

## THE TIMES

The late 1950's were years of transition. "Sputnik" had been launched by the U.S.S.R. in 1957, announcing in no uncertain terms, the world's entry into the Space Age. Polio had been conquered, and organ transplants were on the horizon. There were "rumblings" in Vietnam and Cuba, and desegregation was a "hot" issue. The Dead Sea Scrolls had been discovered, and a new Pope was about to be elected. "Pop" art and "rock 'n' roll" were emerging as "art" forms of the "Beatnik" generation. Technology had been developing, but now took a quantum leap forward. A new emphasis and respect for education emerged with the entry into the Space Age, as science and technology demanded more mathematicians, engineers, and researchers.

In 1958, a number of events occurred that were to shape the direction of history in the second half of the 20th Century.

Politics: "Ike" was President of the United States. Alaska became the 49th State. Prince Charles became the Prince of Wales. The European Common Market emerged.

Culture: There was a mass move to "suburbia." A Gallup Poll revealed that Eleanor Roosevelt was the most admired woman in the United States. At the International Auto Show, the Ford "Thunderbird" was introduced. Postal rates rose from 3¢ to 4¢ to mail first-class letters. Hula hoops were in vogue, as was "rock 'n' roll" and "duck-tail" haircuts for young men. The "cha-cha-cha" was the new dance craze, and the idea of paperback books became popular. Among college students, "cramming" (of students into phone-booths or Volkswagons) became the thing to do. Quiz shows were popular, but they were proved to be fraudulent. At the Brussels World's Fair, the United States' entries in cultural competition were "South Pacific" and "Carousel."

Sports: Arnold Palmer won his first Masters' Tournament. "Columbia" won the America's Cup. "Sugar" Ray Robinson regained the middle-weight boxing championship. "Tim Tam" won the Kentucky Derby. In the Rose Bowl, Ohio State defeated Oregon State, 10-7. In the World Series, New York won over Milwaukee, 4-3. The New York Giants beat the Baltimore Colts, 23-17 in the Professional Football Championship.

Travel: A new era in transportation began when a BOAC jetliner made the first commercial transatlantic crossing. There were more air crossings in 1958 after that than ship crossings, and the trend toward air travel continues.

Literature: Among the literary offerings in 1958 were: Exodus (Leon Uris), Breakfast at Tiffany's (Truman Capote), A Raisin in the Sun (Lorraine Hansberry), Sunrise at Campobello (Dore Schary), The Concept of Motivation (R. S. Peters), J.B. (Archibald MacLeish), Two for the Seesaw (William Gibson). The number one "bestsellers" were Kids Say the Darndest Things (Art Linkletter) and Dr. Zhivago, for which Boris Pasternak won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Music: Duke Ellington appeared at the Newport Jazz Festival, while Van Cliburn won the Moscow Tchaikovsky Piano Competition with his rendition of Rachmaninoff's 3rd Piano Concerto. Rogers and Hammerstein's "Flower Drum Song" opened in New York. Samuel Barber's first opera, "Vanessa," won the Pulitzer Prize in Music, and was performed at the Metropolitan Opera House. Stereo had arrived on the scene, and "American Bandstand" was a hit with the teenagers. Top singers were Harry Belafonte, Mitch Miller, Perry Como, Elvis Presley, and the Everly Brothers; Liberace was dazzling people with his candelabra and sequined jackets. The top popular song was "Volare," but others almost as popular were "Purple People Eaters," "Catch A Falling Star," and "All I Have To Do Is Dream."

Entertainment: TV had entered most households, and family-oriented shows were popular. Among these were "I Love Lucy," "The Honeymooners," "Leave It To Beaver," "Father Knows Best," and "Ozzie and Harriet." Elizabeth Taylor was a favorite movie idol; her husband, Mike Todd, was killed in a plane crash in 1958. "Gigi" won the Academy Award for Best Movie, but "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof" was almost as popular. The Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opened.

