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CALIFORNIA MOMENTS IN 1968

January 6

The first adult human-to-human heart transplant operation in the United States is performed at Stanford University Medical Center.

January 13

Backed by June Carter, Carl Perkins, and the Tennessee Three, Johnny Cash performs two shows at Folsom State Prison in California, revitalizing his career.

January 14

The Green Bay Packers defeat the Oakland Raiders in Super Bowl II in Miami, Florida.

January 22

Filmed in Burbank, California, Rowan and Martin's *Laugh-In* airs for the first time on NBC, with rapid-fire sexually and politically charged gags and sketches.

February 12

Eldridge Cleaver, a prominent member of the Oakland-based Black Panthers, publishes *Soul on Ice*, which becomes one of the most influential books of the Black Liberation Movement.

February 22

The counterculture film *Easy Rider* begins production and is substantially complete by the summer.

March 5

A walkout by Mexican-American students at two Los Angeles high schools sets in motion a massive protest movement, eventually involving thousands of students demanding more bilingual education and the teaching of Mexican cultural history.

March 10

Labor organizer César Chávez ends a twenty-five-day fast in Delano, California, in protest of violence against striking migrant farmworkers.

April 6

Two days after Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, Black Panther Bobby Hutton is killed in a police shoot out in West Oakland.

April 10

At the annual Oscar ceremony in Los Angeles, the racially charged drama *In the Heat of the Night* is named Best Picture of 1967.

May 8

In the A's first season in Oakland, hometown pitcher Jim "Catfish" Hunter throws the first regular season perfect game in 46 years.

June 5

Senator Robert F. Kennedy is shot and mortally wounded in Los Angeles just after claiming victory in California's Democratic presidential primary.

June 28

In Berkeley, 2,000 people attend a rally in support of radical students in France. Police escalate crowd-control tactics to unprecedented levels and a street war breaks out, replete with flaming barricades, citywide curfews, and hundreds of arrests.

July 11

Los Angeles-based The Doors release *Waiting for the Sun*. The album, featuring the song "Hello, I Love You," becomes their first and only number-one album.

July 16

In San Francisco, Bill Graham opens the Fillmore West in the former Carousel Ballroom; the venue quickly becomes the West Coast mecca for the biggest rock bands of the day.

August 12

Big Brother and the Holding Company, based in San Francisco, release *Cheap Thrills*, their last with Janis Joplin. The psychedelic rock album becomes the most successful album of 1968, selling nearly one million copies.

September 3

"Beat" novelist Jack Kerouac appears as a guest on conservative pundit William F. Buckley's television show *Firing Line*, and joins a panel discussion on "the Hippies."

September 8

Huey Newton, the Black Panther Party Minister of Defense, who had been charged with first-degree murder, assault, and kidnapping for his confrontation with an Oakland police officer in October 1967, is found guilty of voluntary manslaughter at the Oakland Courthouse.

October 1

Bay Area biologist and ecologist Stewart Brand publishes the *Whole Earth Catalog*, a counterculture bible that inspired a generation of innovators, including Steve Jobs, who likened it to “Google in paperback form.”

October 16

Tommie “Jet” Smith and John Carlos, sprinters from San Jose State University, and medalists in the 200-meter sprint at the Olympic Games in Mexico City, lower their heads and raise black-gloved fists during the playing of the national anthem, in protest of racism in the United States. The gesture leads to them being stripped of their medals.

November 1

The Motion Picture Association of America establishes the first film rating system, using the ratings of G for general audiences, M for mature audiences, R for restricted, and X for audiences of 17 years and older.

November 6

Protesters begin a strike at San Francisco State University that will go on for five months. The strike leads to the establishment of the College of Ethnic Studies and inspires the creation of ethnic studies programs at universities throughout the country.

November 26

After gaining 3,187 yards and scoring 21 touchdowns for the University of Southern California during the 1968 season, running back O. J. Simpson wins the Heisman Trophy by the widest margin in Heisman history.

December 9

Inventor Douglas Engelbart and fellow researchers unveil their “writing machine”—the world’s first word processor—at Stanford University.

December 20

Two high school students are shot to death while parked on a “lovers’ lane” in Benicia, California—the first victims of a serial murderer who comes to be known as the “Zodiac Killer.”

December 26

Psychedelic drug proponent and counterculture leader Dr. Timothy Leary is arrested in Laguna Beach, California, for possession of a small amount of marijuana, which Leary claims was planted by the arresting officer. He is later convicted.