Decade 1960 to 1969

Development

1960  U.S. Census puts population at 40,765 plus 33 late corrections. This is an increase of 17,527 or 75.45% from 1950. There are 9,874 homes in the city. The city which in 1910 encompassed 1.99 sq. mile now has 31 sq. miles. Sometime in the 1960s the U.S. telephone systems start to utilize area codes as preface to local numbers. South Texas is assigned 512. In 1992-93 this is changed to 210 as the number of telephones escalates throughout Texas. In 97-98 this changes again, this time to 956.

3/10/60  The Harlingen Chamber of Commerce honors the 10,000th navigation school graduate. Jack Calhoun, chairman of the Chamber's highway committee is working on preliminary plans for the Los Indios Bridge.

3/20/60  Numerous subdivisions are being developed at this time. They include: 60 acres between 7th and 13th Streets north of the high school by O.R. Flinn; Park Terrace by Art Hausman with 127 lots between 25th and Morgan; Citrus Terrace No.5 with 72 lots between 21st and 25th and alley N. of Washington and S. of Adams by the Rio Improvement Co.; Casual Acres, 37 lots Marshall Avenue north of Casual Avenue by O.R. Flinn; Riverside No.4, 35 acres on Lamar, north of Arroyo and between Henderson and Clark Street by Arroyo Estates, Inc; Tropical Acres No.2, 34 lots north and south of Flynn between 1st and the drainage ditch by Leo McLeod; Whitehouse Circle No.3, 28 lots north of Susan and between W. Whitehouse Circle by the Dr. Whitehouse Circle Corp.; Arroyo Shores, 10 lots E. Harrison at the Arroyo on survey 301 by the Tri-County Corp.; Millerborg, 2 lots south side of Ed Carey at the MoPac tracks by C.W. Simpson.

8/8/61  Businesses on South 77 Sunshine Strip protest lack of city water and other utilities.

1962  The Harlingen Air Force Base closes and throws the city into an economic slump of major proportions. Between April and December the military complement at the basedrops very sharply as does civilian employment. Pushed by George Young the three year "Go Harlingen" campaign commences. The Farmers Home Administration and Veterans administration takes 250 homes off the depressed housing market. Harlingen real estate agents agree to spend $100,000 on national advertising. 15 to 18 metropolitan newspapers located in northern tourist area are to carry ads. Some 800 wood frame military houses are offered for $5,850 complete with city lot. These are aimed at those 62 and older and promoted with the slogan "Fifty Eight Fifty." 70,000 inquiries are made for the one and two bedroom homes. A sizeable neighborhood around West Matz Street becomes a retirement area The next 400 homes are priced at $9,000 each and 1,000 other houses for less than $14,000 are offered. The Harlingen Industrial Foundation buys 400 acres of land from the school district, marks then up $100 and sells them to local builders who construct about 200 additional houses with prices ranging from $11,500 to 13,500 for house and lot.

1/27/62  The Harlingen Industrial Development Corporation is chartered. Incorporators are J.L. Boggus, E.C. Breedlove, and D.B. Dunkin. One million shares at $1 per share are
offered, the purpose: to acquire land and buildings for industrial purpose to meet the 
needs of firms that may be interested in locating in the city. Numerous prominent 
Harlingen businessmen subscribe.

4/5/62 Issued is the Harlingen Handbook: Answers for Industry. The 71 page book is 
hardbound and comprehensive.

1963 An accelerated campaign of advertising brings Mid-West retirees to Harlingen. It is 
the "Go Harlingen" ad campaign wherein $100,000 is raised for the enticement of 
100,000 people. From 5,800 inquiries, 576 houses are purchased putting $2.6 million 
back into the economy. David Allex, who will become C of C manager in 1964 is a key 
mover. For many years he will help the momentum of the chamber.

1/31/64 The Missouri Pacific Railroad ceases its Valley Pullman sleeper service on the 
line from the Valley to Houston due to lack of business. Only chair cars will remain.
2/7/64 Ed Carey Drive widening, a $131,000 project, is expected to start in 6 to 9 months. 
4/17/64 The Port of Harlingen is to be expanded. There will be three separate docks, one 
for bulk fertilizer. The cost is $235,120.

7/14/65 Downtown merchants and the city combine to fund $25,000 improvements and 
beautification to a 4 ½ block area along Jackson Street. This includes a change of parallel 
parking to angle parking.

1966 The first recreational vehicle caravan rally is brought to town.

1967 The 300 or so members of the Harlingen Country Club offer the city, actually the 
Harlingen Development Corp., its burned out clubhouse and 3 ½ acres next to the 
municipal golf course plus $133,650 for the 150 acre site of the former Harvey Richards 
Field. Matt F. Gorges is secretary of the club at the time and also a member of the HDC. 
This year Hank Stanley (d.1999) lays the foundation for the RGV's Winter Texan 
Industry which by 2004 will pour an estimated $329 million annually into the Valley's 
economy. Stanley, a realtor who was suffering losses due to the HAFB closure, leases 
city land at the site of the old base. The site is exactly in the middle of where the TSTC 
campus now exists. He then offers trailer and RV hookup pads, 150 the first year, at his 
Fun N Sun RV Resort. By year three, this has grown to 550. He also worked with travel 
trailer manufacturers to bring touring caravans to the Valley. This became a nucleus for 
new customers. The C of C helped by launching a promotional campaign aimed at 
turning Harlingen into a destination for Midwestern snowbirds. In the early 70s 
"Smokey" Boyle, a lay minister who preached at area RV parks, is credited with 
originating the term "Winter Texan."

The concept at progressive parks was to provide activities for leasers. These included 
exercise and aerobics classes, dances and live music, arts and crafts, swimming, etc. By 
1981 Stanley's resort has outgrown its Harlingen site, so he opens a new one just over the 
city line in San Benito. It offered 1,300 trailer hookup sites, making it the largest such 
park in Texas. In 1995, Hank and Joan Stanley sold the park to a corporation. By 2004 
the Valley RV parks can serve up to 60,000 units.
1968  The Confederate Air Force, an organization formulated to preserve World War II military aircraft in flying condition, outgrows its facilities at Rebel Field, Mercedes, where one of its founders Lloyd Nolan runs a flying service, and moves to several hangars and buildings on the north end of the old Aerial Gunnery School facilities at the Harlingen airport. This has been facilitated by the $25,000 September 1967 fundraising campaign spearheaded by Dr. George Willeford and Don Bodenhammer. This year E.E. Alcott and Bob Knight sell an undeveloped section north of the Luby’s on 77 Sunshine to Clyde Fincher, M.H. Connelly, C.G. Salisbury, and H.G. Chaffin. When Alcott and Knight and their sons in 1970 organize Redelco, Inc. to develop land, they will repurchase the properties and improvements in 1982 with the exception of the Humble Oil and Refining Co. station with James Gilbreath as franchisee. It had previously been sold.

Agriculture/Ranching

1960  Sometime around 1926 or earlier the Harlingen Gin Co. came into existence at 321 West Jefferson Avenue. In May 1927, the partnership of Davis Wade of San Benito, Fleming Newton of Jacksonville, TX, and Jesse N. Elrod, Harlingen purchased the facility, and it became the Wade-Newton-Elrod Gin Co. By 1935 it was simply the Elrod Gin Co. In 1937 produce shipper Louis Cullen purchased a 1/3 share in the gin from the San Benito Bank and Trust which had acquired it when Wade defaulted on a loan. In 1942 Cullen and his son-in-law and partner S. Eugene (Gene) Thompson purchased Elrod's 1/3 share. Cullen and Thompson had become large buyers, brokers and shippers specializing in onions, cabbage, corn, and tomatoes under the Rio Grande's Best Brand label. They were also land owners and growers in the area north of the airport. Newton's 1/3 share was conveyed to Horace Etchinson of McAllen in 1943. The Elrod Gin was to cease operations in 1960.
The decade begins with a Valley-wide infestation of the Mediterranean Fruit Fly on citrus. This necessitates an all-out pest eradication program.

9/14/61  Hurricane Carla causes $1,183,000 in losses to Valley citrus and vegetables. While it hit closer to Corpus Christi, Harlingen had strong winds and a September rainfall total of 8.3". The storm occurred six weeks after heavy rains caused a 25 to 35% loss in the cotton crop being harvested. Harlingen's August rainfall totaled 4.52".

1/11/62  Eleven hours of temperatures below 28 degrees wipe out the vegetable crop in the Valley and five hours below 26 causes widespread citrus icing. Later 5 to 35% of the trees were deemed killed but up to 50% of the citrus production lost. Homes sustained frozen and busted pipes. The blue norther blasts its way to Veracruz and hurts its orange crop. The 1962-63 winter is another bad one. Temperatures in the mid-20s occur several times in January 1963. 4,000 acres of lettuce are affected and 15,800 acres of early-planted tomatoes are wiped out.

