, Superior, and Rochester, Minnesota, they came to the Valley where Bob worked two years at the Texas State Chest Hospital. He then went into private practice as a surgeon eventually serving as chief of staff and chief of surgery at the VBH. After closing his practice in 1988, he again took up work in 1994 at Su Clinica Familiar and went to work for the VBMC. Marge was to die of cancer in August 2002. Bob would work at the clinic until August 2007 and was continuing to work with the VBMC until he died on December 23, 2007.

1959  Harry Nigro and his wife Ann O'Donnell Nigro come to Harlingen where the warm climate may offer him relief for his rheumatoid arthritis. Born in New York City in 1910, he only went to school through the fourth grade before quitting to support his family. Once here he went into the business, but his partner committed suicide. Together with his wife they went into the "second-hand" furniture business on E Street by renting a 25' by 25' building for $60 a month. Many customers were Air Force families. Later they moved the store that allowed time payments to Harrison Avenue then opened a second-hand clothing store that quietly but charitably gave away merchandise. Harry partnered with Cecil Carruth for 25 years including a bowling alley on Harrison. After finding a two-story brick building near Fair Park, Harry was able to purchase it for $8,000. Together with help from Dial Dunkin and his bank, it was to become the Boys' Club of Harlingen and expand to five units around town.

3/8/59  Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Anglin, a pioneer Harlingen family, and their five children, among others, celebrate their 61st wedding anniversary.

5/6/59  John W. McKelvey, prominent Harlingen business man, dies at age 52 of an acute heart attack after three weeks in the hospital. Born in Birmingham, Alabama he moved here at age 20 with his father, John William McKelvey. Together they operated a grocer store-meat market in La Feria. Later he became a salesman for Wilson Packing. In the late 1930s he organized the Southwest Packing Co., incorporating it in 1940. He started the Laurel Park subdivision and built the Laurel Park Shopping Center in the early 1950s. In 1948 he built the Little Creek Hotel Courts in the extended lot on the northwest corner of Little Creek and 77 Sunshine Strip with its newly constructed Arroyo Colorado bridge. The lot stays vacant for several years, then it is occupied by the Community Bank after the motel is demolished. His other interests included the Valley Compress, and Warehouse Co., Southwest Cotton Oil Mill, Southland Home Builders-developers of the Green Acres subdivision- and SAB Investment, owners of the McKelvey Building (southwest corner of A and Jackson Streets), the Super Drug Mart and Minimax Foodliner, Inc. (it had stores in Harlingen and Mercedes). On his 600 acre farm in Rio Hondo he raised cotton and citrus. From his residence at 1909 S. Parkwood, McKelvey served as a member of the Capital Improvement Board, Harlingen Chamber of Commerce, Airport Board, and the Board of Equalization. He leaves behind his wife Edith, his mother, three sisters one of whom is Mrs. Jack Busa and nieces and nephews including William Busa.
5/29/59  David Kenny Robertson of the Briggs-Coleman area dies. He came from Plattsmouth, Nebraska in 1925; was a member of the First Methodist Church.

6/16/59  Gaylord Kenny with the railroad 39 years retires at 65. This resident of 817 E. Polk was a native of Mountain Grove, Missouri who came to the Valley in 1920 after taking a job as foreman at $3.65 for a 10-hour day. By 1929 he had worked his way up to engineer. He claims Harlingen had only two paved street in 1920. His family includes his wife Ella Virginia Brown Kenny, children Delphon Charlie, Clarence, and Dona Gayle (Mrs. R.B. Hill). He attended the First Methodist Church.

6/29/59  John F. Trousdale, 64 New Combes Highway, dies. He was a resident of the Valley and later Harlingen since 1910. A longtime CPL employee he ended his working career with the South Texas Icing Service. This First Methodist Church member leaves behind his wife Edith, one son Roy, and two grandchildren.

7/10/59  Henry Isaac Fanhauser, 77, dies. Born in Sardis, Ohio, he moved to Madison, Kansas in his youth and to the Valley in 1920. He was an orchardist, nurseryman and farmer. He leaves two daughters and five sons.

