





## Chapter Six 1960-1969

Houston would get a new nickname in the 1960's. The development of NASA in our region would bring the world to our doorsteps and make the name "Space City" a familiar term. The nickname seemed appropriate since one of the first major fires of the decade was at a "Globe" retail store. Rockets in space were allowed but the city banned fireworks in town.

Houston's southward expansion would include the Medical Center fueling a growing demand for emergency services. A new landmark would grace the plains in the form of a domed stadium. The Astrodome was billed as "The Eighth Wonder of the World" and brought big league dreams to town.

Houston's population would exceed a million people within a 466 square mile radius keeping

its growth on the fast track. In 1965 the Fire Department had 54 Fire Houses and 1341 Fire Fighters to protect the citizens of Houston.

The battle veteran "Water Tower" would see its end of service being replaced by not just one, but two Pitman Snorkel trucks. Prosperity would shine on The Fire Department and Fire Fighters would see a couple pay increases during this decade.

In 1968 a new Central Station was opened. A new central motor repair shop also opened that year at a cost of \$600,000. The 1960's would end with the opening of a new department training academy, a new airport (Houston Intercontinental) to service.

In 1969 the world listened as the first word spoken from the moon was, "Houston".

**Fire Chiefs:**

Joe Lobue  
W.O. Hunter  
C.R. "Jake" Cook

**Line of Duty Deaths:**

Don Contorno  
Claude Jackson Hopkins  
Steve Charlie Baranowski  
James Louis Walls  
Truxton Joseph Hathaway Jr.

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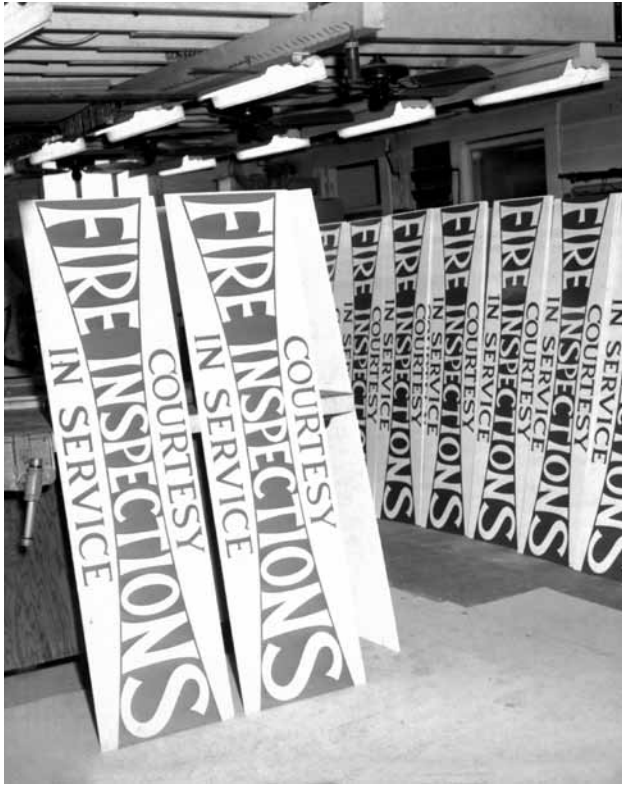
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**Above from Top Left to Bottom Right:** Houston Fire Department Fire Chiefs 1940-1949. (All Photos Houston Fire Department )

Joe Lobue, Fire Chief, 196x-196x

W.O. Hunter, Fire Chief, 196x-196x

C.R. "Jake" Cook, Fire Chief, 196x-196x

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The Astrodome symbolizes the can do spirit of the region. It is located just south of the Medical Center sitting on an old oilfield called Pierce Junction. The temporary “Colt Stadium” can be seen next to it and the Shamrock hotel in the background. 1968. (Library of Congress)