The Bandera Prophet

August 10, 2021

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1935, the Texas Department of Public Safety was established by the Texas legislature, prompted by the election of Governor James Allred, who ran on a platform of better law enforcement. The department was to enforce laws to protect public safety and to provide for crime prevention and detection.

A three-member Public Safety Commission, appointed by the governor for six-year terms, oversaw the department and in turn named the director and assistant director. Homer Garrison, Jr., the first assistant director, became the director in 1938, and led the department for almost thirty years.

Originally department operations were classified into six divisions: the Texas Highway Patrol, Texas Rangers, Bureau of Communications, Bureau of Intelligence, Bureau of Education and Bureau of Identification and Records.

Through the years the Department of Public Safety continued to reorganize and expand its operations into such activities as licensing of drivers, investigation of drug trafficking, accident records, emergency management, automated fingerprint identification, combating organized crime, and motor-vehicle theft.