

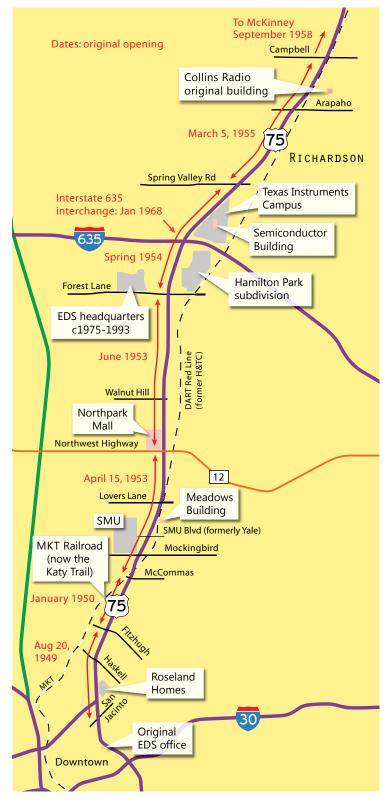
CHAPTER 3

Central Expressway The Original

he freeway era in North Texas began on August 19, 1949, when a crowd estimated at 7000 celebrated the opening of the first section of Central Expressway. Just three years earlier the path of the freeway was the Houston & Texas Central Railroad, the first railroad to be built through Dallas. It was a symbolic moment of triumph for the private automobile as it displaced the railroad for personal transportation. Widespread ownership of automobiles and newly built freeways were poised to transform cities all across the United States. In North Texas, Central Expressway would lead the way into the freeway era, becoming the focus of freeway-inspired innovations and quickly developing into the modern-day main street of Dallas.

Many of the defining attributes of modern-day North Texas were pioneered along Central Expressway. The Meadows Building, opened in 1955 alongside Central Expressway near Lovers Lane, was the first large office building outside downtown and paved the way for the expansion of business into the suburbs. The explosive growth of high-tech industry and the rise of the suburban technology campus began along the Central Expressway corridor in 1958 when Texas Instruments opened the first building of its Central Expressway campus and Collins Radio opened a microwave engineering center in Richardson. Families flocked to the new upscale suburban neighborhoods along Central Expressway and young singles congregated in the large apartment complexes alongside the freeway near Lovers Lane. While it was influential in shaping modern Dallas, Central Expressway also became the first to experience freeway-related problems, including traffic congestion starting in 1953 and, in the 1970s and 1980s, tremendous controversy over how to improve the freeway.

The original Central Expressway remained virtually unchanged in Dallas all the way into the early 1990s when construction finally began on the modernday freeway. Anyone who experienced the original Central Expressway is certain to always remember it. Its substandard 1940s design was a time capsule from Dallas' freeway past. With photographs we can return back in time to relive the era of the original Central Expressway—a time when the possibilities for the new freeway future seemed limitless.



THE HOUSTON & TEXAS CENTRAL RAILROAD



Degolyer Library, Southern Methodist University¹

This photo dated 1940 shows the Texas Special passenger train cruising north on the Houston & Texas Central tracks just south of Lovers Lane. Central Expressway was built just beyond the tracks. The buildings of SMU are visible in the background, including Ownby Stadium (now Ford Stadium) at the far left and campus buildings on the right. The Texas Special was a popular service between San Antonio and St. Louis operated jointly by the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad (also known as the MKT or Katy) and St. Louis-San Francisco Railway (also known as the Frisco) between 1915 and 1964.

The era of railroad transportation in North Texas began on July 16, 1872, when the first train rolled into Dallas from the south on the tracks of the Houston & Texas Central (H&TC) Railroad. A huge celebration was held for the arrival with an estimated crowd of 5000 to 6000 in attendance, quite impressive since Dallas had only 900 residents at the time.¹¹

The railroad nearly bypassed Dallas since preliminary plans aligned the H&TC about halfway between Dallas and Fort Worth and later about eight miles east of present-day downtown. Dallas lured the railroad to be a mile east of the city business district with an offer of \$5000 and 115 acres of land. Immediately, railroad transportation allowed cotton and grain farmers to ship freight to distant markets, prompting a boom in the local economy. With the arrival of the Texas & Pacific railroad, an east-to-west

line, in 1873, Dallas became a railroad junction and the rise of North Texas into a major urban center began.



The H&TC was extended north of downtown on the alignment of the present-day Central Expressway to Mockingbird. North of Mockingbird, the present-day DART red line is built on the alignment of the H&TC. The railroad was completed to McKinney in November 1872 and Denison on the Texas-Oklahoma border in 1873. H&TC was acquired by Southern Pacific in 1883 but continued to operate under the Houston & Texas Central name until 1927 when Southern Pacific consolidated its operations into the Texas and New Orleans Railroad.¹²

The first proposal to remove the railroad was the Kessler Plan of 1911 which recommended building Central



Houston & Texas Central locomotive #245 was built by Schenectady Locomotive Works in 1895 and was scrapped in 1938.

Boulevard on the railroad alignment. Southern Pacific Railways proved to be a tough negotiator and Dallas officials spent the next thirty years trying to reach an agreement for the purchase of the railroad. On June 4, 1941, a contract was signed for the purchase of the H&TC railroad right-of-way for Central Expressway. Plans for the freeway were placed on hold due to World War II, but in 1947 work was underway and the H&TC tracks north of downtown were dismantled.¹³

Central Expressway is named for the Houston & Texas Central Railway. When the name Central Expressway was adopted, "expressway" was the term used for a freeway. In 1951 TxDOT began to differentiate the terms freeway and expressway, educating public officials that the term freeway was correct for a limited-access highway such as Central Expressway. So, the name of Central Expressway pays tribute to its railroad past and also is an artifact of the era when freeways were called expressways. 14

This photograph dated 1947 shows the Houston & Texas Central railroad corridor near present-day Woodall Rodgers Freeway just prior to the removal of tracks for construction of Central Expressway. The area along the tracks near downtown was decayed and run-down, certainly helping to contribute to the strong community support for conversion of the corridor into a boulevard or freeway.



Dallas Public Library¹⁵

Starting in 1911, virtually everyone in Dallas agreed that the Houston & Texas Central (H&TC) railroad tracks should be removed so the corridor could be converted into a parkway or boulevard. Everyone, that is, except the railway. Efforts to relocate the H&TC tracks and clear the way for Central Expressway continued for the next thirty years.

The first plan to recommend the realignment and consolidation of the railroads converging on downtown Dallas was the City Plan For Dallas, authored by George Kessler in 1911. Kessler (1862-1923), a highly regarded landscape architect and planning expert from Kansas City, recommended the construction of a belt loop of railroads around downtown Dallas, allowing for the removal of numerous railroads including the H&TC which would be converted into Central Boulevard, a six-lane parkway on a 200-footwide corridor. A comprehensive engineering study of Dallas railroads in 1915 concluded that the ultimate solution for relieving downtown railroad congestion was the construction of the belt loop around downtown and the removal of tracks within the belt loop, including the H&TC. In the following years substantial progress was made to implement parts of the railroad improvement plan, including the construction of Union Station in 1916, grade separating the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (MKT) Railway in 1919, and the removal of the Texas & Pacific tracks from Pacific Avenue in downtown Dallas in 1921. But progress on the H&TC relocation was elusive.1

In 1921 removal of the H&TC tracks from downtown to the MKT tracks at Mockingbird Lane was at the top of the list of proposed track removals and Mayor Frank Wozencraft appointed a committee to negotiate with the railway. There were signs of progress in April 1923 with a tentative agreement to relocate the tracks for \$2 million, but the deal was not completed. Various commissions, committees, and associations continued efforts to relocate the railroad in the following years, but in 1927 the railway's parent company, Southern Pacific, was still unwilling to relocate.²

A new plan for citywide improvements called the Ulrickson Plan was formulated in 1927 and a \$24 million bond issue approved by the voters in 1928 allocated \$450,000 for the track removal. By this time the MKT railroad was fully grade separated and available as an alternate route, and the railway expressed a willingness to negotiate. The mayor appointed another committee in 1928 to push the track removal to completion. Once again, progress was elusive. Discussions continued into the early and mid-1930s.³

The section of the H&TC railroad south of downtown was the main point of contention between Dallas and Southern Pacific Railways. Dallas insisted that the southern section be included in any acquisition deal since there were plans to convert it into South Central Expressway, today's US 175 S. M. Wright Freeway. But Southern Pacific was not willing to relinquish the track since it provided the most direct route to its freight terminal at the southeast corner of present day Cesar Chavez Boulevard and Canton, and taking another route would add an hour of delay to each train.

