Frisco experienced a population growth of over 60% in the 1950’s. The 1960’s would continue to see growth as the town started 1960 with a population of 1,184 and closed the decade with a population of over 1,800—an increase of more than 50%.

The decade began with Dwight D. Eisenhower as president and ended with Richard M. Nixon in the Whitehouse. The 1960’s were marked by the Vietnam War, the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, assassinations of political leaders President John F. Kennedy, his brother, Robert, and civil rights leaders Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X.

On July 20, 1969, Americans gathered around their television sets to watch Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walk on the surface of the moon. A few weeks later, on August 15, nearly half a million “hippies” gathered in the small upstate New York town of Bethel for the Woodstock Music Festival. It was billed as “3 Days of Peace & Music.” It became a wild weekend of “sex, drugs, and rock & roll” ending with the promoters losing over $1.3 million dollars.

In Frisco, the 1960’s saw the end of passenger train service, leaving the town built by a railroad company without any kind of public transportation. The original depot was demolished.

In this newsletter, we will remember Robert Ray Brown, a young Frisconian killed in action in Vietnam and Joe Murphy, the first Frisco police officer killed in the line of duty. We’ll talk about how Frisco schools were desegregated making way for all of Frisco’s children to attend school together regardless of skin color. Some other 1960’s topics include the opening of the Z.T. Acker Elementary School, the dedication of the Frisco Youth Center, an Olympian with a connection to Frisco. We’ll also share a couple of recipes from the 1963 Junior Class Cookbook—submitted by some very special Texans, and a few more “far out,” “groovy,” and “happening” things from 1960’s Frisco.
Robert Ray Brown, KIA in Service to his Country

Robert Ray Brown grew up during a time of change for Frisco, and the nation. The first 8 years of his schooling, he attended the segregated Hamilton School. For his first two years of high school, Robert was bussed to the Frederick Douglass School in Plano.

When Frisco schools desegregated in 1964, Robert attended Frisco High School where he lettered in football and was a member of Future Farmers of America.

Robert graduated from Frisco High School in 1966. By July, he was registered in the U. S. Army. He served in Germany for one year before being sent to Vietnam. Just three weeks after arriving in Vietnam, Robert was killed in action on October 1, 1967 while serving with the 2nd “River Raider” Brigade, 9th Infantry Division south of Saigon. Robert was 20 years old at the time of his death.

Ginger Duncan Matthews recalls going to the Brown home with her father, postmaster Tommy Duncan, to deliver the telegram about Robert’s death. Ginger and Robert’s sister, Thelma, were friends and classmates. He told her they weren’t going there to socialize, but to bring some awful news. Tommy Duncan knew the devastating impact this message would bring to the Brown family as his own brother, Sydney, was killed during World War II. Ginger remembered it was the first time she saw her father cry. He told her it was because Frisco lost one of their own. For the first time, the war was “real” to Ginger.

Due to confusion regarding his home of record, which is listed as Plano, and his ties to Frisco, having graduated from FHS just before enlisting, Robert’s name was inadvertently omitted from Frisco’s KIA Memorial Wall in Frisco Commons. This error was corrected in 2016 when Robert’s name was added to the memorial and his ultimate sacrifice gratefully acknowledged by the Frisco community. His portrait is displayed in the Collin County Court House as part of the Collin County Fallen Warriors Portrait Project.

Patrolman Joe Murphy – First Frisco Police Officer Killed in the Line of Duty

In the early hours of January 29, 1968, Patrolman Joe Murphy, 32, was involved in an accident on Preston Road at FM 1461. It is believed he was in pursuit of a vehicle carrying people who had been creating a disturbance in downtown Frisco. There were several reports from citizens who heard gunshots about 10 minutes before the crash. Murphy hit the rear end of a grain truck as it was backing on to Preston Road while making a U-turn. Joe had been with the Frisco Police 8 months at the time of his death. The FPD was less than 3 years old, at the time.

Joe was survived by his wife, Donna, his 3-year-old daughter Josie Bel, his parents, four sisters and three brothers—including WWII hero and actor, Audie Murphy. Joe Murphy’s name is engraved on the sculpture called “Transparent Strength” located outside of the Frisco Police station and his portrait (shown here) hangs in the Collin County Russell A. Steindam Courts Building.
The 1960 Summer Olympics

Did you know there was a tie to Frisco at the 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome? Pole vaulter, David Clark, was born here in Frisco on April 28, 1936.