2/10/63  Niagara Chemical Division of Texas commences its blending plant on South Commerce. To employ 20, it will be capable of mixing 20 tons/hour of finished product,
primarily nitrophosphates. It has stored and mixed chemicals on the site since 1946. In 1966 it discontinued its pesticide operations but blended fertilizer there until 1968. The sheds were razed in 1970.

6/64 Oscar Mayfield and sons of Rio Hondo bring in the season's first bale of cotton. The crop is running about two weeks behind schedule as June draws to a close.

1960s (late) As the decade drew to a close one of the issues which impacted the economic viability of smaller gins was the instituting of EPA regulations regarding cotton gin emissions into the air. Many gins discovered that it would be uneconomical to make the necessary capital expenditures necessary to bring the gins into compliance. Closure was the next logical step.

9/20/67 Hurricane Beulah decimates an estimated 90% of the citrus. On September 26, 1967 following Hurricane Buelah, the USDA releases a more studied estimate of citrus losses. Grapefruit loss are put at 50% and oranges at 33%.

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

1960 (early) Anzalduas Dam south of Mission at Granjeno is completed. The $7 million structure will store 4,000 acre-feet and can divert flood waters in the Rio Grande into a floodway system.

1960 The Lon C. Hill Park swimming pool is constructed at 601 North L Street. McKelvey Park is started. Renovation work takes place at the municipal auditorium. Col. Edward L. Baw assumes the position of Port Director and will hold it until he resigns on 2/28/75. He retired in 1959 from the Air Force and the HAFB where he was installations officer. He was later to draw up a master plan for the port.

In the golden anniversary year of Harlingen's founding the Police Department has 46 employees, including 11 in administration which includes three meter maids, four in investigation, four in the traffic department, three patrols of seven men each for a total of 21, two in parking meter maintenance, one janitor, and two night watchmen.

4/26/60 In honor of the city's 50th Anniversary, a time capsule is buried at City Hall. The capsule contains color slides taken by the Tip-O-Tex Camera Club of various city activities. Lon C. Hill, Jr. and Miss Paul Hill, children of the city's developer Lon C. Hill, sign the document. Gov. Price Daniels officiates.

1/3/60 A new sewerage treatment plant is being constructed near the Arroyo Colorado at Taft just south of Commerce.

4/30/60 The Harvey Richard Municipal Airport is rededicated with its $70,000 terminal building which is but part of a $400,000 improvement program. Congressman Joe M. Kilgore gives the dedicatory address. Trans-Texas Airways is to move here on 7/1/60.

5/20/60 The city water works announces plans to build a 90 acre reservoir to serve West Harlingen. This will later be adjacent to Dixieland Park.

5/22/60 Windsor Park at the southwest corner of Filmore Avenue and 77 Sunshine Strip is put into use. The 1.9 acre area had been dedicated to the city by the developers of the Windsor Place Addition in 1926.
6/17/60  At a cost of $481,271 the second sewerage plant, this at the end of E. Harrison and about five miles from town, is put into operation with the addition of 4 ½ miles of piping. Its normal capacity will be 4 million gallons per day. Kenneth R. Caldwell is director of public works.

6/25/60  The Amistad Dam Bill is approved for the $100 million project and is signed by President Eisenhower 7/7/60. The U.S. share is $71,846,000 for the project which is actually expected to cost $109,554,000.

6/60  A contract is let to construct Spur Road 329 (now 374) to connect Expressway 77 with Expressway 83.

7/22/60  The Woman's Club is evicted from the Woman's Building at 201 E. Madison. They have used it for 30 years, but now it will be turned over to the Harlingen Tourist Club which commences to use it 11/16/60. In November architect Alan Taniguchi, a Harlingen area resident, is employed to design a tourist clubhouse for $100,000 or less to be in the southeast corner of Bowie Park. This will become the Casa del Sol.

11/6/60  What was to become a significant episode in Harlingen folklore occurred this date. Lyndon B. Johnson flew into Harlingen shortly before the national elections for president would occur. He was John F. Kennedy's running mate for the vice-presidency. At Harvey Richards Field among the 1,500 people there, he was unceremoniously greeted by political opponents who waved critical signs and voiced anti-Johnson remarks. Harlingen subsequently voted Republican in a narrow Democratic victory nationally. Perhaps the military service people in Harlingen made it politically unique in the Valley. When later the announcement was made that the Harlingen Air Force Base was to be closed, some here ascribed it to vindictiveness on LBJ's part due to his ill treatment on his visit to the city.

12/60  Fred L. Paschall, owner of a retail clothing store, is elected Mayor to serve 12/15/60 to 12/11/62. J.J. (Chuey) Rodriguez and R.W. Liston are elected Commissioners.

12/31/60  Construction valuations for the year at $5,189,775 are the second highest in city history after the $6,329,072 of 1957. 281 new residences were built and commercial valuations totaled $1.3. The city itself has total fixed assets of buildings and equipment used in city operations of $2,331,358.

1/10/61  The sanitary landfill operation is planned to move further east on Harrison (FM 1595) with one year’s space left in the current one.

3/19/61  The first public announcement is made that the Harlingen Air Force Base is to be closed. By 11/15/61 lawyer Jack Skaggs, who is also Cameron County Democratic Party Chairman, along with Marshall Bingham, city manager, are selected to go to Washington to work politically on the base's deposition. Jack Skaggs, Jr. is to die prematurely at age 56. This St. Albans member was a graduate of a Lincoln High School, San Antonio, started at UT only to join the Merchant Marine Service in WWII before resuming his studies and receiving a law degree from UT in 1950. This was the year after marrying Ruth Tucker of San Antonio. He served in many community organizations and chaired the County March of Dimes Drives before leaving his widow and three sons.

5/19/61  The city moves its equipment, some from the 7th Street and Southern Pacific location, to a new 3.9 acre site, the former Mobil Oil one, on South Commerce.
W.B. Uhlhorn is the low bidder at $91,290 for the new tourist center, but when heating and air conditioning are factored in the cost rises to $134,368. The Girl Scouts using the frame building at the planned site are moved to the northwest side barracks currently used by the tourists. The round domed, thin-shelled concrete roof spans 120', giving it a seating capacity of 1,200. It has a stage and catering style kitchen. The C of C has a contest to name the new facility. Casa del Sol, submitted by Mrs. Charles Binny, is selected over Easterling Hall and El Rondondo. When this event, tourist and recreation center at 221 E. Madison is dedicated on 2/11/62, Finis Easterling, a City Commissioner at the time of its conception, is recognized. Carl Searle and the 85 piece HHS band are in attendance.

The State of Texas passes its first sales tax set at 2%.

Nearly complete is the new 1.887 mile stretch of FM 507 north from business 77 to the HAFB. It is named Morgan Blvd. in honor of Col. John R. Morgan, the first commanding officer at the Harlingen Army Airfield in 1941 and who was to retire in Harlingen.

Fire Chief W.T. Hamilton, after 10 ½ years in the post, resigns to take a Texarkana post.

An underground clear water well with a one million gallon storage capacity is constructed at the Dixieland Plant while a permit is obtained for the proposed area' off-channel reservoir. Substantial water lines are installed to service the F Street and Ed Carey Drive areas.

A severe freeze on this date and the two following days causes 610 water meters to be frozen and require replacement. Forty-seven breaks in main service lines also incur. Costs accumulated are $10,450. The lowest temperature registered was 19° for ten hours.

Harvey Richards Municipal Airport is operating. Four flights arrive daily while six flights depart. The north-south runway is 4,950'; the NW-SE one 3,400'. It also has a third turf runway, taxiways, an apron, several hangars, and a terminal building. Operators at the field are Elliot Dusting Service, Elliot Aviation Company, Valley Flying Service, and Young Flying Service. In 12/67 the facility is to close as the airlines move to the much larger runways of the former HAFB.

This year, Sam Lozano, a school teacher, becomes the third Hispanic ever elected to the City Commission. In 1970 he is elected mayor, the city's first Hispanic in that position. Though 1987 he serves 20 years on the City Commission and is elected mayor again 1983 into 1987.

The City Library stacks now contain 40,000 volumes having a circulation of 148,000. This is the year Ola Sandlin first volunteers for the library. On 6/4/64 she will be employed there part time becoming fulltime circulation librarian beginning 7/1/65. On 4/21/75 she will become acting librarian then director from 2/6/78 to 6/10/84. Retiring 8/31/98 she will act as lay representative to the Cameron County Library System for at least the next ten years.

It costs the city $47,000 for annual brush hauling. The January freeze overloads the system.