In 1936 the railroad was willing to sell the north section of the H&TC tracks, from downtown to Mockingbird, for \$250,000. But without the south section of tracks, a deal could not be reached.

Dallas City Council, which had become annoyed and irritated with the lack of progress, passed an ordinance in September 1936 requiring the railway to remove all crossings with city streets within five months. The only way the railway could comply would be to remove the tracks. Southern Pacific responded with a lawsuit. Before the issue reached trial, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce acted as a mediator and an arbitration committee was formed to continue negotiation. By July 1937 a tentative agreement had been reached for the removal of tracks north of Commerce Street, allowing the tracks to remain south of downtown with a plan to build parallel roadways alongside the tracks. South Dallas interests who wanted the tracks removed strongly opposed this plan, so it was not able to move forward.⁴

Demands to move the Central Boulevard project forward were building to a crescendo in the late 1930s as civic groups, City Hall and the planning commission all designated it as their top priority for civic improvement. A new round of negotiation was launched in the summer of 1938 at the urging of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. In mid-1939 negotiations remained stalled as the railroad refused to abandon the track south of downtown, and south Dallas interests refused to accept any deal which did not include removal of the south Dallas tracks.⁵

The 1936 ordinance requiring H&TC to remove its track was officially repealed in 1939 as a good faith measure in the negotiating process. The legal merit of the ordinance was questionable and it was unlikely to survive court scrutiny. Dallas concluded it would need to construct new railroad track to provide efficient access to the Southern Pacific downtown freight terminal. In October 1940 a joint engineering study between the City of Dallas and Southern Pacific provided a detailed proposal for a new railroad to the terminal costing \$853,176. Finally, the ingredients for a deal were available and in December 1940 an agreement was reached. Dallas agreed to pay \$50,000 for the railroad tracks on the Central Expressway alignment from Main Street to Mockingbird. In exchange for the track south of downtown, Dallas would pay the cost of constructing the new railroad spur track to the freight terminal.6

On June 4, 1941, a contract-signing ceremony took place at the Hall of State at Fair Park. It was definitely a moment to celebrate—the culmination of 30 years of dreaming, planning, negotiation, disagreements and, finally, compromise.⁷

These views show the beginnings of Central Expressway just north of downtown. At right, clearance of the corridor is underway at Lemmon Avenue in 1947 with the H&TC railroad track still in place. The Roseland Homes housing project is visible in the mid-left. The lower photo dated October 15, 1947, shows construction underway on this section of the freeway with the overpass at Hall Street taking shape adjacent to Roseland Homes. For more information on Roseland Homes, see page 104.





From Boulevard to Expressway

Since the first proposal in 1911 the corridor had been known as Central Boulevard and was envisioned as a high capacity thoroughfare street on a 200-foot-wide right-of-way with a wide, landscaped median. Although the City of Dallas had acted alone in promoting and developing the project, it had always been expected that TxDOT would actually build the freeway once Dallas had obtained the right-of-way. Efforts to secure state participation began in October 1939 when Mayor Woodall Rodgers announced that the city was making \$1 million available for its share of the cost of the project. World War II put plans for construction on hold, but planning and preparation for actual construction proceeded steadily during the war years. ¹⁶

TxDOT and the Federal Bureau of Roads became partners in the project by early 1940 and their vision for Central Expressway was a state-of-the-art modern freeway, not just a boulevard. Their recommendation featured grade separations with all intersecting streets and proposed bringing the freeway through downtown with an elevated or trenched design. By June 1940 the City of Dallas agreed to make the design a grade-separated, freeway-type facility. The proposed changes dramatically increased the estimated cost of the project to \$10 million, making a larger financial contribution from TxDOT critical. In March 1943 a formal agreement with TxDOT was signed, covering Central Expressway in both north and south Dallas. Dallas was responsible for utility relocation, construction of a

drainage tunnel and acquisition of a right-of-way corridor with a minimum width of 182 feet. TxDOT would fund the freeway construction. It was expected that the overall project cost would be shared approximately equally between TxDOT and Dallas. Right-of-way acquisition was underway in mid-1943 after all agreements were finalized and signed.¹⁷

Engineering plans for construction were complete in July 1945 and in May 1946 TxDOT published a booklet with descriptive information and illustrations of the design for the entire length of the project. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on March 3, 1947, with Mayor Woodall Rodgers shoveling the first load of dirt. With construction imminent, removal of the H&TC railroad tracks was underway in August 1947.¹⁸

Even as everyone was pleased to see the decades-long goal being realized, cost increases were severely straining the city's finances and the project consumed virtually all available public works funds. By 1949 the overall project cost had risen to \$25 million with the City of Dallas responsible for \$14.3 million. In 2013 dollars, the corresponding values are approximately \$140 million for the city share with an overall cost of \$245 million. While the equivalent 2013 costs may not seem excessively high by modern standards, Dallas in the 1940s was a much smaller city with far lower government expenditures. Dallas' \$14.3 million share was 62% of the 1949 city budget of \$22.9 million. For perspective, 62% of the \$2.0 billion 2010 City of Dallas

This March 18, 1951, view looking west along Mockingbird Lane shows the traffic detour around the freeway intersection to allow excavation of the underpass for the freeway main lanes. The long warehouse-style building in the background, at the southwest corner of Mockingbird and Central Expressway, was replaced by the Mrs Baird's bakery which began operations on August 24, 1953. On its opening, the Mrs Bairds's bakery was reported to be the largest automatic bread-making plant in the United States with a maximum capacity of 2 million pounds of bread weekly and a regular output of 1.4 million pounds per week. The bakery closed in 2002 and all buildings on the property were demolished in 2011.³³

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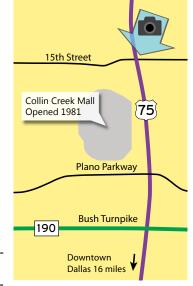
This view looks south along Central Expressway at 15th Street in Plano, showing the original construction of the freeway on May 24, 1955. At the time, Plano was still a remote rural settlement in Collin County. Collin Creek Mall opened in 1981 on the right side of the photo. The winding Collin Creek on the right side of the freeway was rerouted into a tunnel to allow construction of the mall.

operating budget is \$1.24 billion.19

Construction progressed quickly and the first section was complete in August 1949. Central Expressway was not only the culmination of many years of dedicated effort, but it was also envisioned to be the first of more freeways which would propel Dallas to growth and prosperity. It was time for a party, and local leaders were eager to launch the freeway era in Dallas with a huge civic celebration.

