

The Year 1960

1960 (MCMLX) was a leap year starting on Friday of the Gregorian calendar. It was the first year of the 1960s. 1960 is also known as the "Year of Africa," and on the Chinese calendar it was the Year of the Rat.

Major Events

- The cold war continues to become colder as the United States and Soviet Union distrust each other more and try to influence other parts of the world.
- France tests its first atomic bomb in the Sahara and joins the US, UK, and USSR as countries with nuclear bomb technology.
- Dwight D. Eisenhower is President, and Richard M. Nixon is Vice President.
- Seventy million people watch the presidential debate between Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard Nixon.
- In a closely fought race, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson win the election by a small margin of 113,000 votes out of 68.3 million
- The United States announces that 3,500 American soldiers are going to be sent to Vietnam to support the French in the fight against communist North Vietnam.
- Following major food shortages in East Germany, 160,000 refugees cross over to West Germany; as a result, Communist leader Nikita Khrushchev orders the construction of the Berlin Wall.
- On May 1, 1960, thirteen days before a scheduled East-West summit conference in Paris, a U.S. Lockheed U-2A reconnaissance plane was shot down over the Soviet Union. The Soviets recovered the surveillance camera and developed some of the photographs. The incident resulted in great humiliation for Eisenhower's administration, and prompted a marked deterioration in relations with the USSR.
- The USSR, Britain, France, and the US conduct summit talks but without results.
- Communist China and Soviet Union split in conflict over Communist ideology.
- Relations between the United States and Cuba deteriorate as Fidel Castro nationalizes oil, sugar, and other American interests in Cuba.
- Adolf Eichmann, top Nazi murderer of Jews, is captured by Israelis in Argentina on May 23.
- The Irish Republican Army (IRA) begins its fight against the British.
- Fifteen African countries including Togo, Mauritania, Chad, Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar, Zaire (Belgian Congo), and the Central African Republic gain independence, and South Africa leaves the commonwealth.
- Black students stage a sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, NC, to protest segregated seating; this event inspires a wave of sit-ins across the South.
- Afrikaner police open fire with sub machine guns on demonstrators in the black township of Sharpeville, South Africa.
- On March 17, Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 710 crashes into a bean field near Cannelton, Indiana, killing 63 people.
- On October 4, Eastern Air Lines Flight 375 strikes a flock of starlings and crashes just seconds after taking off from Boston's Logan International Airport.
- On December 16, TWA Flight 266 and United Airlines Flight 826 collide in mid-air in heavy clouds a mile west of Miller Field, a military airfield on Staten Island.
- John F. Kennedy, Jr. is born on November 25.
- The seaport city of Agadir, Morocco, is virtually destroyed and 12,000 people are killed by a pair of earthquakes, a tidal wave, and a fire.
- Chile subduction fault ruptures from Talcahuano to Peninsula de Taitao, generating a tsunami and one of the greatest earthquakes on record.
- Hurricane Donna moves up the US East Coast, killing 50 in Florida and New England.
- Emily Post, an American author on etiquette, died on September 25, 1960. She was 88.
- Princess Margaret marries Antony Armstrong-Jones on May 6.
- The world's first female Prime Minister is elected in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).
- Nakayama Masa is appointed Minister of Health and Welfare in Japan, becoming Japan's first female cabinet member.

- 50th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America and the Camp Fire Girls.
- The design for the 50-star flag was born at a high school in Lancaster, Ohio, in 1958 when student Robert Heft designed it for a history class project. President Dwight D. Eisenhower made Heft's design the official American flag on July 4, 1960.
- The American Heart Association publishes first studies linking cigarette smoking to heart disease and death in middle-aged men.
- OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) is formed.
- On July 21, 1960, the German government passes the "Volkswagen Law." Originally under the control of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist Party, Volkswagen would eventually grow into Europe's largest car manufacturer and a symbol of Germany's economic recovery after World War II. The Volkswagen Law changed the company to a joint stock corporation in which the share of any stockholders would be limited to 20 percent.
- Bernard Madoff founded the Wall Street firm Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities.
- Thomas S. Monaghan and his brother, James, purchase DomiNick's, a small pizza parlor in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The deal was secured by a \$75 down payment and the brothers borrowed \$500 to pay for the store. Eight months later, James traded his half of the business to Tom for a used Volkswagen Beetle and Tom renames it Domino's.
- Fry's Food Store, founded in 1954 by Donald Fry in California, expands into Arizona with the help of his brother Charles.
- On October 20, the Post Office Department placed into service the first automated mail processing facility at Providence, Rhode Island. It incorporated automatic high-speed sorting, facing, and cancelling machines as well as three miles of conveyor belts that moved mail between processing areas within the plant and to the loading docks for transport.