The city conducts its first property re-assessment in ten years. This is ill-timed due to the HAFB closing.
4/62 At this time the city has 16 parks encompassing 244.7 acres.
5/18/62 The Expressways 77/83 interchange at the end of West Harrison is nearly complete. Fill for its elevated sections came from the new Water Works reservoir at Dixieland Park.
6/30/62 Service on MOPAC's overnight Eagle is discontinued.
9/23/62 Robert Edward "Mike" Gilbert, who has been a manager for Interstate Theatres, is appointed Harlingen Postmaster to replace acting PM Arthur Purdy, in that position since 11/30/61. Gilbert will also be acting postmaster, until 6/64 when he is made permanent. Gilbert will serve until 1982 when he dies of a heart attack. He is later followed by Mary Martinez. Born in Linn, MO he moved here from Electra, TX in 1920 just in time to enter the first grade. In 1930 he was an usher for Interstate Theatres and by 1938 becomes the manager of the Rialto and Strand. In the US Army in World War II he goes to OCS in December 1942 and is discharged in 1946. In 1947 he will form Company B of the National Guard in Harlingen. Again with Interstate he becomes the manager of the Acadia, Rialto, Grande Theaters and the Rio in Mercedes. Gilbert is involved in numerous civic organizations such as the scouts, Lions, and PTA. This Catholic married Virginia Runyon of Brownsville and had two daughters. She was the daughter of famed photographer Robert Runyon. During the Reagan administration Mike died in 1982 after a heart attack.

9/28/62 The State Highway Department approves HWY 77 widening from Harrison to 500' south of Ed Carey.
11/28/62 A packaged 200-bed Civil Defense hospital arrives in Harlingen for storage. It is to be used in a major emergency. This is at the height of the "Cold War" wherein the U.S. and the Soviet Union were rattling their nuclear sabers.
12/16/62 Harlingen's Urban Renewal Project over the last 10-12 months, with owner permission, has torn down 70 unoccupied huts and has 150 more on its list, this according to City Manager Marshall Bingham.
12/20/62 Mike Hodes succeeds Fred Paschal, who has been mayor the last two years. Hodes has been serving on the City Commission since December 1959. Hodes serves as mayor 12/12/62 to 12/13/66. M.T. (Mike) Hodes had come to Harlingen with his wife Maybell Hilderbrandt Hodes in 1948 after spending four years in Corpus Christi. Maybell, a native of Bellville, TX (b. 7/27/12) had gone to Houston where she married Mike in 1934. After he died in 1975 she was to marry Oren B. Troop in 1978. She died in Harlingen at age 91 on 1/26/04. She was a longtime member of the First Methodist Church and the Harlingen Country Club.

2/6/63 The Harlingen State Adult Mental Health Clinic, one of four in the state, has an open house to publicize its several weeks existence at the old HAFB. Dr. Ignacio Magana is director of a small staff of psychiatrists and clinicians.
2/20/63 The Texas legislature finally agrees on measures to allow the federal government to establish the Padre Island National Seashore. Rep. Menton Murray of Harlingen is a leader in this effort.
2/21/63 A City Commission resolution to establish a regional airport in Harlingen elicits protests from McAllen and Brownsville interests. The commission also asks the county to
purchase right-of-way land to widen Ed Carey Drive between the Expressway and 77 Sunshine Strip.

1/16/64 A Harlingen Convention Center, possibly to be built at Victor Park, was one of three proposed bond issues defeated.
2/11/64 According to City Building Inspector Charles Oakes the city has condemned 62 structures in the last 12 months in a "do it yourself" renewal program.
2/13/64 Myrlin O. Johnson begins his term as judge on the 107th District Court. He will serve until 12/31/74.
2/15/64 The 77 Sunshine Strip widening from Harrison Avenue south to Carolina Avenue is about to start.
4/17/64 Arroyo Colorado Navigation District awards contract for additional facilities at Port Harlingen. The work includes three separate docks, two of which will be extensions of existing docks, and the other designed to handle bulk fertilizer. The latter will have a receiving hopper and 160' conveyor to the 5,000-ton capacity warehouse. The entire project will cost $281,000 and take seven months to complete. $131,000 will come from Public Works Grants, $50,000 from accumulated reserve funds for improvements, and $100,000 from revenue bonds issued by the district.
6/24/64 The City Water board is to develop a new lake. It paid $54,550 for 97 acres. The 13' deep reservoir will be along Dixieland Road.
8/27/64 $103,952 has been recommended to be spent on the Municipal Auditorium. 80% of this would go towards air conditioning.
11/12/64 Ray Carter has been serving as fire chief.

1/3/65 Kika de la Garza becomes the Congressman for Texas Congressional District 15 and will serve this constituency until 1983 when district lines are redrawn to create Congressional District 27 into which Harlingen will fall.
2/27/65 The US Post Office moves back into its newly remodeled facility on Van Buren.
3/2/65 City Manager Marshall Bingham is fired by the Commissioners after a strange scrape with the law in Austin.
3/6/65 Voters to decide on 139 acre sale of former HAFB land to the Coleman Foundation of Chicago and MMA for $70,000 of which $55,000 would go back to MMA. This includes 28 buildings.
7/7/65 William L. Somers, formerly of Dennison, is hired as city manager. This Lubbock native has a 1950 degree in law from Baylor University.
7/28/65 Local History Committee will ask the City Commission on 8/4 to help fund renovations for the former HAFB building deeded to it by Howard E. Butt for use as a museum.
8/65 By a four to one margin Harlingen voters approve a $1.25 million bond issue to convert the former HAFB to a major jet international airport. The stacks at the library now hold 45,000 books. The Municipal Auditorium is air-conditioned.
8/27/65 Local contractor R. D. Haines wins with low bid of $161,150 to erect a new police station for the city.
9/9/65  Mr. E. C. Breedlove retires after 20 years service on the Water Board. At age 75 he has reached the prescribed limit of tenure for a Board Trustee. W.A. (Bill) McBride is elected in his stead.

1965  The Water Board approves a contract with the State Highway Department for the latter to use Dixieland Reservoir excavation soil for the construction of HWY 83 and Spur 329. The Water Works is replacing the old cast iron pipes in its system at a rate of 12,000 feet per year.

1965 (late) Roy Cavazos joins the Harlingen Police Force to become one of its 30 men working out of its Jefferson Street office. When he retires, 5/4/96, 30 ½ years later the force has grown to 100 individuals including his son J.D. Cavazos.

4/14/66 The proposed movement of the airport from Harvey Richards Field to the former HAAF is opposed by some, but the economics are there as well as the future of an industrial park at the site.

1966  Started October 1965 the $200,000 Spanish Colonial architecture Police Station at 1102 S. Commerce is completed while George Young is Mayor. He is to serve from 12/13/66 to 12/8/70. Under him the municipal airport moves into the former HAFB and the Confederate Air Force is invited to establish its facilities at the airport. Tyler Street is widened under his watch, and the title is cleared for the beginning of the Marine Military Academy at the old HAFB housing and support area. 1966-70. Funds have come from the 1964 bond issue. The combination headquarters and jail connected by a breezeway features three TV monitoring devices. Marshall Rousseau is police chief.

1966-70  Le Moyne Gardens, low income city housing is converted from the old military family housing it was. The Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel is purchased by the city (1968), renovated (1970-71) by the Harlingen Housing Authority, and converted to Heritage Manor, a retirement facility for low income senior citizens.

2/66  The City Commission passes an ordinance setting up a board to organize and direct activities of a museum.

10/21/66 The latest addition to the park system will be J.J. Victor Park to be constructed on land donated by the Victor family. At this time the city has 16 parks on 292 acres.

12/2/66  After serving as chairman of the Water Board from 1945, J. Lewis Boggus dies. M. Day Young is then chosen as chairman and T. Howard Anderson elected to the board. System assets at this time are $4,436,104. The city's share of a Valley-wide assessment to construct a waste water diversion canal in Mexico is $14, 868. The El Morillo Drain will subsequently remove considerable salinity from the Valley water source.

1967  The Casa de Amistad, immediately east of the Municipal Auditorium, is erected. This metal building serves for business shows, exhibitions, wedding and other receptions, quinceneras, etc. In 1993 it receives a major overhaul with a new extended reception front, rest rooms, insulation and sound-proofing.

The Tony Butler Pro Shop at the Municipal Golf Course is established.

This year, at the request of Verna McKenna, Howard Butt donates the old HAFB brig (built in 1952) to house a gun collection which has been donated. Thus begins the Rio Grande Valley Museum, an idea first contemplated in the late 1950s. After much cleaning and the collection of artifacts, the museum has its formal opening in March 1967. In December of that year, the Rio Grande Valley Historical Museum Association is
organized. Mrs. Charles Washmon chairs the fund-raising committee which raises about $184,000 to create the RGV Historical Museum Complex. In 1974 the Hill House is moved there after having been restored in 1971. In 1973 the remains of the Paso Real Inn are moved there and in 1976 the old F Street hospital comes to its final resting place. A 1967 report proposes that the Dixieland Water Plant and Reservoir be brought up to a 24 million gallon per day capacity at a cost of $1,970,000, not including distribution mains and an 1 ½ million gallon elevated tank, the latter to cost $404,900. In September residents are informed that water rates will be raised 21% for necessary filtration and sewerage improvements.

9/20/67 Hurricane Beulah wreaks havoc with its flooding. At its peak the Arroyo Colorado water gauge registers 43.3 feet elevation whereas flood stage is 28.0 feet. The city sustains major damage to its infrastructure. The water system loses mains across Rangerville Road. The T.B. Hospital is evacuated of patients and the Valley Baptist Hospital is threatened. On 3/11/68 the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development will approve a grant for $878,100 to the water system to effect repairs.

