

# What were the 1960s like in Oklahoma?

Chapter

16

**What was unique about J. Howard Edmondson's win as governor in 1959?** J. Howard Edmondson was inaugurated in January 1959. At 33, he was the state's youngest governor in history. Edmondson's "prairie fire" and "Big Red E" campaigns (both named for his red hair) brought him from behind to win the Democratic primary. He won the general election by the largest majority ever given a governor in the state.

Born in Muskogee in September 1925, Edmondson earned a law degree from the University of Oklahoma. He served in the Air Force and was a Tulsa County attorney before becoming governor. That year, the Oklahoma Hall of Fame named him an honorary member. He was honored as one of the nation's Ten Most Outstanding Young Men.

Although the country had repealed Prohibition years earlier, the state was still "dry." But the state did not *enforce* the law well. Edmondson promised he would either *enforce* or repeal Prohibition, and he ended up doing both. He said that "every Oklahoman who votes dry will drink dry." He turned to Attorney General Joe Cannon to *enforce* Prohibition. Law *enforcement* officials raided bars and nightclubs which were illegally serving liquor. They also targeted bootleggers for breaking the law.

Perhaps for the first time, citizens knew what it meant to be "dry." People who had never given up liquor learned what true Prohibition meant. They saw the actual *enforcement* of Prohibition was expensive. From the daily news, it seemed that most sheriffs and police were busy full-time with "bar busting." Who was going after the "real" criminals?

Previously, any teenager with the right information and enough money could buy alcohol. Now adults started thinking regulations might protect teenagers better. After all, bootleggers would be out of business. State laws would keep most young people out of bars, nightclubs, and liquor stores.

Legislators wrote a *referendum* for a Liquor Control Act. They sug-



**Governor  
J. Howard  
Edmondson**

gested an Alcoholic Beverage Control Board could license liquor stores. On April 7, 1959, the question went to the people in an election. It carried 386,845 votes to 314,830 votes, and added the Twenty-seventh Amendment to the Oklahoma Constitution. The first package (liquor) stores opened on September 1, 1959.

Another Edmondson accomplishment was starting a Central Purchasing System for state agencies. He also set up a State Merit System to hire and promote state workers according to tests. He put a tax withholding system into effect, making it easier for the state to collect income taxes.

In 1960, the voters approved Question 391, forming the Oklahoma Industrial Finance Authority. They allowed it to issue up to \$10 million in bonds to develop industry. They also approved a \$35 million bond issue for state buildings.

The “winds of politics” changed directions midway through Governor Edmondson’s term. Opposition to his programs began to grow. For instance, because of the population shift from rural to urban areas, the governor asked for *reapportionment*. He wanted to re-map congressional districts to give urban areas more votes. He also asked for a highway commission set up by the State Constitution. It would have administered funds and handled other matters usually handled at the county level. When the legislature refused these proposals, the governor took them to the people. They turned down his ideas, too.

The governor and the legislature reached a *stalemate* (stand-off). Edmondson became less active. Legislators made changes to weaken the State Merit System and Central Purchasing System, but the programs survived. A federal court ordered *reapportionment* of the state.

When Senator Robert S. Kerr died in 1963, the Oklahoma governor had the power to appoint someone to finish the senator’s term. First Edmondson resigned from the governor’s office. The lieutenant governor, George Nigh, succeeded him. Then, as governor, Nigh appointed Edmondson to finish the senator’s term in Congress.

Edmondson served about two years as a U.S. senator. When he ran for the office in 1964, he was defeated. He returned home to practice law. He died of a heart attack on November 17, 1971.

**What effect did the election of youthful leaders have on the U.S.?** The youthful energy of Governor J. Howard Edmondson appealed to many Oklahomans. Similarly, when President John F. Kennedy won the presidential race, he was a great contrast to his predeces-

sor, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Kennedy urged young people to make the world a better place through programs like the Peace Corps overseas and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) at home. He also challenged America to enter the Space Race and put a man on the moon within 10 years. He made the younger generation, especially, feel hopeful and powerful.

**When did Oklahoma City become the nation's largest city?** On October 31, 1961, Oklahoma City became the U.S. city with the largest land area. On that date, the City Council annexed 42.7 square miles of land, making the city 475.5 square miles. The second largest city, Los Angeles, California, was 457.9 square miles. At the start of the twenty-first century, Oklahoma City had 608.2 square miles, but was no longer the nation's largest city.