Business and Economy

- US GDP: \$526.6 billion
- Federal spending: \$92.19 billion
- Federal debt: \$290.5 billion
- Consumer price Index: 29.6
- Unemployment: 5.5%
- Federal minimum wage: \$1.00/hr.
- Average yearly income: \$5,620
- First grade teacher salary: \$4800

Cost of Living

- Yearly inflation rate (US) 1.46%
- Average cost of new house \$12,700
- Cost of house + 6 acres of land \$17,500
- Average monthly rent \$98.00
- Cost of a first-class stamp: 4¢
- Movie ticket: \$1.00
- Gallon of gas 25¢
- Average new car cost \$2,600.00
- Average used car cost \$950-1,000 (1-2 years old at time of purchase)

Everyday Life

- US Population: 180,671,158
- Life expectancy: 69.7 years

Food Prices

- Bananas 10¢/lb
- Box of Cheerios 25¢
- Loaf of bread 20¢
- Can of Beef Ravioli 30¢
- Candy bar 5¢
- Ketchup 17¢
- 1/2 gallon ice cream 47¢
- Miracle Whip 51¢
- Swanson TV dinner 50¢
- McDonald's hamburger 15¢
- Cheeseburger 20¢
- French fries 15¢

Nobel Prizes

Physics: Donald A. Glaser (US), for invention of "bubble chamber" to study subatomic particles

Chemistry: Willard F. Libby (US), for "atomic time clock" to measure age of objects by measuring their radioactivity

Physiology/Medicine: Sir Macfarlane Burnet (Australia) and Peter Brian Medawar (UK), for discovery of acquired immunological tolerance.

Literature: Saint-John Perse (France) "for the soaring flight and evocative imagery of his poetry."

Peace: Albert John Luthuli for his role in the non-violent struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

Science and Technology

- The first working laser is built by American physicist T. H. Maiman.
- NASA launches TIROS I, the first weather satellite.
- Transit I-B, first navigational satellite, is launched.
- Corona, first spy satellite, is launched.
- US launches Echo I, the world's first communication satellite.
- Soviet Sputnik 5 launches two dogs into orbit and returns them safely to earth.
- US launches the world's first nuclear powered aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise.
- "Tesla" first defined as a unit of measure.
- A US-French team led by Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh in the bathyscaph USS Trieste break a depth record when they descend to the bottom of Challenger Deep 35,820 feet (10,750 meters) below sea level in the Pacific Ocean.
- 90% of US homes have a television; over one hundred million television sets in use worldwide.
- Aluminum cans are used for the first time.
- MOT test of automobile safety, roadworthiness, and exhaust emissions introduced in Britain.
- US experimental rocket-powered airplane travels at 2,200 MPH.
- Xerox introduces the first commercial document reproduction machine.
- Dr. Kazuo Hashimoto invents the Ansafone sold in the USA as an automatic telephone answering machine.
- Wilson Greatbatch develops the first implantable cardiac pacemaker in Buffalo NY.
- Vertical take-off jet first developed in the UK.
- A Japanese company introduces the first felt-tip pen.
- Chevrolet introduces the Corvair, Mercury releases the Comet, and Ford introduces the Falcon. These were small cars by American standards of the 1960s.
- First Teflon non-stick cookware goes on sale at Macy's in New York.