10/67 Rio Paving is lengthening the main runway at the Harlingen Industrial Airpark to 6,350’, a $751,496 job being split 50-50 by the Federal Aviation Administration and the City of Harlingen.

10/19/67 Commissioners to have citizens vote 12/12 on instituting a 1% sales tax for the city.

11/10/67 Water bills sent out this date increase by an average of 21% over previous ones.

1968 The Harlingen Community Center, 201 E. Madison, is erected on the location where the Woman’s Building once stood. It serves the Tourist Club members and well as others. This year John Clary commences a four-year stint as city manager. He will then resign to accept a similar position in Texarkana. The Youth Service Office, 1201 W. Van Buren is erected.

6/28/68 A Harlingen branch of the Small Business Administration (SBA) is opened at 219 E. Jackson.

8/68 At the sacrifice of considerable greenery Commerce Street from Tyler to 77 Sunshine Strip is widened to a 60’ width.

9/17/68 Voters authorize $1 1/2 million in general obligation bonds in order to complete the Dixieland water projects. Groundbreaking took place one year later. The total project cost would be $2,117,200, of which $878,100 would come from H.U.D.

10/12/68 Funds are approved for the City of Harlingen Housing Authority to reconstruct 200 apartments at Le Moyne Gardens. It was originally built to house military families. Funds were also received to remodel the old Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel for a facility to house the elderly.

1969 In this year Omar Lucio is a patrolman with the Harlingen Police Department. He will over time rise to the rank of captain with the outfit in which he started his law enforcement career. A native of San Benito, he will go on to hold a dual major degree from Pan American University, a degree in criminal justice and a degree in sociology. He will first be elected to the position of Cameron County Sheriff for a four-year term to
commence January 1967, get defeated for a second term, then once more occupy the office starting 1/1/05.

2/24/69 With work having commenced 1/26/68 the new Harlingen Airport terminal is dedicated.

**Business/Commercial/Industrial**

1960s (early) Wally Van Wyk with his realty office located at the tip of 13th and North Sunshine Strip eyes the property to his east. The Flamingo Motel and adjacent apartments are owned by Fred Flynn and two associates. With two partners Van Wyk buys the property and a few years later sells the south 55,000 sq. ft. section having the Texaco Station on it to Al Padilla who is to build on it a McDonald’s Restaurant. Still later the motel and apartments will be torn down to make way for the upscale shopping center named El Mercado. In August 1982 the partners sell the complex to Felix Madrazo of Mexico.

3/10/60 Bill Pletcher of the Chamber of Commerce tourist committee notes that within five years Harlingen's tourist business has increased from $1 million to the current $5 million a year. The Tourist Club membership is up to 600. Fourteen new shuffleboard courts are added to the facility run by the Chamber.

4/60 Hygeia opens a $250,00 ice cream plant. In this year it has nearly 300 employees, a payroll of $1.2 million, and its milk purchases are over $2 million. It distributes over 51/2 million gallons of milk and ice cream each year.

Harbenito Broadcasting Co. has McHenry Tichenor as president, J.C. Looney of Edinburg (and a stockholder) as vice-president, and Troy McDaniel is secretary-treasurer and general manager of the station.

This year Edward (Bert) Alcott, Jr. and Bob Knight, Jr. form the partnership of Redelco Inc., a family corporation to promote real estate development in the city. Anchor of their new Village South Shopping Center is one of the first Luby's Cafeterias. It is at 701 North 77 Sunshine Strip. Later the corporation purchases the Village North Shopping Center, builds the Redelco Office Center on Morgan Blvd., and the Redelco Business Park on Loop 499 just east of 77 Sunshine Strip. They are also the initial developers of the Knightwood Estates, which is located between Rio Hondo Road and Vinson Road to the north. Previously they had bought the 7-UP Bottling Company in Harlingen merging it into the Royal Crown Cola Bottling Co. Located at 601 N. 77 Sunshine Strip it became, after closing, Dixie's (Coleman) Gift Shop and later Blockbuster Video.

The Tropical Savings and Loan Building goes up where the Madison Hotel once stood. 3/9/60 Swift and Co. will open 8,000 square foot pesticide manufacturing plant on Wilson Road to produce liquid and dust Gold Bear Brand.

3/16/60 Plans are revealed for a shopping center on a 22 acre block on the southwest corner of 13th and Austin Streets. The area is owned by Wilder D. Davis and A.B. Demic who will sell the property later to be named Sun Valley Mall. Wilder and his wife Georgia have farmed part of the area and their home is in its northeast corner. Also living with them is his father Wilder D. “Dave” Wilder and his wife Nola. Wilder’s daughter June would go on to be an actress and promote and direct local theatrical productions. In late June 1961 Roy L. Martin and Associates reveal plans for the 25-30 store complex, now said to be on a 27 acre tract. In August the $4.5 million shopping center is approved
with its planned 1,600 car parking. The Davis family will move their houses including a
garage apartment to the corner of 13th and Carrol. In the southeast corner of the property,
where later a 10-screen cinema will arise, is the home of Gus and Lottie Demic. Upon
their marriage in 1922 it was given to them as a wedding gift by Gus’s father. Daughter
Margery Demic Biggerstaff was born in the house in 1924.
5/14/60 Grand opening of Clyde's Drive Inn, 415 E. HYW 77. This becomes the
gathering place for Anglo teenagers from the nearby high school.
8/28/60 Grand opening of Tropical Saving and Loan's new building. Paul Carruth is
president; Morris Verner, executive vice-president; Stanley Crockett, first vice-president;
Van Snell, second vice-president; Forrest Runnels, director, along with J.C. Looney and
John C. Jones, Jr.; and B.S. Mothershead is secretary-treasurer. It was organized in 1956.
The association's building is at 2nd and Van Buren, the former site of the Madison Hotel
which was razed last winter.
10/12/60 The Seville Hotel with its 95 units between Harrison and Tyler at P street is
50% complete. George Beck, owner and builder has named Tom Moran of Weslaco as
resident manager of the hotel expected to open 12/1/60.
10/3/60 The popular Mexican food restaurant, Palmetto Inn, 1524 W. Jackson, has a fire.
Its owner is Moises Carrasco of Brownsville. While campaigning here Ronald Reagan
has lunch there. A branch of the restaurant is opened in South Padre Island. When
business suffers in Harlingen the place closes in 2002.
6/25/61 The Goodyear Store and Service Center at Van Buren at Commerce is going up
and opens August 16 with Le Roy Liberda as manager.
7/2/61 The 40 patient Millerborg Nursing Home on Ed Carey, 300 yards south of 77
(now 1314 N. Ed Carey) is set to open. It will be the first of Harlingen’s major nursing
homes. Mrs. Ruth Millerborg has operated Ruth's Convalescent Home here since 1948.
7/61 A new bowling alley opens at 1502 N. 77 Sunshine Strip. Years later it will be
converted into an evangelical church and still later an events center.
8/31/61 A $140,000 garment factory to employ 200 to move here. The local investment
needed is $75,000, $30,500 of which has already been pledged.
9/5/61 Businessmen raise $15,000 for ads to attract business and industry to the city.
The ads will appear in the mid-west edition of the Wall Street Journal. Several weeks
later a committee is formed to promote Harlingen as a retirement area.
10/1/61 Lara’s Bakery has a grand opening for its new building at 405 W. Polk. Mr. and
Mrs. Abraham Lara are proprietors. Forty years later the bakery would be featured in an
article in Southern Living.
10/29/61 Dr. George Gallaher receives approval for the $18,000 drive-in movie complex
at 2620 S. HWY 77. When the Seventy Seven Sunshine Strip Drive Inn opens the
following year Dave Ayoub, Al Roiz, and Challis Davis are listed as partners. It is to
close in 1983 or 84.
10/31/61 The Valley Morning Star commences its annual editions of Saludos Amigos.
11/2/61 Baxley’s Furniture, 714 W. Harrison goes out of business.
11/7/61 Seventy-five members of the C of C initiate an Investment: Harlingen Drive to
double the C of C membership and income.
12/3/61 The Kriedler-Ashcraft Funeral Chapel capable of seating 340 people is nearly complete at 1002 E. Harrison. J.B. Ashcraft III is president of the firm. In early 2004 the business closes and the building is vacated until the Trinity Funeral Home occupies it.

12/31/61 The bank deposits are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank</th>
<th>12/31/60</th>
<th>12/31/61</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First National Bank</td>
<td>$22,662,597</td>
<td>$22,770,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlingen National Bank</td>
<td>$11,654,367</td>
<td>$11,223,212</td>
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</table>

1962 Hino Gas, a supplier of natural gas and propane commences business with owner Alejandro Hinojosa Sr. The company has facilities on W. Business 83. With the deregulation of the electricity industry in Texas in 2002, it enters the utility business and has $30 million in 1,500 contracts with expected revenues by the end of 2002 to be $70 million. In December 2002 Hinojosa sells his share of the utility (Hino Energy Service Co.) to the other partner, Texas Commercial Energy. The TCE office with eight employees is at 222 E. Van Buren.