**How did political passions manifest themselves in the 1950s?** Political passions ran high in Oklahoma in the 1960s. At one point, a near-riot occurred in a *confrontation* between Democrats and Republicans. On November 5, 1962, Republicans marched through downtown Oklahoma City in a pre-election, torchlight parade. When they met up with a group of Democrats, both sides jeered at each other. They started pushing and shoving. The police reported two hundred people involved.

A Democratic spokesman said, "The Republicans just got a little passionate," but he claimed the Republican torches were more like clubs. A Republican spokesman claimed that the Democrats' conduct was "close to being an un-American activity."

For many years, the Republican Party's symbol has been the elephant. That night, Republicans unloaded three elephants in front of Democratic headquarters. Naturally, this angered the Democrats and helped stir the battle. Police "arrested" the elephants and held them in a local garage until Clyde Brothers Circus reclaimed them.

**Who was elected as the state's first Republican governor?** Henry Bellmon accomplished what many people thought impossible in Oklahoma in 1962. He became its first Republican governor.

Born September 28, 1921, in Tonkawa, he grew up in the Billings area, where he was a wheat farmer. Graduating from Oklahoma A&M College in Stillwater in 1942 with a degree in agronomy, Bellmon served in the Marines during World War II. He earned the Legion of



**Governor  
Henry Bellmon**  
*Oklahoma Historical  
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Merit and the Silver Star. Bellmon was Oklahoma's most-decorated governor.

During his campaign, Bellmon told a story about a farmer with a cow for sale. "The first man who looked at the cow wanted to know about her pedigree," he said. "The next fellow inquired about the butterfat content of her milk, and another one asked about her annual milk production. 'All I can tell you,' said the farmer, 'is that she's an honest, hard-working old cow, and she'll give you all the milk she's got.'" Bellmon promised to be like the cow — honest and hard-working.

He had served one term in the state legislature after the war but had no other experience as an elected official. He had served as a precinct committeeman, Noble County Chairman, and State Chairman of the Republican Party.

The Democratic primary had several candidates, including former Governor Raymond Gary. Gary lost to W.P. "Bill" Atkinson, who became the Democratic candidate. He supported a one-cent increase in sales tax. Bellmon preached no new taxes and won the election.

On January 14, 1963, when Bellmon took office, he was younger than all but one previous Oklahoma governor (Edmondson). Despite the new state liquor laws, Bellmon announced that he had served no liquor in his home and would not serve it in the governor's mansion. He did not even serve it at the Inaugural Ball. He also said he would not wear a "cockeyed tux" to the ball.

Bellmon did prove to be hard-working. Even though he served with a Democratic legislature, he signed more bills than any of the three previous administrations had. One was a public housing bill. Despite pressure, Bellmon kept his word about no general tax increases. He did increase the cigarette tax as a fund-raiser for education.

The legal field saw many changes as a result of the work of the thirtieth legislature. It replaced the county attorney system, in which each of the seventy-seven counties had its own attorney. The new system divided the state into twenty-seven districts. Each one hired a district attorney.

Scandal shook the State Supreme Court in the early 1960s. A federal court convicted Vice-Chief Justice Nelson Corn of income tax evasion. While in prison, Corn gave evidence of other justices accepting bribes. Justice Earl Welch resigned from office to avoid impeachment. A federal court later convicted him. Justice N.B. Johnson was impeached, convicted, and removed from office.

## Do You Know?

Oklahoma has produced more astronauts than any other state. These include Major General Thomas P. Stafford (Weatherford), Gordon Cooper (Shawnee), Owen Garriott (Enid), Shannon Lucid (Bethany), and William Reid Pogue (Okemah).

Bellmon inherited the problem of *reapportionment* (the division of congressional districts). He and the legislature tried to work out a solution. They passed a law in 1963, but a three-judge panel ruled that it was unfair. Then the judges themselves divided the state. The first elections under the new plan were in September, 1964.