The opening celebration took place on Friday evening, August 19, at the Ross Avenue overpass. The event stage was colorfully decorated with streamers and flowers. An estimated crowd of 7000 joined the festivities, filling the freeway halfway to Hall Street. A large poster with an aerial view of the freeway was positioned behind the speaker's

stand, and in front was a large replica model of the freeway. As dusk arrived, official ceremonies began with an overflight of six military aircraft which were illuminated with spotlights. Political officials made their comments, and Mrs Fred Wemple, wife of the chairman of the Texas Highway Com-

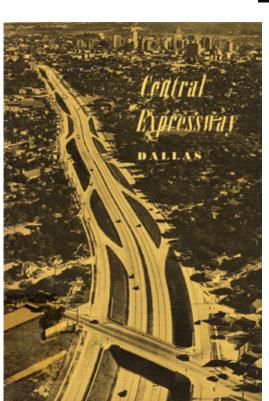


mission, cut a ribbon on the expressway model to symbolically open it. Dorothy Savage, wife of Dallas Mayor Wallace

Also see: opening photos pages 1 and 2

A huge Friday evening celebration was held on August 19, 1949, for the opening of the first section of Central Expressway. A crowd estimated at 7000 gathered on the freeway at the Ross Avenue overpass for the dedication ceremony and post-ceremony dances, a square dance for whites and an "old-fashioned street dance" for blacks. A large poster featuring an aerial view of the freeway was placed behind the main podium, which was colorfully decorated with flowers and streamers.

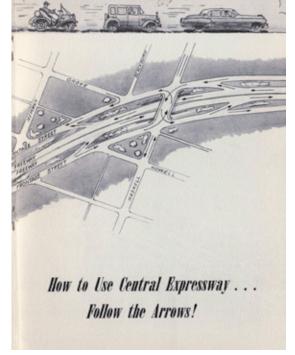
Below is the cover from the event brochure and program which was distributed at the opening. The ceremonial ribbon was cut by Mrs Edith Wemple, wife of Texas Transportation Commission Chairman Fred Wemple, followed by the christening done by Mrs Dorothy Savage, wife of Dallas Mayor Wallace Savage. Mrs Savage broke a bottle of cologne over a model of the freeway.





Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin²¹

This booklet was distributed to educate the public about the rules for driving on freeways.



Dallas Public Library²²



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This group of folks, looking like socialites, loaded into the 1948 Buick Super convertible for a photo on the Haskell overpass with the new Central Expressway forming the backdrop.

Savage, performed the freeway christening by breaking a bottle of cologne over the model. Two dances then began, a "mammoth" square dance for whites and an "old-fashioned street dance" sponsored by the Negro Chamber of Commerce for blacks.²⁰

Popular, but Flawed

The opening of the first two miles was just the beginning for Central Expressway, as work was already underway on the next section to McCommas and plans were in place to extend the freeway all the way to Richardson. Beginning with a modest traffic count of 22,000 vehicles per day in April 1950, traffic steadily increased, reaching 32,000 vehicles per day in July 1951 and 43,000 vehicles per day in June 1952. In November 1952, with the freeway open only to McCommas, the city traffic engineer announced that Central Expressway was near its capacity limit at rush hour.²⁶

After a long delay in the construction of the railroad overpass south of Mockingbird Lane due to a steel short-

age*, the freeway was opened to Loop 12 on April 15, 1953. Increased traffic from the new extension was enough to push freeway traffic to the point of maximum capacity, and in June 1953 Central Expressway achieved another milestone: its first rush-hour traffic jams. Of course, the suburban and land development boom along North Central Expressway had only just begun, so traffic jams would become a way of life on Central Expressway.²⁷

Exacerbating the traffic problem was the design of the freeway. The design was modern and even state-of-the-art for the 1940s, but by today's criteria it was horribly substandard. Anyone who drove the original expressway is certain to remember it vividly but not-so-fondly. The freeway main lanes went up-and-down like a roller coaster, with poor sight lines for drivers. The original freeway had no guardrail in the freeway's narrow center median, and 28 median crossover accidents occurred in the four years

^{*} The railroad overpass served the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad, also called the MKT or Katy. The railroad bridge was permanently removed during the 1990s reconstruction and the railroad corridor west of Central Expressway was converted into the Katy Trail recreation path in 2000.



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This view, taken just after the opening in August 1949, looks southbound at Haskell Avenue. This aerial perspective of Central Expressway with downtown in the background was popular, appearing frequently in publications including the September 19, 1949, issue of *Life* magazine.



National Archives²³

This view looks southbound along Central Expressway at McCommas Avenue, which was the northern terminus of the freeway after the second section opened in January 1950. Barriers forcing traffic to exit can be seen at the northbound exit ramp just south of McCommas, indicating that this photo was made prior to the opening of the third section of freeway in April 1953. Left of the freeway is the "M-Streets" neighborhood, looking relatively new in this photo with minimal tree growth.



Dallas Public Library³⁷

The most influential individual in getting Central Expressway built was Dallas Mayor J. Woodall Rodgers, who served from 1939 to 1947. In the above May 19, 1952, photo, Rodgers is on the right pointing to the freeway with William G. Vollmer, president of the Texas & Pacific Railway, at left. Many key events for the freeway took place during Rodgers' mayoral tenure largely due to his leadership, including the agreement for the purchase of the Houston & Texas Central railroad, the agreement with TxDOT for funding, the conversion of the planned boulevard into a full freeway and the elevation of the project to the top civic priority in Dallas, including a huge funding commitment from Dallas. Rodgers (1890-1961) turned the first shovel of dirt at the ground-breaking ceremony on March 3, 1947. Shortly after Rodgers exited office in 1947 there was an effort to name the freeway for him, but rules prohibited naming a street for a living person. Of course, Rodgers would get a freeway named in his honor, the Spur 366 Woodall Rodgers Freeway in downtown Dallas.³⁶

from 1954 to 1957 with three fatalities, prompting the installation of a median barrier from downtown to Loop 12 in $1958.^{28}$

Getting on the freeway was often a harrowing experience since the on-ramps had virtually no merging zone with the main traffic lanes. And then there were the, well... idiots, who would come to a complete stop on the onramps as they awaited a gap in the traffic. A 1959 study by the Texas Transportation Institute quantified the high risk of accidents on the on-ramps, and found that 93% were rear-end collisions caused by vehicles stopped on

the ramps. The geometrics of the on-ramps were never improved during the entire existence of the original Central Expressway, with relief not arriving until the major reconstruction of the 1990s.²⁹

The original 1940s freeway design was called a first generation freeway by TxDOT, and engineers dramatically improved design standards for the second generation of freeways which would get underway in the mid-1950s. As early as 1964 there was discussion of major construction to expand Central Expressway's capacity, but no significant new construction would take place until the major rebuild



TxDOT Travel Information Division

Bringing a taste of Las Vegas to Central Expressway This 1962 view looking south with the Haskell overpass in the background shows the Tropicana Inn alongside the freeway. When the motel opened in April 1960, three years after the Las Vegas Tropicana opened, a detailed report in the *Dallas Morning News* described its "semitropical setting highlighted with palm trees, date palms, banana trees and ferns combined with other greenery" and a front facade (not visible in the photo) with a "striking color contrast in the use of baffles in brilliant tones (gold, Indian red and two shades of green)". By the time of this photo, it appears that most of the tropical foliage was gone with one dead palm tree and one ailing tree remaining in the pool area. Automobile-friendly hotels along freeways were a growth industry as new freeways opened, and the most notable motor hotel in Dallas was the huge Marriott Motor Hotel along Stemmons Freeway (see photos page 194), proclaimed by J. Williard Marriot to be the world's largest motor hotel after a 1963 expansion. The Tropicana Inn was demolished between 1985 and 1989. In 1989 the Marriott on Stemmons Freeway also succumbed to bulldozers.

began in the 1990s. For 46 years the original Dallas Central Expressway existed virtually unchanged from its first generation design with only sporadic and token efforts to improve the situation.³⁰