Science and Technology: Russia launched the first nuclear-powered ice breaker, and the U.S. sent the first nuclear submarine, the "Nautilus," under the polar ice cap. Sony produced the first transistorized FM radio. Computers were enhanced by the development of integrated circuits. During the International Geophysical Year (1957-58), scientists from 66 countries cooperated to learn new things about earthquakes, oceans, solar activity, weather, the polar regions, and electromagnetic fields in space. The Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology was won by Lederberg (who discovered sex in bacteria) and Beadle & Tatum (who determined that chemical reactions in living cells are determined genetically). Russia launched Sputnik III, and the U.S. launched a whole series of space probes: Explorer I and Pioneer I discovered the existence of the Van Allen radiation belts; Vanguard I discovered that the earth is pear-shaped; Project Score broadcast the first voice message from space. In 1958, the United States Congress passed P.L.85-766, authorizing \$80 million for the establishment of NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). The Space Age had officially begun, and the race was on!

Education: Desegregation became a painful issue, as Governor Orville Faubus closed four high schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, and reopened them as private schools to avoid Federally mandated desegregated education in public schools. This issue was to have more impact on public education in the following decade than almost any other domestic issue.

One of the most significant bills in U.S. educational history was signed in 1958: the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). This bill provided financial aid to states to buy equipment, graduate fellowships and loans for needy and superior individuals, expanded teacher training programs in critical subjects, improvement in counseling and testing programs, and research into communication media for educational purposes. The Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare had responded to the need for improvement in the educational system.

### ...IN TEXAS

The decade of the 1950's was both prosperous and tempestuous in Texas. The state had endured a 7 year drought that finally broke in 1957; this factor led to increased emphasis on conservation and environmental issues. The use of water resources was an important issue to a largely agricultural state, and irrigation, drilling of new water wells, and conservation of this vital resource loomed as critical factors in the state's progress economically. The "quality of life" became an important issue in controlled expansion of the urban areas.

The petroleum industry came to dominate both the political and economic scene during this decade. The revenue from oil helped to keep property taxes lower than most states, and kept Texas from imposing a state income tax. The oil-rich land enabled the University of Texas to become one of the wealthiest public universities in the world. Even politics were dominated by petroleum interests.

Ralph W. Yarborough, an Austin attorney, was elected to the United States Senate in 1958, and Lyndon B. Johnson became a most powerful Texan because of his majority leadership role in the Senate. Another Texan, Sam Rayburn, was Speaker of the House; the combined leadership of Johnson and Rayburn gave Texans much prestige in the United States Congress during these years. Johnson was instrumental in passing some of the first civil rights legislation since the Civil War; although this legislation was weak, it was a beginning. The year 1957 marked the dawning of civil rights involvement of the federal government.

Integration had been legislated at the federal level in 1954, but Texans refused to accept it peacefully. School integration moved slowly, as did other civil rights. In 1958, only a little more than one third of the black voters were registered. Tejanos won the right to serve on juries (women had only been granted this right in 1954). Tyler, Texas held out against school integration until a federal judge enforced the federal law. By 1958, approximately two thirds of the colleges and universities were integrated. The issue of integration was one of the fiercest battles fought in Texas in the decade of the 1950's.

Highway construction in Texas accelerated at a phenomenal rate during the 1950's. The first toll road in Texas was between Dallas and Fort Worth, and was opened in 1957. Since then, the highway system has become one of the best in the nation.

A number of scandals rocked Texas in the 1950's. There were insurance company bankruptcies because of mismanagement of funds, and veterans land program frauds. The "hippie" movement infiltrated the urban areas, and the drug culture soon followed it. As a result, Texas passed some of the nation's harshest laws for drug offenses.