7/15/59  Mrs. Margaret Whitney, a Harlingen resident of 30 years, observes her 103rd birthday. Her sister Elizabeth is 93. They both live at 406 E. Monroe with Mrs. Jennie Newman. Mrs. Whitney dies 12/11/59.

7/17/59  Miss Jennie Case dies. She came to the Valley from Missouri in 1918. She and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Mattie Case who died 5/51, began teaching in Harlingen schools in 1920 and continued to their deaths. Her late brother-in-law, Paul Phipps, was an early Harlingen school superintendent. Her niece is Mrs. Jean Phipps Clore.

8/1/59  Mrs. Liddie (Grandma) McElwain, 82, dies in Kingsville.Born in Missouri in 1877, she came to the Valley over 45 years ago in a covered wagon from Oklahoma. Her husband, J.D. McElwain, a prominent Harlingenite, managed the interests of Lon C. Hill, Jr. for many years. Mrs. McElwain left Harlingen in 1952 to live near her two daughters, Mrs. Edith Barton and Mrs. Daisy Pfeiffer. She leaves one son, Jesse J. McElwain.

8/5/59  Civic leader Roscoe E. Pryor dies at age 71. He was born in Harrison County, Missouri. His business interests involved lumber, leather, manufacturing, grain, flour, feed processing, real estate, and insurance. This First Presbyterian Church member was in numerous civic endeavors including being Rotary Club president, chairman of the Red Cross and Library Boards. He leaves his wife Elsie C. Pryor.

8/7/59  Dr. Nathan Powell celebrates his 90th birthday with wife Minnie. They live at 221 Austin. He retired 40 years ago from the Methodist ministry but not after leading and promoting Methodist education in Texas. This movement led to the establishment of Southern Methodist University in Dallas. While his wife taught school here, he operated a citrus nursery at the present site of their home. The 1933 hurricane ruined the operation. Powell was born in the old Texas plantation, Parker Fort on the Navasota River on 8/19/69 and been in the Valley since 1927. Mrs. Powell is to die at age 87 on 1/14/60 leaving a doctor a widower and leaving behind four daughters. Born in Virginia on 3/18/72, Mrs. Powell lived in Union city, TN and attended Vanderbilt University. She came here in 1932.

11/5/59  Dial Dunkin is named "Boss of the Year." Born in Bristol, OK, he came to the Valley at age 7. He started with the first National Bank of Harlingen, worked 2 ½ years in San Antonio to manage father-in-law's importing business, and returned to Harlingen
and, with others formed, Harlingen State Bank, now Harlingen National in March 1945
He was executive vice-president until 11/51 when he became president.

Education

1950  The school system has 5,662 students. This year sees the final integration of the
Stuart Place School and the Wilson School of Primera into the Harlingen Consolidated
Independent School District.
The Fair Park Elementary at 1406 W. Jefferson will become the David Crockett
Elementary School in 1952. The new Travis Elementary will open at 700 E. Taylor.
The short-lived Colonial Acres Elementary is at 500 Elm, which is near the airport.
This year 19 year old Joanne Cleckler, coming from East Texas with her husband, begins
a 45 year teaching stint with the school district. She retires in June 1957 as assistant
principal at Ben Milam. For many years she taught home economics studies at the junior
high.
Crockett Elementary will open this year, a music building will be added to the high
school, and the Booker T. Washington School will see the addition of two classrooms.
Crockett was designed by Cocke, Bowman & York and built by Frank Parker while M.
H. Connelly was school superintendent and J. Louis Boggus president of the school
board.
1/23/50  Gay Junior High School to accommodate 630 stud-
ents is set to open. It features
a $365,000 ultra-modern auditorium seating 548.
1950-51  With school enrolment jumping to 7,190 the budget escalate to $1,275,284.

