Time Capsule 1968

Take a "Fond Flashback" as we look at the people, places and events that made headlines in 1968.

The Year in Review: In January, the USS Pueblo, a Navy spy ship, and its crew are captured by North Korea for allegedly gathering intelligence while in North Korean waters; one crewman is killed when the ship is fired upon.

After the Pueblo is boarded, crew members are bound, blindfolded and beaten before being taken to prisoner-of-war camps, where their mistreatment continues. Their commander, Lloyd M. Bucher, is tortured and put through a mock firing squad in efforts to make him confess to spying. The 82 surviving crew members are freed 11 months later after U.S. officials promise not to spy on the North Koreans.

In this Presidential election year, racial unrest and antiwar demonstrations continue. Yippies and other antiwar protesters clash with Chicago police during the Democratic National Convention.

When civil-rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. is shot to death in Memphis, Tennessee, in April, riots break out across the U.S. His assassin, James Earl Ray, is later arrested.

After antiwar Demo-cratic Presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy nearly upsets President Lyndon B. Johnson in the New Hampshire primary, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, brother of slain President John F. Kennedy, throws his hat in the ring. Following his California primary victory, he is fatally shot by Sirhan Sirhan.

In August, at the Democratic convention, Hubert H. Humphrey is nominated after President Johnson has declined earlier in the year to run again.

Republicans nominate former vice president Richard M. Nixon. The campaign also has a strong third-party candidate, former Alabama governor George Wallace.

Johnson is kept busy with the Vietnam War and antiwar protest demonstrations at home. In January, the North Vietnamese begin their surprise Tet Offensive, attacking more than 100 cities in South Vietnam.

In May, the U.S. begins peace talks with North Vietnam, but the Communist leaders stall until Johnson halts the bombing of North Vietnam. Nixon secretly tells the North Vietnamese he will offer them better terms if he is elected in November, so no more progress in the talks occurs.

Nixon offers a campaign pledge of “peace with honor” and wins by about 512,000 votes, or less than 1 percent of the votes cast.

On Alaska’s North Slope, the Prudhoe Bay oil field is discovered. It has twice the recoverable oil of the second-largest U.S. oil field, located in east Texas.

In Europe, the Soviet Union invades Czechoslovakia.

In space, Apollo 7 astronauts fly for 163 orbits, or almost 11 days, and are the first to transmit live telecasts from orbit, giving millions of Earth-bound people their first live views from space.

On the fashion scene, women’s attire is more feminine while still flamboyant. “Do your own thing” is the mantra, with pants of all fabrics worn for all occasions and leather appearing in dresses and vests. For men, bolder plaids are seen, along with shirts in blazing colors and decorative scarves, belts, chains and pendants. Ties, when worn, get wider.

Names in the News: Jacqueline Kennedy, widow of slain President

John F. Kennedy, weds Greek shipping magnate and financier Aristotle Onassis.

Catholic priest and peace activist Daniel Berrigan and a handful of followers use homemade napalm to destroy draft files from a Maryland draft board.

Actress Jayne Mansfield dies when a car she is riding in collides with the rear of a tractor-trailer. She, the driver and a third front-seat occupant die instantly, but her three children, riding in the backseat, suffer only minor injuries.

Music: The Beatles found Apple Records, and the label's first release, Hey Jude, becomes the year's and the group's biggest hit. Their album Magical Mystery Tour is also one of the top sellers of the year.

Simon & Garfunkel get a big boost with the popularity of the soundtrack from the movie The Graduate. Their newly released album Bookends is also one of the year's biggest sellers.

Aretha Franklin has four hit singles, including I Say a Little Prayer and Think.

"Bubblegum music" refers to songs aimed at preteens, and its leading performers include The 1910 Fruitgum Company with 1, 2, 3, Red Light and Simon Says, and The Ohio Express with Yummy, Yummy, Yummy.

Herb Alpert's No. 1 hit This Guy's in Love with You grows from a tune he sang to his wife on a TV special. After CBS receives thousands of calls about the song, Alpert releases it on his A&M label and it spends 4 weeks at the top of the pop charts.

Debut artists include Sly & the Family Stone, Steppenwolf, Jose Feliciano and Creedence Clearwater Revival.

Country artists making a splash on the pop charts include Glen Campbell, Wichita Lineman; Kenny Rogers and the First Edition, Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In); O.C. Smith, Little Green Apples; Tammy Wynette, Stand by Your Man; Johnny Cash, Folsom Prison Blues; and Jeannie C. Riley, Harper Valley PTA.

Other top songs include Hello, I Love You, The Doors; I Heard It Through the Grapevine, Marvin Gaye; Angel of the Morning, Merilee Rush & the Turnabouts; Judy in Disguise (with Glasses), John Fred and His Playboy Band; (Sittin' on) The Dock of the Bay, a posthumous debut by artist Otis Redding; People Got to Be Free, The Rascals; Grazing in the Grass, Hugh Masekela; and Honey, Bobby Goldsboro.

The musical Hair opens on Broadway at New York City's Biltmore Theatre and is billed as "the American tribal love-rock musical."

