

The 1950's

The post-war boom hit the Blair community as hard as any in the country. Under the leadership of Principal Darryl Shaw, Blair expanded into the largest and most successful high school in the area—or in the country, for that matter. The Blair Building Boom hit its peak in the 1950's, with the opening of "A" Building in 1950 (and the expanded front portico in 1952), "D" Building in 1951, the new Boys Gym in 1953, and finally "E" Building in 1959.

The 50's also saw Blair hit its stride in many aspects of school life. The school's athletic teams won championship after championship (including undefeated football *and* basketball teams in 1954-55), the student body grew larger, and the changing cultural mores of the time were reflected in the way students dressed, talked, danced, and "interacted."



The King of Siam, played by Charles Shutting, dictates a letter to Joy Gargan, as Anna, offering to send President Lincoln elephants.

Entertainment took a turn at Blair in the late 1950's. Until 1958, Blair held an annual Variety Show, where the students (and faculty) performed skits, songs, dances, parodies, and generally showed off whatever talents they had. In 1959 Blair started its tradition of producing Broadway musicals with "The King and I," and that tradition continues today. From the very beginning these shows were tremendously well received by the school and the entire Silver Spring community.

As Blair grew, so, too, did the rest of the region and Blair began building up rivalries with such schools as Bethesda Chevy-Chase (really a rival since Blair opened), Wheaton, Richard Montgomery, and Northwood. These rivalries extended beyond the athletic fields and into the classrooms, as schools vied for recognition for their scholastic achievements, their arts programs, and their community service activities. Blair was always near the top in all of those areas.

Many have called the 1950's the Age of Innocence, but for Blair it was also a decade of growth, success, and a commitment to quality in everything it did. It was a commitment future Blazers would emulate.