Texas was changing its image in the 1950's, from an open-space, agricultural/ranching status to one of urbanization (in several concentrated areas), industrialization, and technology. There was a duality in this decade that still exists: the older, rural customs and philosophy persisted but were mixed with the urbanized, high-tech modernization. The volcanic individualism of the frontiersman was expressed by Saturday afternoon "wars" on the gridiron; the finest football in the nation was played in high school stadiums all over Texas. At the end of the decade, Texas would have its own professional football team, the Dallas Cowboys.

In entertainment, Maria Callas appeared in Dallas, in the production "Medea" and was given a six minute, standing ovation. "Giant" was filmed in Texas in 1955, and starred Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, and James Dean.

In education, there was a tremendous increase in the number of colleges and universities because of the influx of veterans from both World War II and the Korean War. The G.I. Bill of Rights enabled these veterans to attend a college at little or no expense to themselves, and large numbers of them took advantage of this opportunity. In 1958, the National Defense Education Act added impetus to the influx of college students by providing low interest student loans.

In 1958, the status of women in higher education received a boost as two Bryan women were admitted to Texas A & M (previously an all-male school). As integration gradually became a reality, the quality of education at all levels became an issue. Although public schools were still largely run by men, there were many women teachers. Few women were in positions of responsibility, either at the principal level or as chairmen of departments, but the administrative role of women in education was increasing.

The role of women in general, in Texas, was in a state of transition in the 1950's. The rural character of the state had retarded the change, but as urbanization increased, the numbers of women working also increased. At the beginning of the decade, the women's labor force had more than doubled from 1920, but jobs were concentrated in the clerical areas. Black and Hispanic women made up the greater part of the service occupations (cooks, maids, servants, etc.), but as the integration process progressed, there was a shift to the teaching and nursing professions. Cultural attitudes toward working women have been slow to change, but increased opportunity and the desire for higher levels of education have enhanced the status of women in the employment sector.

...IN AUSTIN

The decade of the 1950's in Austin reflected many of the national fads and feelings. High school students gyrated to Elvis Presley's music, while Marilyn Monroe captivated movie audiences. Polio was conquered, and integration was painful.

The City of Austin was named twice, by the "Sales Management Magazine," as one of the best retail markets in the nation. Bonds were sold for capital improvements, and a \$36.8 million budget program was adopted. The site for the Municipal Reservoir was purchased by the city, and the North Austin Post Office began its operations. The North Loop and Cameron Village Shopping Centers opened for business. The University Baptist Church celebrated its golden anniversary, the Strategic Air Command replaced the Tactical Air Command at Bergstrom Air Force Base, and there was a fire at the Hitchin' Post Restaurant on Halloween night. Heat records were broken on August 12 and 13, with temperatures of 102° and 103° respectively; the same month, a record low of 65° was recorded on August 26.

The Austin Public Schools had a record enrollment of 29,726 in 1958. They won a safety award, but had to employ a detective agency to stop vandalism on school property. The School Board prohibited married students from participating in extra-curricular activities, but introduced integration into the ninth grades in the Fall. Sandra Kay Hall was the first black student to be admitted to a white junior high school in Austin. Carolyn Calvert, a 1957 graduate of Austin High School, was chosen Miss Texas. Brand new McCallum High School won honors from the Texas High School Press Association for their newspaper and yearbook, and named their new athletic field, "Veterans Field."

Visitors to Austin in 1958 were numerous. Among them were: author, Katherine Anne Porter; movie star, Jayne Mansfield; United States Secretary-Treasurer, Robert B. Anderson; and entertainers, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. Benny Goodman gave a concert at the Gregory Gym, on the University of Texas campus.

The University of Texas marked its 75th birthday with a huge rededication ceremony and celebration. The Santa Rita oil rig was placed on the campus and dedicated, and the original manuscript for "The Eyes of Texas" was loaned permanently to the University.

Austin has been described as a "small city," with the flavor of a small town. It has cultural, political, educational, and technological centers, but has retained the "neighborhood" feeling. The changes begun in the 1950's have helped Austin maintain its character without losing its unique personality.