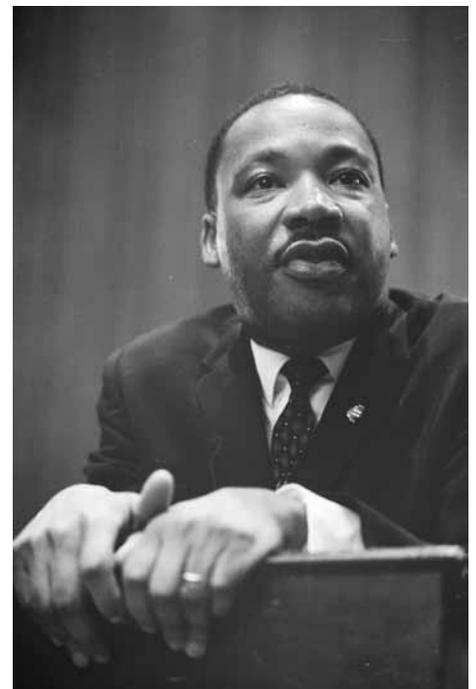
After leaving office in 1967, Bellmon spent a short time at his farm. Soon he became the second Oklahoma governor elected to the U.S. Senate. He defeated long-standing incumbent Mike Monroney. He left the Senate in 1982, returning to the farm.

Public service called him away again the same year when the director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) retired. Governor Nigh asked Bellmon to serve as acting director of the agency. Because of problems within the system, Bellmon resigned from that position within a few months. Later, he served as *interim* director of the Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center in Oklahoma City.

**How did Oklahoma schools operate in the Bellmon years?** Schools got a lot of attention during the Bellmon years. The Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) called for a \$1,000 raise for teachers. When the legislature refused it, the OEA asked the National Education Association (NEA) to investigate the state's schools. The NEA report placed Oklahoma on a national blacklist. It imposed professional sanctions, saying that working conditions were "sub-minimal." The report pointed out that Oklahoma was fortieth among states in spending per student and thirty-seventh in salaries for teachers.

During Governor Bartlett's term, the OEA specifically demanded statewide kindergarten system. Bartlett vetoed that plan. The OEA also asked for more funds for a special education program. They asked the state to improve school libraries and to require smaller teacher-student ratios. The OEA again sanctioned Oklahoma because of what was, in their opinion, a disinterested legislature. Bartlett and several legislative leaders were later able to pass a program to improve the schools, including a \$1,300 annual salary increase for teachers.

**What kind of progress on civil rights issues was made during Governor Bellmon's term?** Nationally, the most controversial issue during Bellmon's administration was civil rights for African-Americans. President John F. Kennedy had won election during Edmonson's term



**Dr. Martin  
Luther King, Jr.**  
*Associated Press*

of office. In fact, he had a hand in Edmondson's appointment to the Senate. Kennedy pushed for a bill granting equality of citizenship and rights to African-Americans. He was assassinated in November 1963, but Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Meanwhile, a young African-American minister named Martin Luther King Jr. urged people to use nonviolence to claim their rights. Peaceful protests including marching with signs, riding in the front of a bus, and "sitting in" at segregated lunch counters. Support for their civil rights grew. Whites began to join the cause.



**Governor  
Dewey Bartlett**  
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Clara Luper continued leading students in local protests. Five years after their first sit-in at the Katz Drug Store, all restaurants in downtown Oklahoma City were integrated. Bishop's Restaurant was the last one. After a long siege of sit-ins, the management finally agreed on June 4, 1963, to *negotiate* for integration.

Protests and marches began drawing attention to all kinds of civil rights. Women and sexual minorities spoke out against *discrimination*. Latino migrants organized a union to protect their rights. These efforts were peaceful but controversial: They angered some citizens and gave hope to others.

Despite the success of nonviolent protests, many people were frustrated with the rate of change in America. At times, frustration did erupt into violence.

**Who was Governor Dewey Bartlett?** Dewey Bartlett became the second Republican governor of Oklahoma in 1967. Born in Marietta, Ohio, in March 1919, Bartlett received a degree in geological engineering from Princeton University. He served as a Marine combat dive bomber during World War II and earned the Air Medal.

Since the court scandals in the early 1960s, the legislature had wanted to reform the courts. It sent a proposal to the public soon after Bartlett took office in 1967, and the measure passed. It eliminated the justice-of-the-peace system in Oklahoma. It also created nonpartisan election of judges.

Bartlett's administration was one of investigation. It charged several officials, including State Corporation Commissioners, with conflict of interest. He vetoed a bill to increase salaries for state officials.