3/28/62 Wallace W. Steine, only 39, dies this date. He is owner of Wally's of Harlingen and Wally's Shoes of Brownsville. He leaves his widow Madge, sons Doug, John, and Mike, daughters Sandra, Sybil, and Shelby, all of Harlingen.

5/26/62 F. E. Pereira, evaluator for the Harlingen tax department says that the 1,413 business establishments here is an all-time high. 170 new firms were established while 108 disappeared.

6/30/62 MoPac discontinues twice-a-day passenger service from Brownsville to Houston. With a daily average ridership of only 79 passengers the railroad claims it is losing $131,305 a year. One night train from and to Houston continues. From the 50s MoPac has run a "Branded Name" train to the area. It is called the Valley Eagle and runs the 371 mile Houston-Brownsville route. Each diesel locomotives sports on its front a distinctive wingspread eagle with on its body a logo stating "Missouri Pacific Lines".

8/3/62 Payless Shoe Source opens its store in the Laurel Park strip mall. It is one of 26 in the Texas chain started by Alfred and Sam Rosenfield in Austin in 1956.

7/6/62 This is the date when first news is released about the Navion Aircraft Co. of Galveston coming to Harlingen. Additional hoopla is to follow. The firm moves into hangars at the airport and begins to manufacture its small plane. Its sales lag and by October it is in trouble. It lays off about 1/3 of the 200 employees here. On 12/6/62 Navion and its parent company, Tusco Corp., are unable to meet debts and file for reorganization listing $10 million in assets.

9/28/62 The discount food store, Val-U-Mart Supermarket, opens at the north end of Sun Valley Shopping Center (Mall). Bill Fears is manager.

1963 Alma Cocke writes a weekly column for the Harlingen Press titled "News and Views from the Woman's World." It continues to run for at least three years.

8/63 The Southmost Savings and Loan is founded by a local rancher, businessman, and attorney. In 8/84 it opens a branch at 502 S. Dixieland Road in addition to offices in Port Isabel and Raymondville.

10/31/63 There is a ribbon cutting ceremony for the extensively remodeled 1928 Sears Store on W. Harrison. A.L. Benoist, who was the store's first manager and is still the owner of the building, is present.
1964  Central Freight Lines commences service here. It had bought Inland Freight in the 1950s.
4/16/64  Navion merges with the Trusco Corp. of Houston, the new entity to be known as Base Industries. John A. Miranda is president, Hill Cocke Sr. VP and Orrin W. Johnson secretary.
6/19/64  A $500,000 expansion at Ready Mix Concrete Co. and Valley Concrete Pressure Pipe owned by Hill Cocke, Sr. takes place. It includes a 50x160x28’ steel building having a 5 ton overhead crane.
10/64  A year after getting married, Julio Charles and his wife Eloina commence the Las Vegas Cafe at 1101 West Harrison. He had worked for Piggly Wiggly, and she had food preparation experience. Their venture, open 10 hours a day for breakfast and lunch, continues to be successful forty years later.
11/21/64  Plans are announced for a new Harlingen National Bank Building to be erected on East Van Buren Avenue. The property acquisition will cost $350,000.
1965  With an increased number of financial institutions Harlingen deposits continue to grow. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bank</th>
<th>12/31/64</th>
<th>12/31/65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First National Bank</td>
<td>$26,506,659</td>
<td>$28,062,563</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harlingen National Bank</td>
<td>14,191,080</td>
<td>17,090,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RG Building and Loan</td>
<td>15,266,748</td>
<td>17,828,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical Savings and Loan</td>
<td>13,524,615</td>
<td>14,096,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/1/65  James "Jim" Hand born in Harlingen and who attended Southmost College then received a BA degree from UT (Austin) is named executive vice president of Tropical Savings and Loan association. He served in the Air Force 1950-53, was with Fl. Flynn Investment until 1960 then Paul Carruth until September 1964. He married Leona Pustka of Hallettsville and has two children.

2/65  The Base Aviation Maintenance Company (BAMCO), a subsidiary of Base Industries, commences operations at the airport. Its employment will rise to 140 individuals before the 11/65 bankruptcy announcement of its parent company. This follows negation of a $700,000 contract to overhaul 31 Air Rescue Service Planes.
4/20/65  A complex of 108 apartment units at 1700 E. Washington Ave., initially on 2 of the 11 acres, will cost over $1 million.
6/5/65  The Maryland Apartment complex at 1410 Morgan Blvd. is to start. The project of 46 apartments will cost $550,000.
The Roy L. Martin Company of San Antonio presents plans to the City for the Sun Valley Development.
9/19/65  Mack T. Tichener seeks city license for a cable TV franchise to be operated by Valley Microwave Transmission, Inc.

3/15/66  This date the last railroad passenger service, an overnight one, to and from the Valley takes place. MoPac locomotive No.54 pulls the Pioneer consist of passenger cars
leaving Harlingen at 7:25 pm for Houston. On hand is Volney Spiegehauer who has 40 years service with MoPac, much as a ticket agent. The train is crowded as many take a nostalgic hop from Harlingen to Raymondville.

10/66 Work is starting on the erection of the six story $1.3-1.6 million First National Bank on Van Buren between 1st and 2nd Streets.


2/67 The Harlingen Chamber of Commerce offices burn.

10/67 Valley Transit moves its terminal from the corner of North A and W. Monroe to the 200 block of E. Monroe.

11/1/67 The old Air Base becomes the Harlingen Municipal Airport and Industrial Air Park and the commercial airline facility. Between 1/68 and 2/18/69, a total of 3,000 passenger boardings occur. In January Trans Texas Airways starts its jet service to Harlingen on a newly extended runway.

1968 Woolco, the subsidiary of Woolworth Company, opens a large store on the south end of Sun Valley Mall. It, along with J.C. Penney, will be one of the mall's anchor tenants among twelve retailers. Woolco is an attempt by the company to upscale its merchandise. When the company fails to keep abreast of its aggressive competition, its directors vote to dissolve the company rather than make huge expenditures and possibly go into bankruptcy. The Harlingen store and others across the country close at the end of the fiscal year, January 31, 1983.

Construction begins in what is now the Coronado Shopping center for Quips and Quotes. It will open the next year.

7/68 The Harlingen Canning Co. closes, and its buildings are sold. Two years later the buyer sells it to the Mission Citrus Association that processes juice in it until 1987-88.

9/68 The City de-annexes the 383 acre Palm Valley Estates area, formerly Harvey Richard Field.

10/23/68 Dr. David Flory, Chairman of the Airport Board announces that the Hawaii firm, MurrayAir, Ltd., will open a manufacturing facility to build giant agricultural application planes.

1/17/69 Groundbreaking occurs for the $750,000 Coronado South Shopping Center west of Luby's. It is owned by Bob Knight, Jr. and Bert Alcott.

8/6/69 The 128-room Seville Motor Hotel with Harold Ebbage as manager is sold for over $1 million to Phoenix-based chain, Romney International, Inc.. Over the years it will have numerous changes of hands and facelifts. During the years that the CAF conducted its annual air shows in Harlingen, the Hanger nightclub on the second floor of the motel was an extremely popular gathering place for visitors and locals alike.

10/15/69 Wicks Lumber and Building Supply opens on Ed Carey Drive. It is the 215th store of the Saganaw, Michigan chain located in 30 states. The 41,000 sq. ft. Center is on 10 acres.

People
8/27/61  Alan Y. Taniguchi is one of five architects honored in 1961 with an award by the Texas Society of Architects. The Harlingen firm of Taniguchi and Croft designed the Casa del Sol and was awarded the design for the upcoming Harlingen Police and Courts Building. In September the firm's Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School will be completed and is the first and only air conditioned one in South Texas. Alan and his wife Leslie moved to Harlingen in 1950 and sons Evan was born here in 1952 with Keith to follow in 14 months. Recognized for his creativity and work Taniguchi will go on to become a lecturer and dean (1969-1972) of the College of Architecture at the University of Texas, and dean (1972) of Rice University's Architectural College. He will set up a practice in Austin. His father Isamu came to the Valley after WWII during which time he had been incarcerated solely because he was a Japanese ethnic and a community leader. In the early 1970s Alan's father, at age 89, will be honored by the Austin Board of Realtors as Austin's Outstanding Citizen. Isamu had in 1968-1969 with his own funds and efforts over 14 months created the three acre Isamu Taniguchi Oriental Gardens in Zilker Park. Upon the efforts of Lady Bird Johnson Isamu was to be awarded the Rising Sun Medal by the Government of Japan in 1972.

12/28/62  R.W. Liston is named by the State Jaycees as one of the state's outstanding young Texans for 1962.