7/51  C.E. (Dad) Burnett, 19 years with the Corpus Christi school system, takes the
position of Harlingen School Superintendent. He takes the place of M.H. Connelly, 17
years in the system and superintendent the last four years, who has resigned to take over
an insurance business. Burnett born 7/19/01 in Stephenville, TX has a two year degree
from John Tarleton College, is a UT graduate in 1925, and received an MA degree from
UT in 1936. He married Mary Lucile in 1930.
This same month the school board seeks a site to expand Gay Junior High so it can
sustain a ninth grade and approves the 1951-52 school budget of $1,536,476. By 1952, 20
additional classrooms have been added to Gay.
9/28/51  Don Schmidt is principal of Colonial Acres School for Exceptional Children
(handicapped.) He employs Dan Jackson, a specialist to assist. With the reactivation of
the air field the Air Force takes over Colonial Acres by January 1952 and pays the city
$45,810 for the 6.5 acres and buildings. The students are then dispersed among the
elementary schools in the city.
10/51  The new Board of Education Building opens on Harrison near its intersection with
77 Sunshine Strip while this year the Austin School adds six classrooms and Dishman
two, and two tennis courts are built at the high school.

1952  The city has one high school, one junior high school, and eleven elementary
schools. There are 5,762 students enrolled under a faculty of 240. The high school now
has a 100 member uniformed marching band. The Dishman and Wilson School systems
have been integrated into the new Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District
Supplementing the public school system are two Catholic parochial schools, one Episcopalian and one Lutheran school each. There are three vocational schools and Durham’s Business College with its capacity of 125 students.

1/12/52 W.O. Ferguson and Sons, Brownsville is awarded the $235,442 contract for the addition at Gay Junior. On this date the elementary school population has grown from 4,290 in 1950 to 4,428 in 1951, the junior highs from 704 to 778, while the high school has dropped from 932 to 899.

2/12/52 Parker Construction is awarded the $32,042 contract for the school administration building plus $3,730 to Rio Refrigeration for its air conditioning.

5/4/52 Briggs-Coleman votes 83 to 28 not to consolidate with the HCISD. 225 elementary studies currently attend, while junior and high school students are going to Harlingen which is reimbursed. In August 1952 the HCISD says it no longer has room for the 33 Briggs-Coleman students.

5/21/52 A $750,000 school bond issue passes 588 to 195.

5/23/52 J.B. Chambers, Jr., president of the school board, awards diplomas to 130 high school graduates.

7/18/52 The 1952-53 budget sits at $1,216,849.

9/4/52 Beginning school year enrollment increases to 5,816 including 272 dependents of Air Force personnel.

1952-53 During this school year four classrooms were added to the Dishman School and the same to the Bowie School. The capacity at Gay Junior School was doubled with facilities added for shop, home-making, music, audio-visual education, art, and regular classrooms.

1953-54 For 8,200 students the school budget is set at $1,790,187. Out of every educational dollar $.55 went to the instructional program, $.23 to capital outlay, $.08 ½ to debt service, $.04 1/8 to operation of plant, $.03 ¼ to administration, and the remainder to auxiliary services, plant maintenance, and fixed charges.

1/53 The schools face considerable absenteeism as a mild strain of influenza sweeps the city.

5/24/53 High school graduates number 178.

8/9/53 The school budget is set at $1,216,849, $975,932 of which is for instruction.

8/10/53 The sixteen room Lorenzo de Zavala Elementary School, 1111 North B, is projected by architect Walter Bowman to be mostly ready occupation by September or October and the Harlindale School, at what will become 2400 E. Jefferson, a little later. The latter will be renamed for James Butler Bonham, the Alamo hero, after a vote of the student body of Colonial Acres. It will have sixteen rooms. Horace McGee is to be principal of Zavala and Don Schmidt at Harlindale. At the time C. E. Burnett is school superintendent and J.B. Chambers is president of the school board. One of Bonham’s first teachers is Mrs. Lee Means who will later become president of the HCISD board. The school district is forecasting an increase of 829 students. Seventy three new teachers will include 14 additional to last season. Plans also call for the addition of six rooms to the Crockett Elementary School as well as six to eight rooms to Jefferson Elementary.
The school census this year puts the student population at over 7,000 pupils serviced by 285 professionals. Towards the end of the year a Student Parent Teacher Association is formed at Harlingen High School to generate interest among these constituents. Mrs. E.O. Matz is its first president. In February 1954 the group sponsors the first Cardinal Mardi Gras. Mrs. E.C. Bennett is general chairman of the event.

