



#44: Humble Grows Up

Humble started off as a small lumber community in the 1880s, then as an oil boom town in the early 1900s, and eventually into a small city in the 1930s. But how did it survive past that? There were lots of small towns along Highway 59 between Houston and Lufkin. Many are no longer around. What made Humble unique?

Humble had some great growth leading into the 1930s, but over the next two decades (1930s and 1940s) the population was stagnant, and then started to decline. It got so bad as the 1950s started that the school district was almost merged with another one, due to the low number of students. But, just as things were not looking so good...it drastically started going in Humble's favor.

Events happened in the 1950s and 1960s that helped Humble survive its small-town status, and eventually develop into the great city it is today. In 1953, the City of Houston created Lake Houston, a reservoir on the San Jacinto River, east of Humble. It was a major water supply for Houston but it also resulted in there being a recreational area on Humble's shore. Local community members enjoyed boating and water activities, but it also brought Houston residents to the area. They came for boating and fishing, and got a chance to enjoy the small, wooded area that was Humble. In 1956, the City of Houston annexed 108 acres to increase the size of the city. A good portion of that land included the Lake Houston area and other areas around Humble. Humble, which used to be out in the "sticks," was now a suburb of Houston. In the late 1950s, work was being completed on U. S. Highway 59 through the west side of Humble. Humble was now just a 20-minute drive from Houston, making it easier to get to.

In 1965, construction began on the Houston Intercontinental Airport on the southwest side of Humble. The opening of the airport brought many more businesses and people to the community. Then, in 1969, work began on the construction of the Kingwood neighborhood, a joint project between King Ranch and the Friendswood Development Company. The Kingwood Development spurred much of the growth in the Humble area during the 1970s.

By the time Humble emerged from the 1970s, it was an attractive place to live: wooded areas, water recreational area, quick 20-minute drive to Houston, major airport (with lots of associated businesses), and some attractive and unique housing areas. Humble was the place to be! All of that set the stage for the rapid growth that was going to happen to Humble and the Lake Houston area in following decades.