The voters approved a constitutional amendment allowing Okla-

homa governors to succeed themselves in office. Dewey Bartlett was the first to try. He lost by a mere 2,190 votes. A recount confirmed that David Hall was the winner of the 1970 election.

Bartlett went on to win a seat in the U.S. Senate. There he served alongside Henry Bellmon, his predecessor as governor. Bartlett resigned from the Senate because of health problems. He died of cancer at the age of 60.

**Who was Mike Monroney?** Almer Stilwell “Mike” Monroney was a long-time senator from the Fifth District. He had been born in Oklahoma City in 1902. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1932 and married Mary Ellen Mellon on July 3 of the same year. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1939 to 1951. He served in the U.S. Senate from 1951 through 1968. He received *Collier’s* Award for Distinguished Congressional Service in 1945.

Monroney had a great personal interest in aviation. He sponsored legislation to protect and develop the industry. He received the Wright Brothers Trophy in 1961. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) named the Aeronautical Center of Oklahoma City in his honor.

**What was the Vietnam Era?** It is hard to say exactly when America first got involved in the Vietnam War. Since the end of World War II, American presidents had watched events there. They sent military advisors to resist a Communist take-over from the North. By 1963, there were thousands of American advisors in South Vietnam, but the general public barely heard of the place.

In 1964, the *Maddox*, an American ship, was attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Viet Cong (communists from North Vietnam) thought the ship had been sent to assist the South Vietnamese. Actually, it was on a scientific mission. As a result of the attack, Congress sent a message to President Johnson “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States, and to prevent further aggression.” American involvement escalated (increased in range and intensity). Within the year, Johnson sent thirty thousand troops to Southeast Asia.

By 1967, when Governor Bartlett took office, Vietnam was a household word in Oklahoma. The next year there were 540,000 Americans fighting the war, part of an international force of 1.6 million soldiers. Nevertheless, U.S. officials were committed to “limited involvement” — the same kind of policy that had existed during the Korean War. But the draft called up more and more young men.

The American people were divided on the issue of the war. The “Doves” opposed the war while the “Hawks” believed in the cause. Some thought no troops should have been sent. Some thought enough troops should be sent to put a quick end to the war. Others liked the government’s policy of limited involvement. Through it all, TV brought the war into living rooms and affected people’s perceptions.

Since the war was a central issue of the presidential campaign of 1968, the Democratic Convention in Chicago was disrupted with a week-long protest. Ten thousand people with various causes assembled peacefully. But when they were met by police in riot gear, their assembly turned violent. The nightly news showed police using tear gas on, and beating, protesters, journalists, and by-standers.

**What occurred in the protest movements during the Vietnam Era?** As the U.S. increased its troops in Vietnam, more and more people opposed the war. By the late 1960s, demonstrations were a common means of protest both for students and adults. They marched with signs demanding that soldiers be brought home. They lit bonfires so young men could burn their draft cards. Musicians played anti-war songs. Veterans of World War II could not understand how people could criticize their own country, but the opposition was too large to ignore.

Many protests began on college campuses. Fearing the same disorder in Oklahoma, the state legislature and the governor passed a “speaker ban” statute. They wrote it to keep “outside agitators” off local campuses. In 1969, the statute was questioned in court. In 1970, Oklahoma’s Attorney General G.T. Blankenship declared it unconstitutional because it tried to limit free speech.

**What was the significance of “one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind?”** With all of these difficulties tearing the nation apart, the optimism of young people certainly had setbacks. Both the President and his brother, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, were assassinated, as was Martin Luther King Jr. There seemed to be no end to the Vietnam War. The tension in America grew worse, as did the “gap” between the generations.

Then in July, 1969, NASA’s Apollo 11 made a lunar landing. When Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon he referred to it as a giant leap for mankind. And the nation came together — in front of TV sets — to



**Carl Albert by Charles Banks Wilson. This portrait hangs in the U.S. Capitol.**

watch the remarkable scene.

### **What scandals were associated with President Nixon's terms?**

President Richard M. Nixon had been elected in '68 and again in '72. His running mate was Spiro Agnew, who had been governor of Maryland. But Agnew was investigated for accepting bribes and not reporting income while governor. He resigned from office in '73. Nixon appointed Gerald R. Ford, from the U.S. House of Representatives, as new vice-president.