5/17/54 The U.S. Supreme Court rules that public schools across the nation must be desegregated.

7/8/55 The Harlingen School Board votes to admit the city's black high school pupils now attending the Washington School to Harlingen High School. They number around 11. The sixty other grade students at Washington include 10 from Santa Rosa, La Feria, and Raymondville. The board delays a decision on their status and also that of the three black teachers under contract and surplus to the system if integration occurs. The actual integration doesn't occur until 1957 when the three teachers find employment outside the Valley.

8/8/55 A budget of $1,902,561 is approved by the school board. A real estate valuation of $1.35 per $100 is used this year.

9/21/55 First month school enrollment is up. There are 923 in the first grade classes and 4,736 overall in grades 1 through 6. In junior high are 1,470 and in high school 834 bringing overall enrollment to 7,040.

3/56 The city has one high school, one junior high school, and thirteen elementary schools. The physical plant is valued at $4,170,000. A faculty of 320 serves 10,390 children.

Lamar Elementary School comes online at 1100 McLarry Road. It was constructed in 1955 with C.E. Burnett as superintendent and L.R. Baker as president of the school board.

9/56 The School of the Sacred Heart of Mary Immaculate opens its new brick structure with seven classrooms. It would close in 1971, and the building will be used for its parish religious education program.

8/57 Robert I. (Bob) Irby comes to Harlingen as the High School Choir Director and as part time music director at the First Baptist Church where he will also serve as deacon. Born August 4, 1926 in Memphis TN, he will die in Harlingen 12/15/04 at age 78, leaving his wife of 30 years, Gail, four children, and eight grandchildren. Sadly he had over the years lost his first wife, Beulah, and sons Bill and David. He attended school in Austin and was graduated from Plainview High School. In 1950 he earned a Bachelor of Music degree from North Texas State University and in 1957 a Master of Music Education from the same institution, now North Texas University. From 1957 to 1986 he served the school district where his choirs and students won many awards. After his initial retirement he taught four years at the Marine Military Academy and returned in the school years 1999 through 2001 to teach Advanced Placement Music Theory to senior and junior high school students. The music department established a Bob Irby Scholarship to honor his accomplishments.
12/19/58  Is the date of the first occupation of the new Harlingen High School on E. Marshall. C. E. Burnett is superintendent of schools while Dr. Thomas La Motte is president of the school board. It costs $1,485,000 including the grounds according to Warren W. Ballard, school business manager. On 1/26/59 it is officially dedicated. Speakers are Dr. Ernest H. Poteet, president of Texas College of Arts and Industry. He was superintendent of schools here for 7 ½ years. J. Gordon Nix is to be principal of the school constructed by W. B. Uhlhorn. Additions are made to it in 1961. Bill Uhlhorn had come to Harlingen in 1942. He was a graduate of Southwestern University of Memphis from where he came. A certified property manager he became associated with the Vernon Walsh Realty Co. here. In early February 1946 he opened his own real estate office at 213 S. 1st Street at a time when was secretary–treasurer of the Harlingen Real Estate Board and president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. At that time he, his wife, and one child lived in Finwood Heights.

2/14/59  Joel Hendrix Murray of 1307 E. Filmore dies. He came to the Valley from Stephenville in 1921 and until seven years ago was building superintendent of Harlingen schools.

9/23/59  The HISD is to put forth a $450,000 bond issue. C. M. Callihan is serving his first year as superintendent of schools, having commenced July 1, 1959.

Religious

1950  In the first half of the year St. Paul Lutheran on Tyler enlarges its seating by 50%. A dedication service is held the first Sunday in July. By March 1952 the church is given a permastone exterior, yet 2 ½ acres for future expansion are purchased for $7,500 on Morgan and Washington in 6/51.

1/50  This month sees the formal opening the large Education Building of the First Baptist Church. It cost $118,000 to construct.

9/20/50  The newly completed Temple Beth Israel in the 1700 block of E. Jackson will hold its first high holidays Yom Kippur service according to Larry Rosow, secretary-treasurer. It will not be until June 24, 1951, the Jewish calendar year 5711, that the sanctuary is officially dedicated.