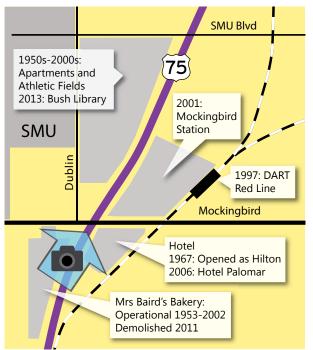
In 1964 the research arm of TxDOT, the Texas Transportation Institute, began studies and experiments on Houston's Gulf Freeway, another first-generation freeway which was clogged with traffic. Efforts focused on regulating the flow of vehicles at freeway on-ramps to minimize disruptions to the mainlane traffic, allowing the mainlane traffic to maintain higher average speeds. When the experiment completed in 1968 researchers concluded that ramp signals were an effective way to improve freeway flow and reduce the risk of rear-end collisions on ramps. Ramp sig-

nals were soon planned for Central Expressway.31

Signal lights on forty-one Central Expressway ramps between Lemmon Avenue and Spring Valley Road became operational in June 1971. It was believed to be only the third such installation in the United States and the most sophisticated system to date. Telephone lines were used to connect 320 sensors in the pavement to a computer which identified a traffic gap sufficient for vehicle merging and then sent a signal for a green light to the ramp meter. Six months later the project was proclaimed a success by traffic engineers who reported a 25% increase in traffic flow and a 50% decrease in accidents. The ramp signals remained in service until the major rebuild began in the 1990s.³²



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This view looks northbound along Central Expressway at Mockingbird Lane on June 6, 1957. The Mockingbird intersection became one of the busiest along Central Expressway as development and redevelopment would continuously evolve and enhance the area. The vacant land to the left of the freeway would be filled with apartments and athletic facilities in the years after this photo, but everything was cleared in the late 2000s for the Bush Presidential Library. The highly successful Mockingbird Station mixed-use development opened on the northeast corner of the intersection in 2001 following the opening of the DART rail station in January 1997. A Hilton hotel was built on the southeast corner of the intersection in 1967 and was redeveloped into the luxury Hotel Palomar in 2006. Just out of view of this photo on the southwest corner was the Mrs Baird's bakery, opened in 1953 and demolished in 2011. Numerous office buildings were built along the freeway, following the lead of the Meadows Building, the first suburban office building in Dallas opened in 1955 and visible alongside the freeway in the upper part of the photo.



This view shows the freeway at the northbound exit for Yale Boulevard in 1975. In the distance, just behind the Ramada Inn sign, is a sign for the Dallas Cowboys headquarters office at 6116 Central Expressway. The headquarters relocated to the present-day Valley Ranch location in August 1985. North of this exit the freeway had only four main lanes (two each way).

The City of University Park, which incorporated in 1924, named many of its streets for other universities around the country, perhaps trying to create a collegiate atmosphere in the neighborhoods around SMU, which opened in 1911. Since Yale Boulevard had an overpass at Central Expressway, the namesake of another university became one of the main access roads into SMU. At the request of SMU, University Park renamed the street SMU Boulevard in April 1993. However, a short section of Yale Boulevard remained in the Dallas city limits to the east of the freeway. When the SMU campus expanded eastward and the university occupied offices on Yale Street in the 2000s, SMU petitioned the City of Dallas to rename the Dallas section to SMU Boulevard, receiving official approval in September 2008.39

This photo near Lovers Lane provides a good view of the original narrow median which lacked a barrier. This photo was taken sometime between the freeway opening in April 1953 and the installation of the median guardrail in 1958.



the Dreaded ON-RAMPS

For anyone who experienced the original Central Expressway, one of the strongest memories is surely the freeway on-ramps. And the memories are not good. The on-ramps between downtown and Loop 12 had practically no merging space. Once you reached the freeway main lanes, you could only hope for a gap in the traffic or a friendly motorist who would let you in. Oftentimes there was no such luck, and panicked motorists would regularly slam on their brakes at the end of the on-ramp as merging space ran out. Astute motorists were keenly



On-ramp north of Henderson.

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These views at the Haskell Avenue overpass show the substandard design of the freeway entrance ramps and the lack of an acceleration and merging lane. The top photo, taken in 1965, clearly shows

the ramp feeding traffic directly onto the freeway with little or no space to maneuver. With the evening traffic congestion, stopping on the ramp was not particularly dangerous since it would be easy to accelerate to rush-hour speed to merge with the flow. In the July 1955 photo at left, two vehicles can be seen at the very end of the ramp, caught in the pinch-point and most likely stopped with full-speed traffic cruising past. The photos show that while the ramp safety issue was neglected, another safety issue—the lack of a median barrier—was addressed with the installation of the center guardrail in 1958. Twenty-eight accidents with three fatalities were caused by vehicles crossing the center median in the four-year period from 1954 to 1957. 49

aware that stopping on the ramp was the worst thing you could do, but, alas, not all motorists were sufficiently savvy. A 1959 study found that rear-end collisions were the most common type of accident on the Central Expressway on-ramps.

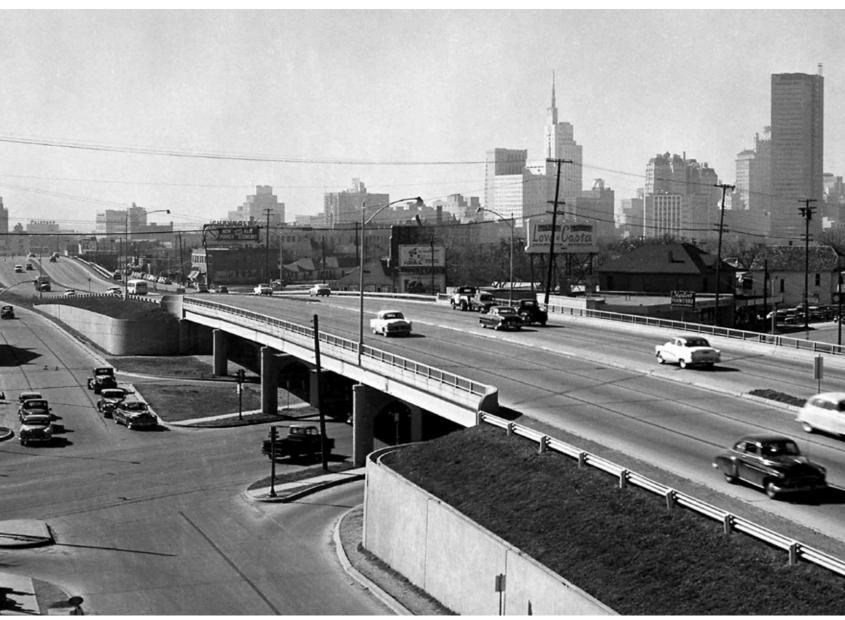
For the entire lifespan of the original Central Expressway, from 1949 until reconstruction began in the early 1990s, no improvements were made to the geometry of the on-ramps. Ramp meters were added in 1970 to help keep mainlane traffic moving during peak-hour congestion, but merging was not a frightening experience during congested conditions with slow-moving traffic. Ramp meters were also operational in the off-peak traffic direction where there was free traffic flow, forcing the law-abiding motorist to stop on the ramp and then merge into 55-mph traffic.