6/65  Dr. Garner Klein commences his Harlingen practice. He comes to specialize in cardiology and be associated with the Valley Diagnostic Clinic before retiring after 36 year and six months of practice on 1/1/03. He then becomes Medical Director for Valley Health Plans.

1/11/67  Johnnie Jackson is born in Harlingen. He will become an All-Valley All-Star football player for the Cardinals in 1982 through 1984. Although he played quarterback here he played on defense while at the University of Houston. In a game against the University of Texas, Johnson set the college football game record with three scores on three interceptions. Drafted by the NFL San Francisco Forty-niners as a defensive back and cornerback/safety he played professional ball with that team 1989-1992 and one more year with the Green Bay Packers, five years in all. He won a Super Bowl ring in his first year when the 49ers beat the Denver Broncos 55-10 in Super Bowl XXIV in New Orleans in early 1990. He would go on to become a principal of a Houston high school.

1968  Rose Wilder Lane who retired to Harlingen dies. She is the daughter of Laura Ingalls Wilder, the author of the Little House on the Prairie series. Rose is an author in her own right. (see Harlingen History link on Cameron County Historical Commission website for a full biography of this individual.)

3/31/1969  L.C. Grindle is to die this date. He was a pioneer of the butane gas business in South Texas and owner of the Grindle Sales Co. of Harlingen and the Auto Supply Stores of Weslaco, McAllen and Edinburg. This First Methodist at the time of his death was the longest-serving Harlingen Kiwanis Club member.
4/69 Elam Clay Breedlove dies at age 79 after suffering a heart attack. He had been elected as president of the First National Bank of Harlingen in 1945 and served in that capacity until elected chairman of the board, serving then until January 1969. He began his Valley banking career in 1924 with the San Benito Bank. A Mason and Shriner, he was also a member of the Harlingen Kiwanis Club and many civic affairs including the Arroyo Colorado Navigation District, the Cameron County TB Association, and a trustee of Valley Baptist Hospital. He left behind his wife, a son, and seven daughters.

Education

1960 The new Sam Houston School, an elementary one, opens at 301 E. Taft bringing the city's total to 14. The HISD this year has 10,463 students and 402 teachers.
3/1/60 The school board approves new $911,654 second junior high school to be built at Coakley Village and the submission of a bond issue to cover its cost. Last week it approved three elementary schools – one at Coakley Village, one Rangerville Road and one at 1st Street and Davis. Coakley Village is on the C.R. Jullian Coakley Estates. The school will eventually be named for Mary E. Coakley. By 6/7/60 plans are drawn for this school.
The Ben Milam Elementary School is being built at 1215 Rangerville Road.
8/23/60 The school budget of $4,715,299 is approved. It necessitates raising the district tax rate from $1.50 to $1.70. When the schools open in September there are 8,931 registered students with the breakdown: 5,689 elementary, 2,175 Gay Jr. High, and 1,067 Harlingen High School according to Supt. C.M. Callihan.
3/61 The School Board buys out the contract of C. M. Callihan for $18,000 and lets him go. Harvey Broyles takes over as acting superintendent of schools.
3/22/61 Adams Brothers General Construction Co. of Brownsville is awarded the contract for the $602,187 cost of the Coakley Jr. High School. In 1/62 when it comes in at $700,000 the city lacks money for paving 6th Street and the Taft crossing. The school district then says it will not open Coakley this school year.
4/6/61 In view of the announced HAFB closing the school board holds in abeyance the construction of 10 new classrooms.
6/1/61 High school graduates number 257.
8/13/61 The $810/yr teacher pay raise will cost the district, which pays about 13% of the teacher's salaries, $50,000. The base minimum is presently $4,014 annually. The 400 plus teachers here received a raise of $120 last year. In 1960-61 the district received $2,215,863 from the state. About 11,500 students are expected to register for the 1961-62 school year up from 10,976 of 60-61. When a count is made in November, the number of 10,314 is actually down.
Martin Segura, a San Benito native, joins the system as a 6th grade teacher in the Zavala School. He moves to personnel in 1980 and after 13 years as assistant superintendent for personnel retires in June 1996. His wife Cecelia has also seen long service in the HCISD, this 31-year teacher still continuing at the Bonham School.
9/3/61 A shop and a 12-classroom wing have been added to the Harlingen High School.
11/2/61 The school enrollment is down for the 1961-62 school year to 10,314 from its level of 10,564 in 1960-61.

2/8/62 Twelve additional classrooms are approved for the high school.

4/20/62 Warren W. Ballard, for 30 years business manager of the Harlingen School System, resigns. He started work here in 12/1/30. The dual system of management since 1920 will be abandoned and the Supt. of Schools will control all aspects.

5/18/62 John H. Morgan, superintendent of the Taft School System for the last two years, is named superintendent of Harlingen schools. He started in 1938 as principal of the Rochester, TX high school and had been at Blinn College for seven years. His three-year contract called for a salary of $16,000 per annum and a car allowance of $100 per month.

5/27/62 The completion of the Mary E. Coakley Junior High School is one year late. Its total cost is $750,000 for the building, paving, and equipment. In September 1,000 students are expected to attend it. It was built under Harvey J. Broyles, school superintendent, and Frank N. Boggus, school board president. Its architects are Hester, Bowman & Swanson while Adams Brothers is the building contractor.

5/30/62 There are 251 graduates of Harlingen High School.

8/62 The La Motte School (T.M.R.) at 216 N. 21st is opened to handle special students. This year also sees the construction of Sam Houston Elementary School to the south of Coakley.

1/17/63 O.E. Hendricks, assistant school superintendent, announces a peak student population of 10,318 for the school year. There are 381 teachers, 23 more than in 1962.

10/25/63 The old high school, now a junior high school, is renamed in honor of Julia Vernon. Initially it serves only eighth graders. Julia Shawson, the third child of Andrew Jackson and Elizabeth Ann (Ray) Shawson, was born 10/24/93 in Youngsport, Bell County, TX. She came to Harlingen in the 1920s and married Thomas Spillar Vernon of West Virginia in Brownsville on 12/22/26. They made their home at 1218 E. Harrison but had no children. She obtained a 1923 teaching degree from Southwest Texas State Teacher's College, and later added a B.A. from Texas A&I, an M.A. from her first college in 1949, and a B.A. in library science from Texas State College for Women in 1951. In Harlingen she taught elementary school children, then middle school English, and finally high school students before becoming the high school librarian. She organized the chapter of Future Teachers of America at the high school and the chapter was named after her. Her husband died of diabetes complications in 1947. This much–loved educator passed away in Waco at age 88 on 6/29/82.

6/63 By this date the Alamo School on S. E Street had grown to have in addition to its main building to the north and two annex building to its south. Total classroom and administration area was 11,724 sq. ft. An auditorium to the northwest was an additional 4,500 sq. ft.

1/1/64 The new wing of the James Dishman School is dedicated.
2/19/64 A local committee of prominent Harlingen business men meets with Lt. General E.W. Snedeker, USMC, to aid in raising $300,000 to furnish and equip the proposed Marine Military Academy, this according to Mayor Mike Hodes.

5/17/64 Groundbreaking occurs for the $1 million expansion program of the Valley Baptist Academy. Howard E. Gary is the Academy president. This was after the land zoning approval of 5/4/64 for the area on Harrison Avenue at 35th Street. The academy has 143 students at present.

7/9/64 The Marine Military Academy purchases the former HAFB chapel for $5,200.

4/65 Ray Jenkins is elected president of the Harlingen School Board. He replaces E.W. Caughfield who was defeated in a recent election.

8/6/65 MMA is set to open 9/9/65 with a goal of enrolling 100 students.

9/65 The first classes, with 59 students, of the Marine Military Academy take place at old wartime facilities of the Air Force Navigation School at the deactivated Harlingen Air Force Base. The academy for high school students follows elements traditional to the U.S. Marine Corps. Prior to 1965 the founders of MMA planned to locate in Prescott, AZ. A Marine recruiter in Harlingen, Gunnery Sgt. John S. Allerton, read about the proposed academy in Leatherneck. He showed the article to Sam Searles, then a major in the Army Reserve and an official of the Harlingen National Bank. Searles was a former Marine Corps sergeant-major. He spoke to city officials about the academy. The organizers visited here and liked what they saw. Funding came from many sources. One major one was J.D. Stetson Coleman, a WWII Marine Corps Veteran. He bought 26 buildings and about 83 acres from the city for $55,000. He also secured a half million dollar loan and paid the interest on it for the first three years. By 1985 the academy had nearly 400 cadets, 37 teachers, and an annual budget of $3 million for its now 139 acre campus. Its 1981 class had 20 going on to the U.S. Naval Academy, and one the Air Force Academy. Sixteen others received full ROTC scholarships to attend college, with 41 others accepted at major colleges and universities.

In this year the Alamo School at 512 South E is noted as (migrant).