Nixon's campaign for re-election in 1972 included authorizing a break-in at the Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C. As a series of "dirty tricks" became more obvious, Congress had to consider impeaching the President. Instead, Nixon resigned in August 1974. This made Gerald Ford the chief executive. He declared the end of a "long national nightmare" and helped to restore trust in the government.

### **How was Carl Albert twice next in line for the presidency?**

In the midst of these dramatic events, leaders of great integrity stood out. One was Carl Albert from Bugtussle, Oklahoma, who achieved the highest office ever attained by an Oklahoman. In 1971, he became Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

Born in 1908, Albert experienced success early. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1931 and went to Oxford, England, as a Rhodes Scholar. There he earned his LLD (an advanced degree) in 1934. He was admitted to the Bar in 1935. Albert served in World War II and earned the Bronze Star.

He first won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1946. As Democratic Whip from 1955 to 1962, he was responsible for the attendance of Democrats whenever votes were cast. He then served as Majority Leader (1962-1971) and became Speaker of the House in 1971. One of the Speaker's duties is to assume the role of vice president in case of disability, death, or resignation. As explained above, Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigned in 1973.



***At an anti-war protest at the Pentagon in October 1967, student protestors put flowers in the barrels of the National Guard rifles.***

***© Monkmeyer Press Service, Paul Conklin***

After Nixon chose Ford as vice president, the Senate had to approve him. Until that approval, Albert was next in line for the presidency. In fact, after Nixon resigned, Ford became president. Then he chose his own vice president, and until the Senate approved him, Carl Albert was again next in line to be commander-in-chief.

A man of small stature, Albert held great power. He was known affectionately as “the Little Giant from Little Dixie.” He retired in 1972 to his home area of McAlester, where he was regarded as an elder statesman. He continued to be influential in Oklahoma political circles until his death in 2000.



**Mayor Patience  
Latting**  
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**Who was Patience Latting?** In 1971, the people of Oklahoma City elected a woman as mayor. Patience Sewell Latting was the first woman to head the government of a city of more than 200,000 people. She was one of only fourteen women to lead cities of more than thirty thousand residents.

Nationally, equal rights for women were a hot topic. Many people wanted to liberate (free) men and women from traditional roles. Politicians had to choose their words carefully to avoid offending voters of both genders. When Latting’s opponent, Bill Bishop, stated, “Running against a woman is the most impossible thing I’ve ever had to do,” it offended some women. Trying to walk the tightrope of public opinion, Mayor Latting pleaded, “Please don’t make me out as a *women’s liberationist*.” The 52-year-old took office after a campaign against “cronyism” (employment of friends and relatives) in government.

Latting had an impressive background. When she earned a degree in mathematics from the University of Oklahoma, she was only nineteen. She served as legislative chair for the Oklahoma Parent-Teachers Association and wrote the *reapportionment* plan which was adopted for the state legislature. In New York, she earned a master’s degree in economics and statistics from Columbia University. She also worked for a time at the famous Chase-Manhattan Bank as a researcher. It was not Latting’s goal to challenge tradition, but she did it several times.

**Who was Governor David Hall?** Voters elected David Hall governor in 1970. During his term of office, he distinguished himself in several positive ways.

Born in 1930 in Oklahoma City, Hall earned a bachelor’s degree in government and history from the University of Oklahoma in 1952. He

served in the U.S. Air Force from 1952 to 1954 and was a captain in the Air Force Reserves. In 1959, he graduated from the University of Tulsa School of Law. Hall worked as Tulsa County Attorney from 1962 to 1966 and then went into private practice. He was a professor of law at the University of Tulsa in 1968.

Hall was very much a community leader. He sat on the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America. He held offices in several professional organizations for attorneys. A Mason and a Shriner, he worked with young men to develop personal responsibility and leadership skills.