The Downtown Dallas Section

The downtown Dallas section of Central Expressway, south of Woodall Rodgers Freeway, was the first section of Central to be transformed by modern construction. The elevated lanes on both

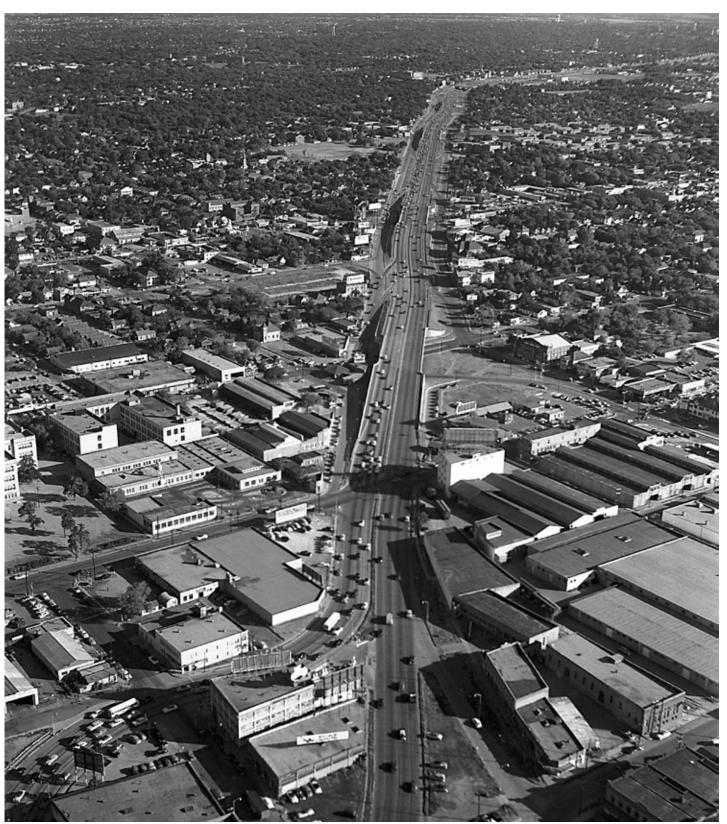
Also see: History of Interstate 345 (the downtown section of the original Central Expressway) page 286

sides of the freeway through downtown were completed in 1973, but the original freeway remained mostly intact. By 2005 all of Central Expressway north of Woodall Rodgers had been rebuilt and in 2007 one of the remaining original overpasses on the downtown section was demolished for a new light rail transit line. In 2012 the only remaining traces of the original Central Expressway can be found at Ross Avenue—the original structure of the overpass which is still in use.



Dallas Historical Society77

This view looking toward downtown shows the Ross Avenue overpass in 1954. The opening ceremony for the first section of freeway took place on this overpass on August 19, 1949. The present-day elevated structures were completed along both sides of the freeway in 1973. After the 2005 completion of the High Five interchange, the downtown section shown here had the only remaining structures from the original North Central Expressway. After the 2007 demolition of the overpass in the distance at Goode-Latimer, the Ross Avenue overpass became the only remaining original structure, although it has been widened on both sides.



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This August 26, 1953, photograph looking north shows the downtown terminus of the original Central Expressway. Nearly all the buildings in the foreground have been demolished, many in the late 1960s to clear right-of-way for the elevated freeway lanes which opened in 1973. Only one of the warehouse structures on the lower right side still remains. Buildings to the left of the freeway succumbed to obsolescence and were demolished. The original freeway has also been partially demolished with the 2007 removal of the first overpass in conjunction with the construction of the DART Green Line.

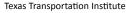
Walnut Hill and Royal Lanes



TxDOT Travel Information Division

"Take the tunnel under the freeway to the back nine" North of Loop 12 Dallas was still semirural when Central Expressway opened in 1953. As can be seen in this undated 1950s-era photo, the frontage roads were still two way, typical for rural areas. This view looks southeast at the intersection with Walnut Hill Lane, showing the Glen Lakes Country Club golf course. The five holes on the east (left) side of the freeway connected to the thirteen holes on the west side with a tunnel underneath the

freeway, visible just south of Walnut Hill. Property along Central Expressway became too valuable for use as a golf course, and Glen Lakes Country Club closed in October 1977 to make way for development. At right is a view looking south along the freeway in May 1988, just before the freeway expansion began.





This undated 1950s-era view looking south shows the entirely vacant roadside between Walnut Hill in the foreground and Northwest Highway/Loop 12 in the distance. Northpark Mall opened on the right side at Northwest Highway in 1965, and the roadside was intensely developed in the subsequent decades.

Buy your tractor on Central Expressway This undated view from the 1950s looking south at Royal Lane shows a Ford Tractor dealer alongside the freeway in the semirural area.



Dallas Public Library⁷⁹





FITZHUGH AVENUE



TxDOT Travel Information Division





The Dallas tornado of April 2, 1957, commonly known as the Oak Cliff tornado, was a landmark event in the history of meteorology. It was the first time a tornado was extensively photographed and filmed through all phases of its life cycle, including formation, initial touchdown, numerous encounters with the ground and dissipation. The hours of film and hundreds of photos greatly expanded scientific understanding of the formation and behavior of tornados, which up to that time was poorly understood.

This view looks south from the Fitzhugh overpass, capturing the tornado as it first reaches the ground in south Dallas. Previous images in the photographer's sequence show the tornado descending to the ground for its touchdown. An additional photo of the tornado is on page 189, and numerous other classic tornado photos were captured along the path as it crossed from south to northwest Dallas.

An unusual and fortuitous set of circumstances allowed the extensive photography and filming of the tornado to take place. The tornado struck in the middle of an urban area within sight of downtown, an unlikely event since randomly occurring tornados normally hit rural areas. It struck at 4:30 PM on a day with unseasonably warm weather, when many residents were outside or leaving work. The tornado wasn't obscured by rain or clouds, making it visible from miles away. In addition, the tornado hit on a day when national reporters were in town to cover the hotly contested special election in which Ralph Yarborough beat 21 other candidates for a U.S. Senate seat. As a result, the tornado was photographed and filmed by scores of amateur and professional photographers and the photographic record for the tornado dwarfed the coverage of any single previous tornado.⁵¹



(facing page) These views of Central Expressway at Fitzhugh Avenue show some of the distinctive features of the original freeway. The upper photo taken in the summer of 1954 shows the grassy center median with no guardrail. The freeway main lanes are separated by a solid dark stripe. In the lower photo from circa 1956 the lane stripes remain solid but have white stripes painted over the solid black stripe. The slightly arched overpass built with cast-in-place concrete is typical for the original Central Expressway. A center guardrail was installed in 1958.

The large building downtown with the rooftop spire is the Republic National Bank Building which was officially dedicated on December 1, 1954. In the upper photo the building structure is complete but the 150-foot-tall spire is not yet installed. It was reported that only three cities in the United States—New York, Chicago and Cleveland—had buildings taller than the Republic Bank Building, which has 36 floors and a height of 598 feet with its spire. 50

Northwest Highway

The intersection of Central Expressway and Northwest Highway (Loop 12) became the leading retail and business center in North Dallas. Northpark Mall was the first commercial development, opening in 1965, followed by numerous office buildings on the other three corners. The southeast corner is occupied by the two distinctive gold-clad Campbell Centre towers, opened in 1972 and 1977 (see photo page 145).



Northpark Mall, developed by Ray Nasher, opened on the northwest corner of the intersection with Northwest Highway in August 1965. This October 1967 view looks northwest, showing the original cloverleaf intersection in the foreground. The mall became a huge success, reported in a 1972 article to have the highest sales volume per square foot in the United States. While decline, decay and demolition of malls became widespread in the 1990s, Northpark continued to thrive and was expanded to 2.35 million square feet in 2006 to become the largest mall in Texas and among the five largest malls in the United States—and also a member of a small, elite group of malls in 2006 that posted over \$1 billion in sales. The Nasher Sculpture garden in downtown Dallas is named for Ray Nasher (1921-2007). For more about Nasher, see page 125.

Walnut Hill

Northpark Mall
Opened Aug 1965

Park Lane

Northwest
Highway

Downtown Dallas
6 miles



This undated view taken between 1953 and 1958 looks north along Central Expressway with the Northwest Highway overpass just ahead.

Also see: modern view of the Northwest Highway intersection, page 145, and 1970 images, page 367.

This aerial view looking south captures a good view of the original cloverleaf interchange at Northwest Highway. This undated photo is from the period 1953 to 1958. Residential development had reached Southwestern Boulevard in the distance, but all the land around the intersection was vacant.

TxDOT Travel Information Division

Medialing Building



TxDOT Dallas District Office

This view looks southbound along Central Expressway circa 1956. The railroad tracks, originally the Houston & Texas Central, are still in place to the right of the building.