Although his family later moved to Grand Prairie, David spent his early years here in Frisco, attending elementary school here.

David attended North Texas State College and was their first student athlete to participate on a US Olympic team. He was ranked as high as 3rd in the world in 1960 having cleared 15 feet in pole vaulting. David was the first native Texan to accomplish that feat. NTSC threw a “David Clark Appreciation Dinner” and showered him with gifts, certificates, and telegrams from dignitaries including then Vice-Presidential Nominee Lyndon B. Johnson.

At the Rome Olympics, David placed 18th among the pole vaulters. You can bet his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Clark of Frisco, were mighty proud of their high-vaulting grandson!

What’s Cooking?

Among the recipes in the 1963 Junior Class Cookbook are these two from Ladybird Johnson. Note that the Chili recipe is “a favorite recipe of Vice-President and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson”. The recipes were submitted for publication before LBJ became President upon the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

We don’t know how the recipes came to Frisco, but it is a little bit of Texas history in our local cookbook.
November 22, 1963

“The President has been shot!” Do you remember where you were when you heard the news that President Kennedy had been shot? Ask anyone who was alive at the time, and they will tell you. One such story from Frisco was published in the November 28, 1963 Frisco Enterprise.

Prominent businessman and former Frisco mayor R. K. Hollas was in Dallas to see and hear President John F. Kennedy speak at a luncheon at the Dallas Trade Mart on Friday, November 22, 1963. He planned to relay the accounts of the event in a special feature article in the Frisco Enterprise.

The invitation-only crowd of 2,600 people enjoyed a Texas steak lunch at tables decorated with yellow roses while waiting for the President, Governor John Connally, and their wives to arrive; and to hear a much-anticipated speech by Kennedy. Shortly after 1 p.m., what they heard instead was that there had been a “mishap” with the motorcade. That was a half hour after the expected 12:30 p.m. arrival of the President. Ten minutes later, at 1:13 p.m., the crowd was told the President and Governor Connally had both been shot.

R. K. Hollas recalled the moments following the announcement saying, “We were just so stunned and for some time nobody seemed to move.” He would have only been a few yards from the President and First Lady’s table and was anticipating a wonderful afternoon. He is further quoted in the article, “I fully meant to give a complete and detailed report of the affair (the luncheon) but now there is nothing to say.”

Following the assassination, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared Monday, November 25, 1963 a National day of mourning. Frisco joined towns and cities across America in closing businesses and holding memorials for the late president.

Today, visitors to the Sixth Floor Museum can see the place setting that waited for President Kennedy at the Dallas Trade Mart on November 22, 1963. It is a simple, yet poignant reminder of that fateful afternoon and where one Frisconian was when he heard the terrible news.
**Z. T. Acker Elementary School**

The Acker family were strong believers in education starting with Zachary T. Acker. He was a teacher in Alabama before moving his family to Texas in a covered wagon in 1880. Finding no schools here, he taught his children himself. Later, as schools were established, he sent his children to different schools each year—depending on whichever one he felt was the best at the time. At their father’s insistence, all seven of the Acker children had at least one year of college education as well. Two of his daughters, Mattie Acker Smith and Josephine Acker Staley, became schoolteachers.

In 1961, Mattie Acker Smith donated 11 acres of land on Hickory Street for the construction of an elementary school—provided the school would be built within three years.

When the school construction was completed, the FISD board, school faculty, and staff were very proud of Frisco’s new, modern education facility. Invitations were sent out for the dedication of the Z.T. Acker Elementary School, to be held on Sunday, November 24, 1963.

Because of the assassination of John F. Kennedy just two days earlier, the event was nearly cancelled, but it was decided to move ahead. Although the day was overshadowed by sadness, more than 200 people attended the dedication. The US and Texas flags were raised on the flagpole and lowered to half staff in honor of the fallen President.

When the Z. T. Acker Elementary School opened in 1963, it was the first Frisco school dedicated to only the elementary grades. In 2001 the Acker Elementary building became home to the early childhood center and administration offices. Today, it is the Z. T. Acker Special Programs Center.