10/1/50  The new rectory and convent building of St. Anthony Catholic Church is opened. The $85,000 structure has a chapel, parlor, music room, community and dining room, and seven bedrooms.

1951  The Trinity Assembly of God Church erects a sanctuary and educational building at the northwest corner of Grimes and 77.

The First Baptist Church renovates its main building at a cost of $40,000. Fred L. Flynn donates air conditioning. This year also the church begins a mission at Los Vecinos.

10/51  The First Methodist Church having grown to nearly 2,000 members and the city population to 26,200, the organization of a second Methodist church is deemed necessary
"to better serve the growing population of Harlingen." Appointed as members to assist the Board of Missions are J.C. Elmore, Jack Cocke, and Day Young. Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Clift donate 2 ½ acres of land, a gift in the memory of Mrs. Clift's family--the James P. Wilsons, pioneers in the area. The location is Austin Street and 77 Sunshine Strip. An old army chapel is moved to the site for temporary use of what is to become the Wesley Methodist Church with 50 charter members. The first services are 4/6/52 with 125 worshippers who use the Conference Traveling Chapel as a temporary building. 11/52 sees the beginning of a parsonage across the street on a lot donated by Mr. and Mrs. Bob Knight and Mr. and Mrs. E.E. Alcott, Jr. It is completed in 2/53. In May a Boy Scout Troop is organized and will grow to one troop and seven Cub Scout dens. The Charter Hall built by 1955 is too small for over 200 members who before year-end welcome the status of a full-fledged church. Four lots across Austin Street are purchased from C.W. Clift, Sr. for use as a parking site. In the spring of 1957 a kindergarten is planned. It has nine pupils its first year, but the Methodist Day School will have 54 by 1959-60 school year. Membership grows to 476 by 1959. This necessitates a new sanctuary. On 2/26/61 ground is broken for the $65,948 structure to be erected by D.J. Eddeblute. Air conditioning by Coastal Engineering will add an additional $13,948 cost. The new sanctuary in the 1400 block of East Austin is opened by Bishop Paul V. Galloway on 12/17/61 at the same time as a chapel has been added. Three months later the discouraging word comes that the HAFB will be closed. Despite the setback, the church persists and in 1/90 has 455 members and a congregation that will continue to grow.

1/13/52 At a prayer meeting at the home of Norman Olson, 1820 High Street, and under the direction of M.H. Wilson, leader, a group launches the Alliance Church. It purchases land for a sanctuary at 1609 New Combes Highway a few months later. Groundbreaking occurs 3/56. Services are conducted in the parsonage chapel 7/52-1/59 at which time the first service is held in the new sanctuary.

1952 This year sees the start of the Parkdale Baptist Church, Southern Baptist Convention, its 19 members pastored by the Rev. J.W. Ware. In April 1956 it will move to a new location at 401 North 21st Street. The church property is valued at $50,000 by its 125 members led by the Rev. W. Roland Williams. This year also sees the formation of the Central Baptist Church.

1953 The Tabernacle Baptist Church is organized.

1954 St. Alban's Church commences building a new larger sanctuary on 5 ½ acres purchased from C.W. Clift, Sr. It is a part of his forty acre farm which he is to subdivide. Building committee chairman Harvey Lee Richards oversees Valley architect William C. Baxter who does the design. Land, architect's fees, and construction total $122,000. On 9/5/54 the first service is conducted in the new church. Over time additional school and other buildings are added such as the A.O.C. Dent Building, named after the Sunday School Superintendent, and the Marian Cocke Buildings. The old sanctuary is sold to St. Anthony's Catholic Church for $55,000. It is presently serving as a youth center. 5/9/54 Ground is broken for the construction of the Wesley Methodist Church on E. Austin as the congregation of the First Methodist Church has outgrown its facilities.
2/29/56 The Valley Missionary Baptist Church organizes under the leadership of the Rev. C.L. Carroll. Its charter members number 13. A year later it dedicates its sanctuary at 2505 North 7th Street. In 1959 it changes its name to the 7th Street Baptist Church. In 1961 it has 55 members.