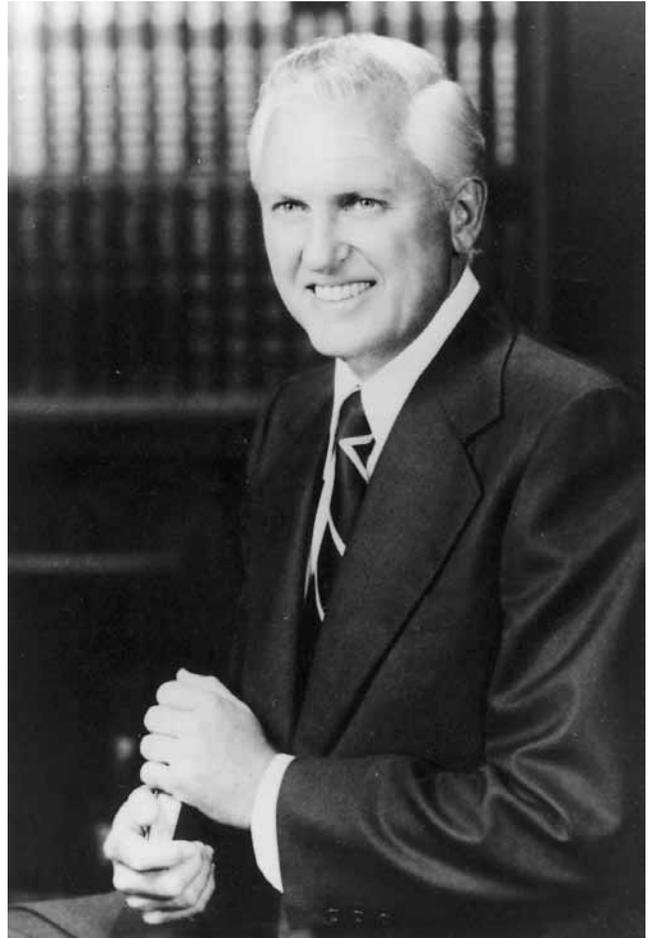
When Hall took office in 1971, he inherited financial problems. State income did not meet agency needs. Per-pupil spending had dropped to a ranking of forty-fifth of the fifty states. So Hall proposed tax increases. The legislature approved increases in the oil and gas taxes, state income taxes, and liquor taxes. These raised \$43 million in *revenue*. Most of it went to education.

The lawmakers also approved the Public Kindergarten Law, making state-funded kindergarten available for students. Hall also proposed bills in special education and vocational training. He worked to bring more business into the state, especially to the poorer counties. In 1973, new industry worth \$613 million came to Oklahoma. Governor Hall made a bid for re-election but lost in the primary to David Lyle Boren.

Hall's impressive record of community leadership ended suddenly. In 1975, just four days after the end of his term, a federal grand jury accused Hall of *extortion* and bribery. The charge was that he conspired to bribe the Secretary of State to invest \$10 million in state retirement funds in a private company.

The jury convicted Hall in 1976. The judge sentenced him to three years in a federal prison. The court released Hall on his own recognizance (promise to appear) and he drove himself to prison at the appropriate time. He served eighteen months and was released.

**What was the McAlester Prison Riot?** The most serious problem Hall faced as governor was the McAlester prison riot. The prison had



**Governor  
David Hall**  
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been built to house 1,100 inmates but was over-crowded for years. In 1973 it held more than 2,200 inmates. That summer they started one of the worst prison riots in American history.

Beginning Friday afternoon, July 27, 1973, the riot lasted through the weekend. Inmates seized employees as hostages and started fires. At one point, an inmate shouted over the public address system, “This is a revolution!” Angry inmates took revenge against their enemies. Three died of stab wounds.



**Governor  
David Boren**  
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National Guard units arrived. Four government officials worked through the weekend to bring peace to the area. They were Chairman of the State Board of Corrections Irvine Ungerman, Commissioner of Public Safety Wayne Lawson, Director of the Department of Corrections Leo McCracken, and McAlester Penitentiary Warden Park Anderson. Both individually and as a group, they met, at first, with several hundred prisoners. Main negotiations were with a group of 130 prisoners. Finally, a spokesman for the inmates, Dan Kuykendall, emerged. He was an inmate from Pittsburg County.

Hostages were freed on July 28. The riot officially ended at noon that same day. But most of the prison lay smoldering and four inmates were dead. Forty other people, inmates and guards, were injured.

Within a year, the prison added more recreational facilities. It developed inmate organizations with links to Alcoholics Anonymous, drug abuse groups, and *ethnic* groups. Officials lifted *restrictions* from mail and reading material. They put a barber shop in each of the cell houses. A new accounting system for inmates discouraged “*loan sharking*” and gave greater protection to the majority.