Movies: Groundbreaking special effects closely mimic real images of space travel, showing the beauty and bleakness of outer space, in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey, based on the Arthur C. Clarke novel.

Another science-fiction offering is Planet of the Apes, a tale of apes evolving to rule humanity.

Oliver! brings Charles Dickens' literary classic Oliver Twist to the screen as a musical, and an epic version of William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet also hits theaters.

Rachel, Rachel stars Joanne Woodward as a spinster teacher trying to come out of her shell, Charly stars Cliff Robertson as a retarded man who temporarily becomes a genius and Petulia stars George C. Scott as a divorced man involved with an unusual woman, played by Julie Christie, who is unhappy in her marriage.

Other films include The Lion in Winter, with Peter O'Toole and Katharine Hepburn; Funny Girl, with Barbra Streisand and Omar Sharif; The Thomas Crown Affair, with Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway; and the animated film Yellow Submarine, featuring The Beatles' voices and music.

Television: Dan Rowan and Dick Martin are the tuxedoed hosts of a hilarious new variety show, Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In. The fast pace, gags, political satire and cameo appearances by show-business greats make it a hit.

Peggy Lipton, Michael Cole and Clarence Williams III form a trio of hip cops in the debut of The Mod Squad.

In other cops-and-robbers shows, Jack Lord plays the chief detective in Hawaii Five-O, while Martin Milner and Kent McCord portray partners in a Los Angeles police cruiser with the eponymous designation Adam-12. Robert Wagner plays a former cat burglar who agrees to steal for a government spy agency in It Takes a Thief.

Other popular shows include Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C; Bonanza; Family Affair; Gunsmoke; Mission: Impossible; The Dean Martin Show; The Beverly Hillbillies; and Bewitched.

Sports: In a year of landmark baseball achievements, Don Drysdale of Los Angeles pitches a record 58-2/3 consecutive scoreless innings, Bob Gibson of St. Louis posts a modern-era-record earned-run average of 1.12 and Denny McLain (31-6) of World Series champion Detroit is the first pitcher to win 30 games in a season since St. Louis' Dizzy Dean did, in 1934.

Adding to the milestones, Luis Tiant of Cleveland strikes out 19 batters in a 10-inning game, Don Wilson of Houston strikes out 18 in a nine-inning game and Frank Howard of Washington hits a record 10 home runs in six games.

In the NFL, Vince Lombardi steps down as Green Bay's coach but remains the team's general manager after his Packers win their second straight Super Bowl title, and George Halas retires as Chicago Bears coach for the fourth and final time.

NBC starts its showing of the TV movie Heidi, cutting off the final 50 seconds of a New York Jets-Oakland Raiders football game in which the Raiders score two touchdowns in the last 42 seconds to win, 43-32.

Ohio State is college football's national champion, while O.J. Simpson of USC takes the Heisman Trophy.

In basketball, Lew Alcindor leads UCLA to the second of seven consecutive national collegiate titles, Wilt Chamberlain of the Philadelphia 76ers is MVP for the third straight year and the Boston Celtics are NBA champions.

Tennis pros Arthur Ashe and Margaret Smith Court reign over the U.S. Open, Montreal claims pro hockey's Stanley Cup, Lee Trevino wins golf's U.S. Open and Bobby Unser gets the checkered flag in the Indianapolis 500.

New in '68

- McDonald's Big Mac
- Clinique skin-care products
- Chinese restaurant syndrome
- First woman on FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list

Popular Books

Fiction

- Airport, Arthur Hailey
- Couples, John Updike
- The Salzburg Connection, Helen MacInnes
- Testimony of Two Men, Taylor Caldwell

- Preserve and Protect, Allen Drury
- Myra Breckinridge, Gore Vidal
- Vanished, Fletcher Knebel
- Christy, Catherine Marshall
- The Tower of Babel, Morris L. West

Nonfiction

- Better Homes and Gardens New Cook Book
- Listen to the Warm, Rod McKuen
- Between Parent and Child, Haim G. Ginott
- Lonesome Cities, Rod McKuen
- The Money Game, Adam Smith
- Stanyan Street & Other Sorrows, Rod McKuen
- Weight Watchers Cook Book, Jean Nidetch

A Few Prices

- Annual wage, $6,772
- Hotpoint refrigerator (11.6 cu. ft.), $199.95
- Hotpoint washing machine, $159
- Gas range, 30-in., $129.88
- Eight-track stereo, $99.88
- Panasonic TV (88-sq.-in. screen), $69.95
- Woman's bathing suit, $6.99
- Folding lawn chair, $3.49
- Pocket transistor radio, $3.49
- Maxwell House coffee, 69¢ a pound
- Surf laundry detergent, 64¢/50-oz. box
- Frankfurters, 59¢ a pound
- Gasoline, 34¢ a gallon
- Fresh corn, three ears for 29¢
- Lemons, six for 25¢
- Peaches, 19¢ a pound
- Jell-O, 7¢ a box
- First-class stamp, 6¢