5/56 The Northside Church of Christ is organized by Pastor Earl Dale bringing on acrimonious admonitions from members of the Church of Christ at 8th and Harrison. A public reply is made 3/5/57 by Bill H. Reeves. The trustees of the new church are G.H. Walters, F. B. Smith, Garland Jarvis, and R. L. McCarthy. Its name is changed to the Pendleton Park Church of Christ about 1965. By 2002 with declining membership it becomes affiliated with the Spanish speaking Church of Christ on Grant Street. Pastor Arnoldo Robledo preaches at the church to help the congregation, but by 2004 its activities cease. In 2006 the simple concrete block chapel, small classroom building and two acres of land are valued at $162,615 as the conservative church has closed its doors forever, its once 95 membership having slipped to about 30 over time.

1957 The First United Pentecostal Church is organized.

1958 Some time prior to this year Mrs. E. D. McDonald and Mrs. David Nickell donate to the Harlingen Methodist Church a 100' bell tower together with Liberty Electronic Bells as a memorial to their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Luther Hill.

4/20/58 The Christian Church sanctuary at 13th and Tyler and designed by Fort Worth architect William C. Bugance, Jr. is dedicated. By 1973 this, an educational unit, parsonage, and youth center whose construction started in March 1969 are valued at $500,000.

1959 The Rev. Leslie Adams Boone to leave his First Methodist Church post for one in El Paso. In WWI he had been a motorcycle dispatch rider. He then attended Southwestern University in Georgetown, TX. After receiving his BA degree he came to Weslaco and was in insurance for a year. This dynamic speaker and daily VMS columnist started ministering in 1922 in Raymondville. He was very active here during the 1933 Hurricane, with the American Legion, and as fire department chaplain. 9/59 The Memorial Baptist Church, Bell Street at Ed Carey, is organized by 23 charter members. By 10/60 the congregation has grown to 95 with an $80,000 sanctuary, $15,000 parsonage, and an educational building.

1959 In this year the Pentecostal Holiness Church is organized. Other religious organizations which form this year are the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Assembly of God Church, and the Trinity Assembly of God.

Organizations-Social, Civic, Service

1950 The Rio Grande Valley Civic Music Association sponsors winter concerts in the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium.
1951  The Hub Club is in action with meetings at the First Methodist Church. Its purpose is "to study the profession of Motherhood so that the children of today may be better citizens of tomorrow." It later evolves into the Child Guidance Club.

2/25/52 American Legion Post 941 with C. B. Smith as commander is chartered in Harlingen. It is an all Black post with 15 veterans as members. It is named the LeRoy Johnson Post after the military man killed in action. His widow attends the ceremony with 300 in attendance including eight members of the Negro post in Edinburg.

1953  John McKelvey donates a land parcel to the Boy Scouts of America, Rio Grande Council. At the corner of South Parkwood Drive and Business 77 in Harlingen, the Council Service Center when completed in May 1956 was furnished by the Sams Foundation.

3/30/53  With 321 men, Harlingen Elks Lodge No.1889 is started. It is the 49th such lodge in the state. Phil Edie is selected as its first exalted leader. On 5/27/53 the lodge's woman's auxiliary, the Drove of Does, is initiated. At this time the lodge is meeting on the third floor of the Matz Building. Exalted leaders in he 50s were to be R.M. Julliard, George B. Russell, C. Worth Wood, Hawthorn Phillips, J.W. Kirksey, Jr., and Joel William Elles. In 1960 the group buys 5 ½ acres adjacent to the arroyo at 77 Sunshine for $10,000 from McKelvey Industries. Adams Brothers General Construction of Brownsville builds the 20,000 square foot structure, which has an adjacent Olympic size pool. Dedication of the new building is 9/16-18/60. By this time its membership has risen to 756.

1955  This year the major men's business/service organizations are the East Side Kiwanis, Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimists, Lions, and JayCees. In November the former group sponsors the General Platoff Don Cossack Chorus and Dancers. Matinees cost 50 cents, reserved seats are $1.50 and $2.50.