Sports

- The 1960 VIII Olympic Winter Games held in Squaw Valley, California.
- The 1960 Games of the XVII Olympiad held in Rome, Italy.
- Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) wins his first professional fight after having won the Gold Medal in Rome in the Olympic games.
- Floyd Patterson defeats Ingemar Johansson to regain heavyweight championship.
- Pittsburgh Pirates defeats the New York Yankees to win the World Series (4-3).
- Boston defeats the St. Louis Hawks to win the NBA Championship (4-3).
- Philadelphia Eagles win the NFL championship.
- Arnold Palmer wins the 24th Masters Tournament.
- Charles Sifford becomes first African-American to play on the PGA Tour.
- Sir Francis Chichester won the first single-handed transatlantic yacht race in the yacht *Gipsy Moth III*, arriving in NY after a record 40-day solo Atlantic crossing.

Arts and Entertainment

- **Movies:** Psycho, Exodus, The Magnificent Seven, Inherit the Wind, The Entertainer, The Apartment, The Sundowners, Sons and Lovers, Spartacus, 13 Ghosts, House of Usher, Time Machine, The Alamo, G.I. Blues, Swiss Family Robinson
- **Songs:** Will You Love Me Tomorrow; Georgia On My Mind; Only The Lonely; Let's Go, Let's Go, Let's Go; Stay; Chain Gang; Save The Last Dance For Me; Shop Around; The Twist; Cathy's Clown; Exodus theme by Ferrante & Teicher
- **Popular Musicians:** Shirelles, Ray Charles, Roy Orbison, Hank Ballard & the Midnighters, Maurice Williams & the Zodiacs, Sam Cooke, Drifters, Miracles, Chubby Checker, Everly Brothers, Pat Boone, Frankie Avalon, Perry Como, Paul Anka, Patti Page
- **TV Shows:** The Flintstones, Gunsmoke, Wagon Train, Have Gun Will Travel, The Andy Griffith Show, The Real McCoys, Rawhide, Candid Camera, The Untouchables, The Price is Right, The Jack Benny Show
- The 32nd Academy Awards honored film achievements of 1959 on April 4, 1960. Ben-Hur, the 3½-hour long epic drama (with its spectacular sea battle and 11-minute choreographed chariot race) became the most-honored motion picture in history up to that time (and until 1997), with its record-breaking eleven Oscars from twelve nominations. It was also the most expensive film of its time, budgeted at \$15 million.
- In the US, an instrumental song that was part of the score for the 1959 movie *A Summer Place*, was the top selling single of 1960. It stayed at #1 in the US for nine weeks, the longest run of any instrumental. It also won the 1960 Grammy for Record of the Year, becoming the first movie theme to win the award.
- The Flintstones premiers on television for the first time.
- Chubby Checker introduces The Twist at NY Peppermint Lounge; starts a new dance craze.
- Ronald Reagan stars in "The DuPont Show" with June Allyson.
- Marilyn Monroe receives Golden Globe award for Best Comedy Actress.
- Pete Best joins the Beatles, and they begin to make appearances outside of Liverpool.
- John Coltrane forms a quartet and becomes the voice of jazz's New Wave movement.
- Elvis Presley returns to the music scene after his 2-year hitch in the army and releases *Elvis Is Back!* It was Presley's first album to be released in true stereo.
- Frank Sinatra begins his own label Reprise Records.
- Pioneering R&R DJ Alan Freed arrested in national investigation of radio industry "payola."
- Pat Robertson establishes the Christian Broadcasting Network in Virginia Beach.
- Clark Gable, nicknamed "The King of Hollywood" in his heyday, died in Los Angeles, California on November 16, 1960 at age 59.
- Family Circus first appears in newspapers on February 19.

Books

- *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee.
- *Rabbit, Run* by John Updike.
- *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* by William Shirer.
- *Born Free*, by Joy Adamson.
- *Green Eggs and Ham*, by Dr. Seuss.
- *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*, by Dr. Seuss.
- *Becky's Birthday*, by Tasha Tudor.
- *Inch by Inch*, by Leo Lionni.
- *A Picture for Harold's Room*, by Crockett Johnson.

Newbery Award Winner - *Onion John* by Joseph Krumgold (awarded to the most distinguished children's book of the previous year)

Caldecott Award Winner - *Nine Days to Christmas*, illustrated by Marie Hall Ets (awarded to the most distinguished children's picture book of the previous year)