Adding to the problems already imposed by the riot, Federal District Judge Luther Bohanon ruled in 1974 that “double-celling” was unconstitutional. This meant McAlester could not house more than one inmate in a single cell. The judge ordered that each inmate must have 60 square feet of space in a cell or 75 square feet of space in a dormitory. The state faced fines and the loss of federal funds if it did not obey the order.

Hall and succeeding governors Boren and Nigh dealt with the same problems. They granted more paroles and expanded living quarters. Eventually the judge’s order was removed and double-celling was approved in 1982.

**Who was Governor David Lyle Boren?** Born in Washington, D.C., on April 21, 1941, David Lyle Boren received a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1963. He earned a master's degree from Oxford University, England, in 1965, and a law degree from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 1968. He was an honor student and a Rhodes Scholar. He was selected as one of the three Outstanding Young Men in Oklahoma in 1969 by the state's Jaycees.

Boren taught political science at Oklahoma Baptist University, where he was chairman of the Division of Social Sciences. He also practiced law. The public elected him to the Oklahoma State House of Representatives in 1966 when he was in his twenties. He served there until becoming governor.

Inaugurated on January 13, 1975, Boren was the first governor to receive more than 500,000 votes in an election. At 34, he was a few months older than J. Howard Edmondson when he took office and the second-youngest governor in state history. In 1975, he was the youngest chief executive in the nation.

While in office, Boren served as chairman of the five-state Ozarks Regional Commission and the Southern Growth Policies Board. He was a member of the Energy Committee of the Southern Governors' Conference and of the Education Commission of the States. He was a member of the Task Force on Social Welfare Reform of the National Governors' Conference and chairman of the Interstate Oil Compact Commission. Some of his most important work was in tax reduction and tax reform.

Boren's marriage to the former Janna Lou Little ended early in his term. Later, he married Judge Molly Shi from Ada.

Boren became the fourth Oklahoma governor to win election to the U.S. Senate. Much later, in 1994, after resigning from the Senate, Boren became President of the University of Oklahoma in Norman. At 53, he said that this move fulfilled a lifelong dream.

**How did the Vietnam War end?** Marches and demonstrations against America's involvement in Vietnam continued. At times they turned violent. When the President, who had promised to end the war, called up more troops, many young people were furious. On May 4, 1970, there was a protest at Kent State University in Ohio. National Guard troops tried to stop it. They shot at students and killed four of them. The nation was enraged. In the next few days, more than eighty colleges closed temporarily because of protests.

In January 1973 the U.S. agreed to a cease-fire agreement with the

## Do You Know?

Oklahoma ranks fourth in the nation in the production of all wheat, fourth in cattle and calf production, fifth in the production of pecans, sixth in peanuts, and eighth in peaches.

Viet Cong and agreed to leave South Vietnam. The last of the fighting men and women returned home in March. As soon as the Americans were gone, the Viet Cong broke the agreement, invading South Vietnam. The war ended on April 30, 1975, when the Viet Cong captured the South Vietnamese capital.

More than 58,000 American soldiers died in the conflict. Thousands of Oklahoma soldiers served in the Vietnam War, and many of them died in Vietnam. Others returned home to a troubled nation, and many felt betrayed. They had done what their government asked of them, and they felt they weren't supported by their countrymen.

Most tried to swallow their feelings and pick up their lives. They went to work or entered school. Some, however, could not shake the emotional *devastation* of the violence they had seen. Their adjustment to civilian life was made harder by the lack of welcome they received at home. The percentage of mental and emotional casualties was much higher after Vietnam than after any other war in modern history.

There is no doubt that this war was different. Even those veterans who successfully put it behind them and got on with their lives seemed to feel some bitterness about their experiences. The unveiling of the Vietnam Veterans War Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Veterans Day 1982 began a national healing. Many Oklahoma names are etched into the memorial wall.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were the major accomplishments of J. Howard Edmondson's term as governor?
2. Who were the first Republican governors in this state?
3. How was Oklahoma significant in the civil rights movement?
4. Explain why Carl Albert was close to the Presidency of the United States.
5. In your opinion, what are advantages and disadvantage of young leaders in government?
6. How long did Mike Monroney serve in the U.S. Senate? Which industry did he promote?
7. What were the results of the McAlester Prison riot?
8. Describe George Nigh's career and achievements.
9. What political scandals made news in Oklahoma during the 1970s?
10. Describe the country's mindset in the 1960s and 1970s.