People arriving in Frisco today find a community with over 70 schools to meet the needs of all of Frisco’s children. Z. T. Acker and his family would be very proud of that legacy.
Frisco Community Youth Center

A committee, headed by Mayor Benton Staley, and Board members Erwin Pink, M. A. Anderson, Erle Grossman, W. M. Stribling, Cal Wester, Bill Christie and Bruce Wills was organized in early 1954 to raise funds to build a Community Youth Center in Frisco. No money was spent on any part of the project if it wasn’t already in the bank. That was a firm rule set by the Board of Directors. Bill Christie and Cal Wester had recently purchased land to develop the Christie-Wester Addition and sold 4.31 acres to the Youth Center for exactly what they paid for it.

A swimming pool was constructed first. Some of the materials were donated and others provided at cost, which allowed a $35,000 pool to be constructed for just $13,000. The pool opened in the summer of 1956 and tennis courts were added the following year. In 1959, the construction began on a building.

The community came together with donations of money and materials to make the Center a reality. A bronze statue of sisters playing in water was donated by Mexican artist, Augusto Escobedo. Escobedo was a friend of Erle Grossman and wanted to give a gift to the children of Frisco from the children of Mexico City. Another artist, Perry Nichols of Dallas, created a large stone mosaic on one wall of the building. It featured rocks from around the world that were mailed to Frisco for the project. It also included a prehistoric fish bone that was found in Frisco by Mr. and Mrs. John Kerley, Jr.

On July 30, 1960, the Frisco Community Youth Center was dedicated with the Honorable Sam Rayburn as the featured speaker. A full day of activities was planned as Frisconians celebrated the realization of their hard work.

The Center also had a Junior Board made up of students. Grades 6-12 were each represented by one boy and one girl who brought their concerns to the Senior Board.

Although the Frisco schools were not desegregated until 1964, the Frisco Community Youth Center was opened to all residents of Frisco regardless of color. Continued, next page
The Frisco Community Youth Center operated until the early 2000’s. As Frisco grew, it outgrew this space. The pool was filled in and the building demolished. The pool’s bathhouse and concession stand were gutted and turned into an open-air structure. A new Athletic Center was constructed on Preston Road with a much larger indoor-outdoor pool to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population.

The stone mural is gone, but a rendering made by the artist hangs in City Hall. “The Sisters” statue now lives in the Frisco Heritage Center after having gone missing for decades. Frisco has grown by leaps and bounds—that growth directed and driven by the same leadership that created a Youth Center through determination and hard work to make Frisco a better place for all its citizens.

Above: The schedule for the July 30, 1960 dedication of the Frisco Community Youth Center.

Right: Augusto Estobedo’s statue fountain, “The Sisters” can be seen in the photo in its original location outside of the Youth Center. It is now on display next to the Lebanon Baptist Church in the Frisco Heritage Center.

In the 1960’s, the Frisco Enterprise ran a weekly “hidden camera shopper” contest. If you saw your picture in the paper, you won $7.50 gift certificate just for shopping in downtown Frisco at one of the businesses that advertised in the Enterprise.

Frisco Enterprise, February 22, 1968
Hamilton School and Desegregation

From 1924 to 1964 African American children in Frisco and the surrounding farms attended the Hamilton School through 8th grade, then traveled to McKinney or Plano to attend segregated high schools. Hamilton was a one-room school located by the railroad tracks on First and Ash Streets, across from the Hamilton Baptist Church. Rev. Jack Hamilton came to Frisco in 1914 and founded the church. In 1924 he formed the school as there was no school for the black children at that time. The school had no running water, restrooms, or heaters, and the students used old textbooks handed down from the white children’s school.

Following 8th grade, black students attended the E. S. Doty High School in McKinney, or the Frederick Douglass School for African Americans, in Plano. This ended in August of 1964 when the FISD board voted to integrate Frisco schools. The Hamilton School was closed, and the building sold. It was moved to Half Elm Street and renovated as a single-family home.

Mrs. Portia Ross Taylor was the principal and teacher at Hamilton. For 34 years she traveled from her home in Dallas, stayed with local Frisco families during the school week, and returned home on the weekends. She loved her students and they loved her. The Portia Ross Taylor Elementary School was opened in 2006.

The Frisco Enterprise featured a senior student each week during 1968. Oscar Smith was Portia Taylor’s student at Hamilton before starting Frisco High School in the fall of 1964 as a freshman in the newly integrated school.
The Texas International Pop Festival

Most people remember Woodstock. Just two weeks later, over the Labor Day weekend, hippies inundated North Texas — many coming directly from Woodstock—for the Texas International Pop Festival. Some Frisco youths might have joined the festivities, which drew about 150,000 spectators the Dallas International Speedway over the course of the 3-day festival. It also drew the ire of local residents who did not want to see Lewisville become another Woodstock.