This year the St. Paul Lutheran School is located near the church sanctuary. Nearby is built a facility to house five classrooms, a parish hall, and a staff workroom. The educational program is to grow. In 1973 a Day Care program is initiated as part of the Early Childhood Education Center. The first year 19 children are under the care of Barbara McCaslin. In 1977 this program is integrated into developmental programs for two-year old through eighth grade. In 1981 the construction of a 4-room building allows all classes to be in separate rooms. A school library is added in 1986.

1965 Around this period the Wilson School at Primera is closed. Its elementary school students are bussed to either the Dishman or Stuart Place School. Higher grade students go into Harlingen.

It is this year that Harlingen College, a business school, establishes itself at 513 E. Jackson in the Matz Building. It is started by key personnel of the San Antonio Business College in that city. O.N. Bard, who worked for them in 1964-65, moves back here and becomes its first manager in 1965.

4/28/66 Three days after being indicted on three Federal counts of "sending obscene and lascivious matter through the mails" Superintendent of Schools John H. Morgan resigns
his post. He had come from Taft, TX four years ago to take the position. Apparently this deacon at the First Baptist Church was a pen pal with two women in a pornography club. The School Board with Raul Garza, Jr. as president then signed Assistant Supt. James I. Thigpen to a two year contract. The salary is $16,500 per annum plus a stipend for use of a car. Thigpen had come from Falfurrias where he was a principal.

8/66 The school district encompassing 81 sq. miles has an enrollment of 10,500 students. These attend 13 elementary schools, grades 1-6; two junior high schools, grades 7-9; and a high school, grades 10-12. The district employs 700 people.

10/66 In its second year the MMA campus has 30 buildings. Constructed between 1952 and 1956, five are academic classrooms, nine dormitories, a recreation building of 12,000 sq. ft., and a chapel with capacity for 350.

1967 O. N. Bard of Harlingen College leaves the school and together with local businessmen forms the Valley Central College (VCC). By 1968 it was located at 119 W. Van Buren where its competitor, Harlingen College (HC), had moved to in 1966. HC advertises that it offers courses in shorthand, accounting, office machines, bookkeeping, drafting, electronics, air conditioning, refrigeration, and heating. While offering similar studies VCC has both a two year plan and short course. Joining Bard, who is president and treasurer, are four more corporate officers. There are three administrative personnel and the faculty is comprised of nine experienced teachers. By the 1970s the focus is already on automation. VCC will establish satellite facilities in Brownsville by 1970 and also in McAllen. In a dispute with directors over the profitability of VCC, Bard leaves and Ray Martin becomes general manager by 1971. In 1975 VCC ceases to function while HC had closed in 1973.

7/4/67 Tom Hestand becomes principal of the high school. He was previously assistant principal of Smiley High School of the Northeast Houston ISD. A native of Denison he has a BA from Austin College and a MS from North Texas State University, Denton.

9/67 Texas State Technical Institute (later to be renamed College) – Harlingen, also known as the Rio Grande Valley Campus begins operation as an extension of the Waco Campus of the Texas State Technical Institute (also called the James Connally Technical Institute). Located at the former HAFB, it starts with two instructors and 40 students. Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey is guest of honor at the official dedication ceremonies held in a former aircraft hangar on 10/23/68. In the summer of 1969 it, and the campuses at Waco and Amarillo, is separated from the Texas A&M system. Milton Schiller became the vice president of the TSTI Rio Grande Valley Campus and Archie Rosales the school’s first general manager. By 9/69 it is offering classes for credit; 78 students are taking classes.

This year structural additions are made at Vernon Junior High School.

1968 The Lamar Elementary School is opened on M Street.

1969 Rosendo Rodriguez Jr. is principal of the Alamo School, the year before it closes its doors forever on its E and F Streets campus.

Religious

2/19/60 In celebrating its 50th anniversary, the First Methodist Church, which started with 31 charter members, now has a congregation of 1,670.
In this year the membership of the First Baptist Church climbs to 1,981. While the First Presbyterian Church did not celebrate its 50th anniversary, later in October it helped to organize the Presbyterian Cavalcade at the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium. This Valley-wide rally heralded the denomination's centennial to come the following year. Membership in the church at the end of 1960 was 691.

1961 By this year there commences an explosion in the number of churches in the community. Mainly they are Protestant evangelical churches serving the growing Hispanic population. This growth will continue throughout the decade.

3/61 This month the Temple Beth Israel gives first thoughts to its physical expansion. Within the next few years a four room Sunday School is erected with two bathrooms and a recreation hall is constructed alongside the sanctuary while the kitchen is expanded and updated. The cost is about $26,935.

8/6/61 St. Paul's Methodist Church consecrates its new sanctuary at 1228 W. Grant.

12/3/61 The new Calvary Baptist sanctuary at North 7th Street and Williamson is coming up. Its use will leave behind two smaller building in the 100 block of W. Filmore. It is dedicated 8/12/62. The sanctuary seats 900, and there are educational facilities for 600, both of which occupy the east half of the 10 acre site.

12/24/61 The Rev. Frank P. Dailey, here since 1928, dies at age 81. Born in Norway IA 10/311/80, he married Mrs. Lottie Peters on 10/15/26. She died here in 1959. This Second Baptist Church member left four sons, only of which Dewitt W. Peters resides in Harlingen.

7/1/62 Dedication of new $10,000 First Mexican Baptist Church, Filmore and B. The Rev. R.B. Alvarez is pastor.

9/30/62 St. Paul Lutheran Church sanctuary is dedicated at Morgan and Washington. Ground had been broken 4/1/62. Built at a cost of $75,000 by Ferguson and Sons, Brownville, it is the first of a complex to be constructed at this site. It seats 500. Erwin A. Metz is pastor. A new parsonage at 2013 E. Bowie had been occupied by Pastor Erwin A. Metz and his family in early July 1962.

1/3/63 A new Presbyterian Church is organized. It will later be named the Treasure Hills Presbyterian Church and have its sanctuary at 2120 Ed Carey Drive. The organizational meeting takes place at the Manse at 2631 Cypress. The Rev. G. Wendell Crofoot (for several years pastor at the First Presbyterian Church), Col. M.F. Runnion, Charles A. Washmon, Gene McCullough, Marshall Bingham, Jeff Bell, Albert Coneway, and Tom McGee, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church coordinate the effort. Later the Manse will be located at 2801 Pinehurst Drive.

1965 Humberto Cardinal Meideiros, Bishop of Brownsville, concludes that a mission is needed here to serve colonia residents. By 1966 Father Regis Kwiatkowski has been assigned the new parish with the name Our Lady Queen of Peace. Starting very modestly first outdoors then in an old abandoned building on North B Street, masses were also conducted at a former dance hall at Colonia Juarez, then at newly acquired (from St. Anthony Parish) Lady of Fatima Chapel on Briggs-Coleman Road. Thirteen surrounding colonias were eventually brought into the parish. By 1968 Fathers Mathias Shanley and
Harold Waters come to serve the growing congregation which has to rent the Zavala School cafeteria to accommodate all. In 1973 a new rectory and teaching center are constructed. On July 4, 1982 groundbreaking takes place for the new sanctuary at 1509 New Combes Highway and the dedication will occur in 1983. By the end of this year, the church has reached an enrollment of 1,500 families and is served by the Sacred Heart priests and Sisters of Saint Joseph.

7/10/65 Pope Paul VI in his Bull, *Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam*, establishes the Diocese of Brownsville.

1968 The First Methodist Church constructs a sizeable new entrance fronting Harrison Street. It has an elevator to accommodate the handicapped.

3/29/68 The former First Christian Church on Van Buren erected in 1926 by Andrew Goldammer and now owned by L. R. Baker is being demolished.

4/23/68 The schism of the Methodists in America dating to before 1845 and partly due to segregation matters is mended with the formation of the United Methodist Church at a Dallas meeting.

1969 Between 10th and 11th Streets along Jackson, a new $84,000 brick sanctuary is erected as Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is dedicated 11/9/69. The transformed barracks serving as a sanctuary previously is demolished to clear the site. Membership is 275 plus 167 winter visitors. In 1987 the two story second barracks serving as a Sunday School/parish hall will also be torn town and in 1988 a brick one erected. St. Alban's buys its third and last rectory at 2408 Ella Street. It is eventually sold to retiring Rev. James B. Giddings, and subsequent ministers are given a housing allowance.

**Organizations -- Social, Civic, Service**

3/15/60 Optimist International charters a Harlingen club with 30 members.

5/14/60 At this point in time the CAF has 48 members owns six aircraft and is working on obtaining two more.

5/2/60 The Music Lovers have an installation. Officers are: Mrs. J.W. Sanders, president; Mrs. J.L. Elmore, recording secretary; Mrs. T.W. Adair, first vice-president and Mrs. Floyd Hawkins, treasurer.

6/17/60 The new Elks Club is opened.

2/62 The Tip-O-Texas Genealogical Society is initiated.