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UT-Arlington Library Special Collections75

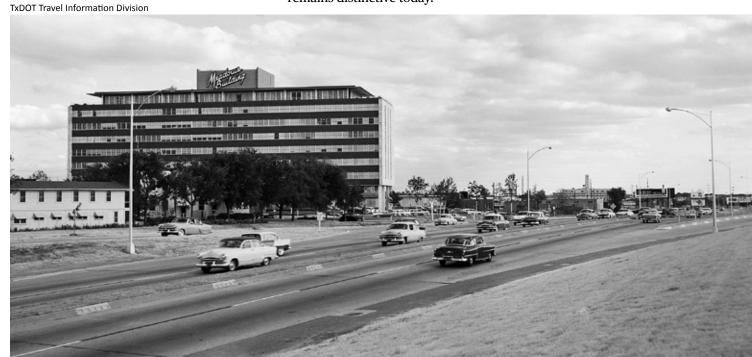
This December 4, 1953, view shows the Meadows Building under construction alongside Central Expressway, which had opened just eight months earlier. The road in the foreground from left to right is Lovers Lane. Greenville Avenue is along the left side of the photo and the tracks of the Houston and Texas Central railroad were still in place alongside the freeway.

This view looks across Central Expressway toward the Meadows Building in August 1956.

Anyone looking for a time capsule from the 1950s should visit the Meadows Building at Central Expressway and Lovers Lane. In terms of architecture and interior design, everything about this building says "1950s". Remarkably, the building has remained nearly exactly as it was on its opening day in summer 1955, with its exterior shades of blue and red, terrazzo floors, green marble accents and its large, cursive-script exterior sign announcing to the world that it is the Meadows Building. A special five-page section featuring the Meadows Building in the December 11, 1955, Dallas Morning News described it as "one of the most beautifully designed structures in the Southwest." The building was named for Al Meadows, chairman of the executive committee of the building's original owner, General American Oil Company.63

The only change to the building has been the demolition of its small southwest wing and alterations to the elevated patio garden. The architectural style is known as mid-century modern, which is often at risk of demolition and modernization due to its, well, 1950s look.

But the Meadows building is not just an oddity in a city where redevelopment tends to be fast and furious. It also holds historical significance as the first major office building in Dallas constructed outside of the central business district. In addition, it was alongside Central Expressway, first demonstrating the value of freeway-fronting real estate for office development. Of course, a tidal wave of suburban office development would come in the following decades as employers moved en masse to the suburbs, with huge developments like the Galleria, Irving's Las Colinas, Richardson's Telecom Corridor and Plano's Legacy becoming some of the better-known suburban office complexes. The Meadows Building was the trailblazer, and it blazed the trail with a style that remains distinctive today.



AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY AND CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY

The displacement of many African-American residents along the Central Expressway corridor near downtown for the freeway, particularly in the Stringtown district alongside the railroad, exacerbated the serious shortage of modern housing available to blacks. A planned expansion of the runways at Love Field airport would displace another 300 black families. Efforts to integrate blacks into white neighborhoods were controversial and often met with resistance. The all-white Dallas Chamber of Commerce recognized the crisis and in 1950 formed the Dallas Interracial Association, a committee of civic leaders from around Dallas, to tackle the problem.⁴²

The association made five recommendations to ensure adequate housing for blacks in Dallas. The most visible product of the association's efforts was Hamilton Park, an all-new subdivision of modern, affordable single-family homes for middle-income blacks on 173 acres at the northeast corner of Central Expressway and Forest Lane. There had been a long search for a suitable site for the subdivision, and previously established black residents in the area led to the selection of this location. The neighborhood was named in honor of Dr Richard Hamilton, a black physician and YMCA worker in the early black Dallas community.

The leadership of influential members of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce brought Hamilton Park to reality, particularly chamber president Jerome Crossman and theater owner Karl Hoblitzelle, who funded a loan for land acquisition. A community dedication was held on October 4, 1953, and a second event to celebrate the completion of homes and the first move-ins was held in May 1954. Demand was strong for the homes which were priced at \$7750 for two bedroom units and \$8950 for three bedrooms (\$67,000 and \$77,000 in 2013 dollars), with a down payment between \$650 and \$900 and monthly payments between \$45 and \$50. Even at those prices, only blacks with above-average compensation qualified for loans. Build-out of 750 homes was completed by 1960, and the neighborhood remains a well-maintained middle-income community in 2013.

Separate from the Hamilton Park efforts, the City of Dallas had previously opened the Roseland Homes community for low-income blacks in 1942 on the northeast corner of Central Expressway and Hall Street, near downtown. Constructed at a cost of \$2.5 million (approximately \$35 million in 2013 dollars), the 650-unit complex replaced a severely deteriorated section of Freedman's Town deemed beyond repair, consistent with the practices of the era in which areas of substandard housing were entirely cleared. Rents varied from \$16 to \$19 per month for one- to four-bedroom units. Roseland Homes fell victim to decay and crime in the 1980s and 1990s but was rebuilt in the 2000s and has benefited from the revitalization of the surrounding area.⁴⁷

Also see: page 128 for the history of Freedman's Memorial Park cemetery along Central Expressway





Dallas Historical Society

Philanthropist Karl Hoblitzelle provided crucial financial support to allow Hamilton Park to proceed, providing an interest-free loan for the land acquisition, approximately \$1.8 million in 2013 dollars. The success of the neighborhood allowed all borrowed funds to be repaid by 1960. In recognition, a street in the neighborhood was named for Hoblitzelle. Hoblitzelle (1879-1967), who amassed his wealth in the theater industry, was one of Dallas' leading philanthropists in the 1950s and 1960s, and the Hoblitzelle Foundation remains an active charitable foundation today.⁴⁸



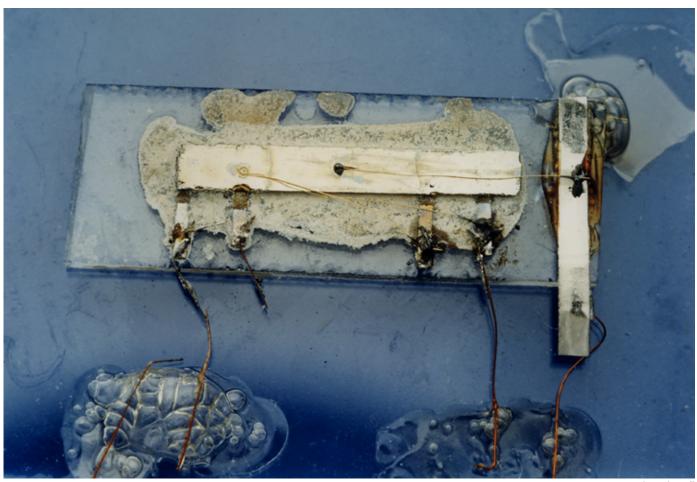
UT-Arlington Library Special Collections⁴⁶





This September 1962 aerial view shows the recently completed Hamilton Park subdivision northeast of the intersection of Central Expressway and Forest Lane. Also visible in this photo at the left edge is Highland Park Airport, which was developed into the Park Central office development in the 1970s. Interstate 635 would pass just north of the airport and Hamilton Park with construction beginning in 1964. North of Hamilton Park is the Texas Instruments campus, which had only two buildings at the time of this photo.

1958: The Birth of the Technology Corridor



SMU DeGolyer Library⁶⁵

This photograph shows the world's first integrated circuit, built by Jack Kilby at the Texas Instruments Semiconductor Building on Central Expressway. When Kilby activated the device for the first demonstration on September 12, 1958, his colleagues watched as a continuous sine wave appeared on the oscilloscope monitor. Robert Noyce, working independently at Fairchild Semiconductor in California, demonstrated an integrated circuit in January 1959 and is often credited as a co-inventor since the Fairchild design was first awarded a patent. The integrated circuit would go on to become the foundation upon which the global electronics and computer industry is built, and Kilby was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2000.

The integrated circuit helped fuel the explosive growth of Texas Instruments in the following years, with TI employment in Dallas county growing by 136% in the following three years. New buildings were added to the Texas Instruments campus regularly in the following two decades. Residential and commercial development boomed along the Central Expressway corridor in Richardson.



