

Traveling Troubadors . . .

Reknowned Singing Cadets Started As '06 Glee Club

By JOE GRAY

The Singing Cadets have long been a permanent fixture at Aggieland, and a very pleasant one. This unique choral organization was formed on the campus in 1906 with 24 members who chose the name of Texas A. & M. Glee and Mandolin Club. These singers performed for many campus activities and sponsored the first fine arts numbers.

Mr. F. D. Steger joined the Glee Club in 1911 and served as director until 1916. In 1912 under Mr. Steger's guidance, and faculty sanction, the Glee Club embarked on its first tour staging concerts in North Texas cities.

During the month of February, after successful appearances in Bryan and College Station, the Glee and Mandolin Club accompanied by the college orchestra made another successful trip, touring North Texas in a private railroad car.

The groups made stops at Corsicana, Demison, Baylor University in Waco, Polytechnic College in Fort Worth, C.I.A. in Denton, and Kidd Key College in Sherman.

During the early days of the college the Glee Club furnished the music for these compulsory chapel services.

In 1929 the Glee Club re-organized and, during the 1931-32 school year, gave concerts in Bryan, Caldwell and San Antonio under the direction of Mr. K. H. Beach.

In 1934, under the direction of Mr. E. W. Glenn, the Glee Club sang for the faculty banquet, the churches in Bryan, and journeyed to Galveston to present a concert.

The Glee Club rocked along under shaky organization until 1938 when 18 Aggies with spirit and determination banded together to

put it on a stable foundation, which was later to make it the great organization it is today.

After receiving official sanction from the faculty, the group literally drafted Professor J. J. Woolkett, head of the Modern Languages Department, as director and became known as the Texas A&M Glee Club. In his College days at Oberlin College in Ohio, Woolkett had been a member of the glee club and had organized several singing groups at this college.

During the first year membership and interest increasing substantially and the Aggies were able to journey to San Antonio to present their first off-campus program. This was the forerunner of the many superb concerts to be staged all over the South by the Aggies in the next 12 years.

During the 1938-39 school year the club, which numbered sixty, presented concerts in Houston and Galveston where they toured schools, radio stations and clubs. Even with scholastic requirements and other interests interfering with the singer's practice, the club elected to tour south Texas and was received with great ovation. The people of Texas were beginning to take notice of the Aggie voices.

While basking in the rain of praises the club was not all to happy with their name, so they decided to sponsor a contest to rename the club. The name of Singing Cadets was thus chosen.

Richard Jenkins succeeded Woolkett as director and immediately embarked on a program to make the Singing Cadets known throughout the South by touring schools, colleges, clubs, and various other groups.

In 1942 when Universal Pictures personnel began production of the

picture "We've Never Been Licked," the Singing Cadets were selected to do all the choral music under the direction of Ken Darby, leader of radio's King's Men. The group not only received valuable experience, but contributed greatly to the film itself.

While on a tour to Houston and Camp Wallace in 1943 the Singing Cadets were invited to appear with the Houston Symphony Orchestra in one of its concerts.

It was spring of 1944 before the Cadets hit the road again, this time headed for Dallas and Denton. Jenkins resigned shortly afterward and was succeeded by Euell Porter who held the reins until Bill Turner took over the direction the next Fall.

In the Spring of 1945 the Singing Cadets were invited to perform at the Billion Gallon Celebration of the Humble Oil and Refining Company. The event marked the production of one billion gallons of aviation gasoline at the Beaumont refinery.

In 1946, after 40 years of distinguished service, the Singing Cadets were given a permanent home on the campus. The old A&M Consolidated School building was remodeled and turned over to the singers by the college.

The building, now the Music Hall, included an up-to-date studio which could be used for broadcasting and recording purposes and rooms which were acoustically treated and equipped with pianos and other musical instruments.

Through the 1948-49 school year the Cadets were constantly on the move touring San Antonio, Denton, Conroe, Texarkana, Wharton, Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, Corpus Christi, and Austin.

Aired First Sportscast . . .

'Voice of the Texas Aggies' Is Pioneer of Texas Radio

By JOE GREY

On October 7, 1922 radio activities began at Aggieland with the installation of a broadcasting station for experimental purposes. The station was maintained by ten electrical engineering professors and their student followers who transmitted Morse code messages.

WTAW, which were the call letters of the station, had the honor of being the first radio station to broadcast an athletic event when they sent in code a play by play description of a football game being played at College Station. The code was received in Waco where the newspapers based their late sports stories on the message.

In 1923 WTAW employed the use of radio telephone and in 1925 the power of the station was increased from 250 watts to 500 watts.

Two years later the station moved to new quarters in the YMCA from which it went on the air regularly twice a week and broadcast chapel services and athletic events. The Extension Service had already taken over management of the station and remained in this capacity until 1939 when the Publicity Department assumed control of the station.

Credit for the development and maintenance of WTAW rests largely with Dr. F. C. Bolton, now President Emeritus of the college, who at the time of the establishment of the station was Dean of the School of Engineering.

Since the inauguration of a radio broadcasting station on the campus Dr. Bolton has devoted much of his time to the furtherance of radio at Aggieland.

During the past 28 years the station has had a variety of broadcasting periods. At present the station is what is known as a "daytime only station" and broadcasts from sun-up until sun-down.

Shortly after the first of the year in 1943 the station moved to

its present location of the top floor in the Administration Building, where its facilities could be enlarged and its technical equipment brought up to date. The station's power output was enlarged two-fold by the installation of a 1000-watt Collins commercial broadcast transmitter.

In 1944 WTAW became affiliated with the Blue Network which was a national broadcasting organization. Thus the station was able to receive and transmit popular programs and to receive the benefits of a coast-to-coast hook-up.

In 1949 the station severed relations with the American Broadcasting Company, which had grown out of the Blue Network, and became an independent station, although during the past summer it

affiliated with the Liberty Broadcasting System for the purpose of bringing Major League Baseball to Aggieland.

WTAW has one of the most complete record libraries in this area and cooperates with the Archives Department in preserving voices and special program activities for that department's files.

At the present time WTAW is staffed by Richard Webb, station manager; John Scoggin, program director; Anne Wilson, secretary; and four student announcers, Allan Waldie, George Gray Jr., Don Marshall and Bill Simms. Ruben Cook is the sportscaster and J. A. Dodd, James Birdwell, George Asoro, and John Webb are engineers.

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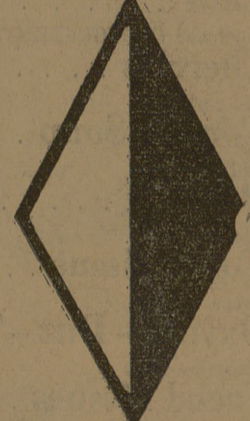
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- Pineapple 2 cans 55c**
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- Onions 3 lbs. 11c**
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- Delicious Apples . . 2 lbs. 25c**
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