1963 When the RGV Federation of Women's Clubs celebrated its 50th anniversary this year a woman from Harlingen had often been its leader. These included Mrs. J.J. (Katherine) Murray (1933-35), whose husband was deputy collector of Cameron County Water District No. 1; Mrs. O. E. (Grace) Stuart (1939-44), whose husband was president of the American Land Co.; and Mrs. Paul (Marion) Greenwood (1949-51), whose husband was a lawyer. Harlingenites honored as Life Members were: Mrs. Greenwood, Mrs. J.C. Myrick; and Mrs. Henry (Hazel) Carlisle, whose husband was in livestock and meat-packing. In the 1950-60s Mrs. J.B. (Madge) Cocke, whose husband was manager of Valley Concrete Pipe Co., McAllen, was also very active in civic activities.
Harlingen groups that had become part of the federation were: the Study Club (1925), Fine Arts Club, (1950), Afflatus (1945), and City Federation (1952).

1/5/63 Lynn Yantis, 38, is appointed Boy Scout Executive for District 2 (Harlingen, Combes, La Feria, Santa Rosa, and Primera) and 6 (Sebastian, Lyford, and Raymondville). In 1940 he formed the first Explorer Post in Harlingen. In 1941 he joined the Sea Scout Ship in Brownsville. He served three years in the Navy and was discharged as an aviation cadet. Graduating from Trinity College in 1948, he entered professional scouting in 1953. He married Virginia Mapes of San Antonio and the First Methodist member has three children. He is to die in Abilene in 1985.

The next month numerous scout supported take out a large ad to promote scouting. It points out that in this the 53rd anniversary of Scouting in America the local council serves 4,800 scouts and is assisted by 1,500 scouter volunteers.

3/10/63 The Confederate Air Force hold its first annual Air Show at Rebel Field, Mercedes.

4/4/64 Brad Crockett named Jaycee Young Man of the Year. Bradley Stanley Crockett, Jr. was born in Mercedes 8/6/35. A 1953 Harlingen High School graduate, he went on to earn a BS degree at Texas A & M in 1957. He spent three years in the US Air Force rising to the rank of 1st Lieutenant. In January 1959 he married Nancy Hardy of Ardmore, OK. They presently have four young children, Mynan, Standley III, Julie and Allen. Brad is VP and manager of Crockett Growers, Inc, and Crockett Nurseries, Inc. while owning Crockett Farms. Some of these are major citrus entities.

1966 The Harlingen Saddle Club is conducting weekly Saturday rodeos in the Merlin Fulmer Stampede Arena, Fair Park near the corner of Wichita Street and Memphis Avenue.

The Sixshooter Club of the Harlingen Chamber of Commerce has been formed to act as official hosts for the city of Harlingen. Dignitaries and important personalities are greeted by Sixshooters, each with special blazer, emblem, badge, string tie, and western hat. Established in 1965 the Harry J. Feldman Award for Sixshooter of the Year will be given annually.

1969 Another chapter involving the Harlingen Cold Storage Plant is writ in fire not ice. In the early 1980s Antonio (Tony) and Lupita Ramirez scraped together more than $100,000 to purchase the plant where she once had peeled and packaged shrimp. It took them fifteen years with the help of their five daughters to pay off the mortgage on the building. At one point they even had to mortgage their home in order to finance payments on the plant.

The building would be used to house the Harlingen Information and Social Service Organization (HISSO). Launched in 1969 by the Ramirezes, the organization was dedicated to help the area's poor. In the 1970s it moved into training programs, such as typing and sewing classes, and feeding centers.

In 1998 Gov. George W. Bush presented the couple with the Governor's Award, the highest honor for volunteer community service in Texas. In 1999, HISSO was awarded a $10,000 grant by Philip Morris Companies as part of its Helping the Helpers Award in Hunger. In 2000 the Texas Department on Aging recognized Tony Ramirez's work by
honoring him with the Greatest Generation of Texans Award, presented annually to ten
Texans, 65 or older. Mr. Ramirez, who was born 12/29/30, was to die at age 73 on 8/9/04
leaving his 68 year old widow after 50 years of marriage.
In the sprawling building with its office having a big red heart painted near its front door,
there was stored furniture, clothing, and appliances. On 8/3/05 a fire of unknown origin
commenced between the walls of the rear of the uninsured structure. The contents of the
storage area went up in flames. The cutting off of electricity caused the spoilage of food
stored in three freezers in another part of the building. The fire was contained to the
storage areas and although smoke impacted the whole edifice, the part of it adjacent to
North Commerce Street will likely be useable.

Miscellaneous

2/2/60  Harlingen obtains a farm team of the National League Giants when the Corpus
Christi Giants are shifted here.
4/14/60  The Rio Grande Valley Giants are set to open their season in the Texas League
of Class AA teams. In its first year the team wins the league pennant. The stadium at Fair
Park is called Giant Field but will later be called Cardinal Field. On 6/6/61 it is
announced that the city is to lose the team after 6/9 to Victoria. Owner Jimmie
Humphries cites low ticket sales as the reason for pulling out.
4/22/60  As a harbinger of things to come it is announced that the Moore Air Force Base
north of Mission is to be closed.
4/24-30/60  The city celebrates its Golden Anniversary. On four consecutive nights the
Harlingen Golden Anniversary Association presents at Cardinal Field a John B. Rogers
production titled "Land of Beginning Again." Over 400 performers are featured across its
300' stage. Verna Jackson McKenna puts together an 88 page combined program and
history of Harlingen. It sells for 50 cents but is subsidized in part by the advertisements
of local businesses. Mrs. J.B. Cocke has been general chairman of the woman's division
of community participation while Evan Hurst has been president of Harlingen Golden
Anniversary Celebration, Inc.
3/19/61  The First Annual All-Valley Science Fair is held at the Elks Club.
3/26/61  The YMCA branch here to close due to lack of funds.
4/16/61  The Valley Baptist Hospital now has a full time chaplain, 44 doctors, and 25
other doctors with staff privileges. Its physical therapy unit is the largest in South Texas.,
in part due to a $1/2 million grant by the Sams Foundation. It treats 150 to 200 monthly
and has about 10 bed patients.
10/19/61  Lloyd Nolen, co-founder of the CAF applies name "Rebel Field" to the
headquarters in Mercedes on FM1425 near the 83 Expressway.

6/22/62  At its 6th annual open house Valley Baptist Hospital releases some statistics. Its
current payroll is $52 million. In 1956 at its new location the value of services was
$707,000 and is now $1.25 million. There are 85 doctors and dentists on the staff. The
Sams Foundation polio clinic, original cost $483,000, has been transformed with the
addition of $29,000 to a general children's unit. $10,000 has been spent on a laboratory,
$250,000 applied for construction of a nurse's training school and dormitory, added storage and an incinerator cost $33,000, and other changes $30-40,000 annually.

4/10/62 Hale Schalebin of Edinburg offers the Paso Real Inn and two acres surrounding it to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Historical Association.

9/62 By this month the Night Owls Dance Club was a going entity for married couples. The fun group would enjoy monthly dances going on until January 1990 when the club's format was changed, and it appeared to be phasing out. Alicia Elliot was likely its last president.

1964 Delegates from five states attend the Intercoastal Canal Association convention held in the city.

1965 The Harlingen Boys' Club of America, Inc. is started in a two story building at D and Harrison. In 1977 it moves to W. Washington Street. By 1985 about 250 boys per day attend activities. It later changes its name to Harlingen Boys and Girls Club.

3/65 The Third Annual CAF Air Show is held at the Harlingen Airport.

1967 The Harlingen Country Club edifice adjacent to the Municipal Golf Course burns down. Years later the Golfcrest Apartment complex will occupy the site. After obtaining 150 acres in what is to become Palm Valley Estates, the club in 1968 under its president Neal Bonner has contractor Frank Parker build a very stylish and enduring clubhouse. In late July 1969 with Matt Gorges as president, the club opens and the course is inaugurated under its golf pro George McKay. UT Law School graduate Bonner will go on to become a director in the First National Bank in January 1976, serve on the St. Anthony's School Board, and in Kiwanis. He is to die in a hunting accident.

1/6/67 The Texas Historical Commission erects a marker to recognize the Paso Real. It is on FM 1420 several miles west of the old inn.

1/22/67 The Marine Museum at the Marine Military Academy is being organized with weapons and equipment being donated and loaned.

9/21-22/67 Hurricane Beulah, third largest of the Twentieth Century, hits the lower coast of Texas. It has moved up from Cozumel, Mexico. Winds up to 140mph are registered near Brownsville. Up to 30" rain flood and inundate the lower Valley. The Arroyo Colorado's rampaging waters cover many of the city's neighborhoods as the river is at its highest level in 24 years. The city sees 26 lift pumps become inoperable. This brings the evacuation of 4,000 residents. Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson declares 24 counties of Texas as disaster areas. Estimated dead are 18, injured-sick 9,000, homes destroyed/heavily damaged 3,000, property damage $100 million, crop damage $50 million, 300,000 people evacuated during the storm and subsequent flooding. On 9/28/67 the President makes an aerial inspection of Beulah-flooded South Texas.

7/26/69 Harrison and Tyler Avenues are made into one-way streets.