Associated Press

Jack Kilby (1923-2005), left, receives the Nobel prize from Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf in Stockholm, Sweden, December 10, 2000.

Central Expressway - Pathway to Suburbia and Technology

The north section of Central Expressway, from Walnut Hill in Dallas into Richardson and Plano, was built with somewhat better design standards than the south section but still suffered from lack of capacity with only four main lanes. Yet for all its shortcomings, Central Expressway was the path to the future—a future of advancing high technology and blossoming suburbia.

Texas Instruments was founded in 1930 as Geophysical Service Inc, specializing in seismic technology used to identify oil reservoirs. The firm diversified into military electronics during World War II and non-military electronics after the war, adopting the name Texas Instruments in 1951 to better represent its diversifying business interests.⁵⁴

The 1950s were boom years for Texas Instruments, with revenue increasing from \$5 million in 1948 to \$24 million in 1954, \$67 million in 1957, and \$233 million in 1960. In 1955 TI president Erik Jonsson recognized the need to acquire a large tract of land for facilities to accommodate the company's growth, and the selected location was a 300acre site in north Dallas along a section of Central Expressway which opened just a year earlier. The first building at the site—the Semiconductor Building, a 310,000-squarefoot plant for the manufacture of transistors and other semiconductor devices—opened in June 1958 and received national attention for its innovative design. A nine-foot-high utility service space between the first and second floors provided unprecedented flexibility in the use of the upper floor manufacturing area, and the facility set new standards for factory aesthetics with its atriums, landscaping and interior decoration.55

The new building also featured an engineering lab which would soon become the scene of one of the most revolutionary advances in the history of the electronics industry. Jack Kilby, who had recently hired on with Texas Instruments, spent the summer at the new lab working on a project to miniaturize electronics for the military. His idea to place multiple electronics components—transistors, capacitors, and resistors—on a single piece of semiconductor material was first demonstrated on September 12, 1958. The invention, called the integrated circuit, fueled the growth of TI and the new campus, with TI employment in Dallas county increasing from 4665 to over 11,000 between June 1958 and June 1961. Kilby received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2000 for his role in the invention of the integrated circuit, and he would also become an accomplished amateur photographer. One of his freeway photographs is shown on page 322.56

Further north along Central Expressway in Richardson another high tech revolution was brewing which would become even more influential than Texas Instruments in its impact on the Central Expressway corridor. Collins Radio Company was founded in 1931 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, by Arthur Collins, an amateur radio operator who originally went into business to offer better equipment to amateur "ham" radio operators. Business grew steadily in the 1930s,

Also see: modern history of the Telecom Corridor, page 142

driven by innovations like Autotune which automatically tuned aircraft radio equipment to active frequencies, freeing pilots to perform other tasks. Collins experienced tremendous growth during World War II and after the war the firm refocused on ultra high frequency (UHF) military electronics and civil aviation electronics. The 1950s brought phenomenal growth to Collins, particularly in its defense and government businesses, and the Department of Defense urged Collins to decentralize its operations for security reasons and to ensure that sufficient labor was available for potential wartime production increases.⁵⁷

The Dallas-Fort Worth area was a major production center for military aircraft in the years after World War II. Texas Engineering & Manufacturing Company (Temco) and Chance-Vought had assembly plants in Grand Prairie, and Convair was located in Fort Worth.* Proximity to customers was a key factor when Dallas was selected as an expansion location, and a two-person office was opened in 1951. By the end of 1953 Collins employed 1400 at its offices in the Trinity Industrial Park near present-day Stemmons Freeway and Dallas was made the operational center for Collins' sales force and field service organizations. By mid-1957 the Collins workforce in Dallas was 2300. The Dallas organization produced both military and commercial products, and it was a stroke of good fortune when Collins moved its commercial microwave communication operations to Texas. That particular technology would be the seed for long-term economic growth in the Central Expressway corridor.58

Collins management praised the quality of the North Texas workforce and business climate, and more expansion was planned as government contracts continued to pour in and commercial work grew. In 1955 Collins purchased 200 acres in Richardson just northeast of the intersection of Central Expressway and Arapaho Road to consolidate its operations and provide room for expansion. The first building on the site, a research and engineering facility, opened in June 1958, just three years after the freeway opened. It was the birth of the telecommunications industry along Central Expressway in Richardson.⁵⁹

In April 1959 Collins announced the formation of Alpha Corporation, a new subsidiary specializing in communications systems integration with headquarters near the Richardson campus. Collins remained the dominant technology firm in Richardson throughout the 1960s and its presence began to attract other firms, notably MCI (Microwave Communications, Inc.) in 1972. Collins Radio was purchased by Rockwell International in 1973. Steady growth in the telecommunications industry continued and by the 1980s the area became one of the leading technology centers in the United States. In 1988 Central Expressway through Richardson was named the Telecom Corridor.⁶⁰

^{*} The Fort Worth aircraft manufacturing plant adjacent to the Joint Reserve Base is operated by Lockheed Martin in 2013.

The Texas Instruments Central Expressway Compus



Dallas Public Library⁶⁴



This view from circa 1956 looks north-northeast across the land which would become the Texas Instruments campus. In the foreground is the Hamilton Park subdivision, which completed its first homes in May 1954 and was in the home-building phase at the time of this photo. (See page 104 for more about Hamilton Park.) Interstate 635 was built from left to right across the photo, opening in 1967 and 1968.

Assembling the 300 acres needed for the Texas Instruments campus was a challenging task since it required the acquisition of more than 20 parcels of property ranging in size from two to 60 acres. Negotiations with the 23 landowners took two months, and in 1956 all 300 acres were owned by Texas Instruments and work was underway on the first building on the campus, the Semiconductor Building. In the following decade several other major buildings were completed on the site, including the Central Research Labs, Materials Building, North Building and South Building.



SMU Library DeGolyer collection⁶⁵

In March 1957 motorists along Central Expressway saw this billboard announcing the arrival of Texas Instruments on the 300-acre site alongside the freeway. In the background a crane can be seen at the construction site for the Semiconductor Building. Below is an aerial view of the newly completed Semiconductor Building, the first building on the Texas Instruments campus. This view looks south

with the billboard still in place alongside the freeway frontage road. The Semiconductor Building was expanded regularly until reaching its present-day size around 1966.





Dallas Public Library⁶⁶

The Semiconductor Building

The Semiconductor Building was the first in the Texas Instruments Central Expressway campus, officially dedicated on June 23, 1958. The opening ceremony for the building featured a ribbon cutting device that was activated by the signal from the Navy's research satellite Vanguard 1, the second satellite placed in orbit by the United States and the fourth overall following Sputnik 1, Sputnik 2 and Explorer 1. However, engineers cheated a little-a recording of the satellite beep was used since Vanguard 1 did not pass overhead at a convenient time. 61

The Semiconductor Building received national attention for its innovative design and was lauded by the Dallas Morning News as a "new look" factory and "one of the most distinctive manufacturing plants in the nation." Features receiving acclaim were its landscaped atriums, artistically decorated interior, college-campus atmosphere, thin-shelled concrete roof, modular design to enable expansion and nine-foot-high utility space between the two floors to allow maximum flexibility in the use of the upper floor manufacturing area. To be sure, the exterior of the building is not particularly attractive. The Semiconductor Building remains in service in 2013.62

This photo of a production area in the Semiconductor Building taken shortly after the building opening shows workers in the diode production area. SMU DeGolyer Library⁷⁵



The Semiconductor Crystal Christmas Tree

The semiconductor was a new technology which had the promise to revolutionize the world, and that's exactly what happened in the subsequent decades. But in 1958 the semiconductor was used mainly in single transistors which replaced vacuum tubes and enabled the first consumer semiconductor products, including the world's first transistor radio, the Regency TR-1, introduced in November 1954 and made with Texas Instruments transistors. The semiconductor crystal Christmas tree was an exhibit used by Texas Instruments in 1958 and 1959 to explain the science behind the technology and its vast potential. Yellow, red, green, blue and white lights represented the different elements in the semiconductor crystal lattice.