11/23/55 The Kiwanis names public health nurse, Mrs. J.C. (Martha Susan) Lewis, as "Harlingen Woman of the Year." She started nursing in 1935 and after 1940 spent much time at the Well Baby Clinic. Her tenure has since a sharp drop in infant mortality figures. In 1976 the Nine Thirty Club of Harlingen, Texas, formerly the Child Study Club, recognized her with a photographic portrait hung in the Cameron County Clinic near Lon C. Hill Pool. This was the Well Baby Clinic Building. She is noted as "Pioneer Health Service Nurse Humanitarian and Founder of the Well Baby Clinic."

1956  The Harlingen Art Forum starts. Also starting this year with 22 charter members is the VBMC Auxiliary.

The Boy Scouts of America erect its headquarters at the southeast corner of South Parkwood Drive and 77 Sunshine.

The Theta Omega Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha sorority initiates its first of 48 annual La Posada dances held the first week in December. This is a charity fund raiser which raises $8-10,000 annually for such causes as scholarships for Harlingen and San Benito senior students, the Boys and Girls Clubs, Loaves and Fishes, Family Crisis and Maggie's House.
In what will evolve into an organization and then later come under the direction of the City of Harlingen Arts and Entertainment Division, national touring company theatrical productions are brought to the Municipal Auditorium.

In this year the Cardettes are organized at the Harlingen High School. The function of the girls’ group is both to stimulate school spirit and to perform at sporting events.

5/14/59 The Little Theater of Harlingen presents "You Can't Take It with You" at Richard's Gold Room. This group was formed in the mid 1950s and was to disband in the 1960s when the airbase closed.

6/21/59 The Broadway Theater League, a project of the Harlingen Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees), announces a season offering four productions in an effort to expose local audiences to exciting Broadway productions. Charles Feldman is chairman of the League. His family owns a chain of alcoholic beverage retail stores in the Valley. The endeavor has its ups and downs. By the 1980s the C of C takes over the handling of this enterprise with the production of "Chorus Line" being its first show. After the revamping of the Municipal Auditorium in the 1990s, the City Parks Dept. assumes responsibilities for the booking and scheduling of productions. [See Broadway Theatre League link.]

This is the last year for the Rio Grande Valley Music Association. The various cities in 1960 form individual organizations such as the Harlingen Community Concert Association. A New York outfit such as the Broadway Theater Alliance, Inc. then books programs for each organization.

**Miscellaneous**

1950 The Harlingen Country Club quickly raises its membership to more than 350. It is the owner of a two acre $125,000 property adjacent to the municipal golf course on M Street. This facility can accommodate 300-400 people. A large swimming pool is one of its amenities.

2/23/50 "The Saga of Six Shooter Junction" is presented in the Municipal Auditorium by The Sunday Nighters, an interdenominational group. With a narration by Jim Sloan the musical and dramatic production is directed by Charles Bounds.

1951 This year Architect John York wins the national AIA Award for his design of the modernistic W.B. Uhlhorn House at 1801 South Parkwood. It is the only house in South Texas ever to win this award.

Professional baseball continues in the city with an upgrade. In this year and the next two the team will be Class B in the Gulf Coast League, then for two years (1954-55) the same in the Big State League.

1/53 Lew Bray, Valley theater owner and citrus grower, organizes "Life Begins at 40" Golf Tournament. The first tournament is 4/53 with 79 entries.

3/11/54 Stock is being issued for Harlingen Baseball Club, Inc. E. J. Waitman is president of the corporation and Forrest W. Runnel secretary.

2/55 Harlingen is the first city in Texas to have direct long-distance telephone service from customers' homes.
1956 The Bougainvillea Trail promoters in order to publicize their endeavors adopt an official song, "Bougainvillea Trail", by Effa Stark Sanders and M. Flora Todd.

1959 The Harlingen Art Forum hosts the first Beachcombers Fine Art Show on South Padre Island. The annual show will celebrate its 45th anniversary in July 2004. Dr. John E. Westburg, a Pan Am history professor, contacts city manager Douglas Henslee about a plan for a Rio Grande Valley Museum.