The shenanigans included the same as those in NY—open use of narcotics, skinny-dipping, and other openly lewd behavior. Some of the spectators weren’t there for the music, but to watch the skinny-dippers in the nearby lake “fly their freak flag.” It was the first and last time the festival was held in Lewisville.

Frisco VFW Post No. 8273 Organized

Frisco Veterans met in January of 1968 at the Community Center on Oak Street to organize Frisco VFW Post No. 8273, which still operates in our community today. Among the many traditions Post 8273 started in 1968 is lining Main Street with flags for important holidays. The photo on the left is from Armed Services Day, May 18, 1968.

Images from The Frisco Enterprise
The Royal Drive In

The Royal Drive In opened on September 14, 1968 and brought a welcome new restaurant to Frisco. Located on the northwest corner of SH289 (Preston Road) and Main Street, the restaurant was popular with the locals. The building is now home to Aiya Asian Cuisine.

Left: Still under construction, the expected opening was early August. Frisco Enterprise, July 25, 1968

Below: The Grand Opening was held September 14, 1968. The Courier Gazette, September 17, 1968

From the Heritage Association of Frisco Board of Directors

The Board of Directors met via Zoom in June to discuss the continued cancellation of meetings and events while the COVID-19 situation continues. Here are a few things you should know:

- There will be no July or August 3rd Sunday Open House. We plan to resume 3rd Sunday in September.
- We are going ahead with planning for Shawnee Trail Cowboy Day in September but will continue to monitor the situation. We are working with the City of Frisco to come up with a plan for a safe event.

If you have not paid your annual dues, or you would like to become a member, please visit our website at www.friscoheritage.org. There are two ways to complete and submit your membership application.

1. Fill out and submit an online application at www.friscoheritage.org and pay through PayPal.
2. Download, print it, fill it out and mail it along with your check to: Heritage Association of Frisco
   PO Box 263
   Frisco, TX 75034
From the President’s Desk

Greetings to our quarantined Heritage Association of Frisco members and friends. It has been quite a while since we have been able to get together. Sadly, with the uptick in cases here in Texas, I think it will be a bit longer before we can be together for a meeting. The HAF Board met on Zoom this week. We are working on a virtual presentation to share with you all. While the pandemic has made it necessary to rethink our plans, I know that we can get through this. More information to come.

Unfortunately, we will be cancelling our Third Sunday events and in person meetings until the Fall. We are still trying to see how and if we can make Shawnee Trail Cowboy Day happen. We will continue to share pages from Zoie’s coloring book “Frisco Through the Ages” on our website and Facebook pages. Vicki Burns will be continuing to share suggestions and ideas to help you in doing genealogy work online.

We are honored to announce that Alex McEachern was the recipient of the Heritage Association of Frisco’s Scholarship which we sponsor through the Frisco Education Foundation. Alex will be attending University of Missouri in the Fall. He intends to major in History and Political Science.

As always, I would like to encourage you all to renew your membership and help us to continue to research, preserve and share Frisco’s rich heritage. Let us explore the past and imagine the future together. Please take care and be safe.

Historically yours,
Donna Schmittler, President, Heritage Association of Frisco

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Researching Your Roots

One of the most used websites for Genealogy is www.familysearch.org. It is a wonderful website with lots of records to search. They are adding new information all the time.

This month's tip is to show you how to search Books on the familysearch.org web site. You can go the the Search tab and scroll down to Books. Or you can use this link: https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/

The partner libraries include ones from Dallas, Houston, Arizona, Florida, BYU, and St. Louis to name a few. All the books are fully searchable. Like the searchable records, this digital library is free to use. I typed in my Great Grandfather’s last name, “Leque” and the first result was a Family History written by a descendant of my Great Grandfather's sister. In this family history, it gave me new information on the sister that I did not have before.

I hope this tip will lead you to new information about your family.

Vickie Burns
Chairman, Genealogy Committee
These telegrams were just two of the many well-wishes the people of Frisco received for the grand opening of the Youth Center. They were read to the attendees at the July 30, 1960 celebration.