Dallas Public Library⁶⁷

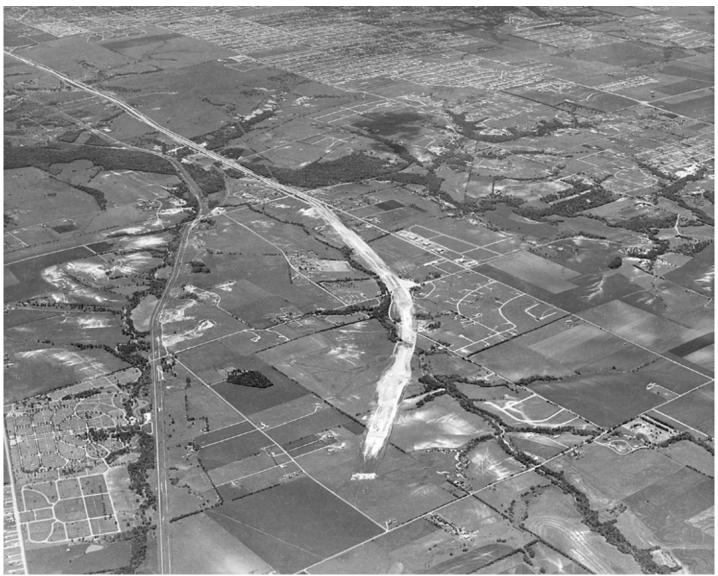
This 1959 view shows the Semiconductor Building with its parking lot full of classic cars.

This undated 1960s-era photo shows workers on the job at the Semiconductor Building.



Central Expressway in Richardson

The telecommunications industry took root along Central Expressway in Richardson in 1958 and ultimately grew into the technology hub which was named the Telecom Corridor in 1988.



UT-Arlington Library Special Collections⁶⁸



This view looks southwest along Central Expressway during its original construction into Richardson on May 31, 1953. The area was still semirural at the time, and the Restland Memorial Park cemetery on the left is the only developed area in the foreground. Interstate 635 would later be built from the left to right sides of this photo. The Texas Instruments campus was built in the center foreground with the first building, the Semiconductor Building, opening in 1958.



UT-Arlington Library Special Collections⁶⁹

This view looks southbound from the median of the original Central Expressway just north of Belt Line Road. The undated photo appears to be from circa 1966.

The view below looks south-southwest along Central Express-way just north of Arapaho Road on June 15, 1955, just three months after the opening of the freeway on March 5. The northbound frontage road stopped in the foreground, and work was underway on the railroad bridge over the freeway with the first piers in place at Greenville Avenue to the left of the railroad track.



UT-Arlington Library Special Collections⁷⁰

Collins Radio in Richardson

The Telecom Corridor was born just northeast of the intersection of Central Expressway and Arapaho when Collins Radio opened its first building in 1958.

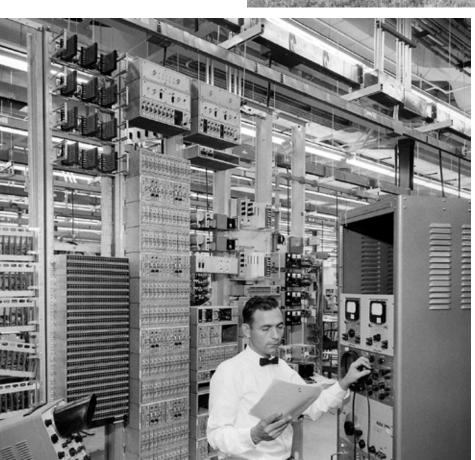


This is the logo used by Collins Radio from the 1940s to 1961, encompassing the years of expansion into North Texas and the establishment of the Richardson campus.



Richardson Public Library

This photo looking north-bound shows the Arapaho exit in 1968, when Collins Radio was still the only major technology firm in the area.



A Collins Radio engineer performs tests on a microwave radio system at the Richardson facility in this undated, 1960s-era photo.

Dallas Public Library⁷²



UT-Arlington Library Special Collections⁷⁴

Alpha Corporation was a subsidiary of Collins Radio formed in 1959 and headquartered at this building on Arapaho Road, shown in 1960. Alpha Corporation was a telecommunications system integrator, building complete communications systems using components from multiple suppliers, not just Collins equipment. The primary market for these systems was the Department of Defense, and Alpha Corporation was a big part of the substantial business in defense contracting in the Central Expressway corridor. The Alpha Corporation name disappears from press reports after 1964 and appears to have been retired at that time.⁵⁰



The original Collins Radio buildings were located along Alma Road. Land to the east was totally vacant at the time of this January 1963 photo.

Dallas Public Library⁷³



Electronic Data Systems



Perot Foundation

Ross and Margot Perot look at ticker tape on March 3, 1971, the day Electronic Data Systems was listed on the New York Stock Exchange. EDS had previously become a public corporation in 1968.

This circa 1966 image shows the data center at the EDS headquarters at Exchange Park, near Stemmons Freeway. The original EDS office was along Central Expressway, and in 1975 EDS moved its headquarters back to the Central Expressway corridor.

Perot Foundation

In addition to semiconductors and telecommunications, the third lynchpin of North Texas technology was the data processing industry. The North Texas data processing industry is largely the result of the efforts of one Dallas entrepreneur, Henry Ross Perot, commonly known as Ross Perot, and the firm he founded, Electronic Data Systems (EDS). Although the data processing industry is not closely associated with the Central Expressway corridor, EDS's original office was located at the corner of Main Street and Central Expressway (now Cesar Chavez Boulevard) and its headquarters was in north Dallas near Central Expressway from 1975 to 1993 (see map page 77).

Born in 1930 in Texarkana, Perot founded EDS in June 1962 at the age of 32 after a five-year stint as a highly successful salesman at IBM. EDS provided its customers with complete data processing services, including hardware, software, personnel, terminals and everything needed to be fully equipped in the data processing field. It was information technology outsourcing, a new concept at the time. Around 1967 EDS moved its offices to the Exchange Park office complex at the intersection of Mockingbird and Harry Hines near Love Field and Stemmons Freeway. The explosive growth of EDS was fueled by government contracts including a big 1966 contract to computerize payments for the newly launched Medicare program. By the late 1960s Ross Perot had become a multimillionaire and was best known for his philanthropy and support of United States armed forces, particularly his efforts to free U.S. servicemen who were being held as prisoners of war in North Vietnam. Perot became a nationwide household name with his independent candidacy for the presidency in 1992, capturing an impressive 18.9% of the popular vote in the election which was won by Bill Clinton.80

> The growth of EDS in the 1960s and a particularly strong boom period from 1969 to 1971 prompted Perot to seek a new location for the company's headquarters. He chose a site on Forest Lane near Hillcrest Road, just west of Central Expressway. The site was formerly the Preston Hollow Country Club and was operating as the Forest Hills Golf Club in 1970 when Perot first began his efforts to obtain the zoning change to permit construction of the headquarters complex. The zoning change was highly controversial due to opposition from nearby neighborhoods and was initially rejected by Dallas City Council in September 1970 but was later approved in September 1971 with the provision for a large buffer greenbelt around the property.



The first building was completed in November 1974 with full move-in in 1975. EDS headquarters remained at the facility until 1993 when it relocated to a new headquarters complex in north Plano near the Dallas North Tollway. In 2008 technology giant Hewlett-Packard purchased EDS, retiring the EDS name a year later when the former EDS was integrated into Hewlett-Packard's enterprise services division.⁸¹

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DMN=Dallas Morning News; DTH=Dallas Times Herald; FWST=Fort Worth Star-Telegram

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