

## Signal Corps Unit Comes to A&M

August 31, 1917 other words, the government has designated the college for a unit of the Signal Corps as instruction in the Southern division for a training depot. One company contains 75 men and two commissioned officers. It is probable that other units will be sent here.

just returned from Washington. In other words, the government has designated the college for a unit of the Signal Corps as instruction in the Southern division for a training depot. One company contains 75 men and two commissioned officers. It is probable that other units will be sent here.

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## Sparked by Research Needs . . .

# A&M Library Grew Slowly In Early Days of College

By W. A. STREICH

The library of A&M was not always the institution of research that it is today. In fact, for many years the library made little or no advancement.

The College Report, 1879-80, estimated that only 1,300 books and pamphlets were available for student use. The library at that time was open for two hours only each week.

In the year 1883-84 the Board of Directors recognized the need for improved library facilities. Consequently, \$1,500 of the \$5,000 appropriated that year went for the use of the library.

Charles W. Hutson of the Departments of English and History reported more than a decade later that "Frequent additions to the college library are needed, because it is the true laboratory of this department.

It would be a great help to us if the library could be kept open a greater part of the day so that cadets could have constant access to it."

In 1898-1900, the Board appropriated \$1,000 annually for library use. By this time the number of volumes had increased to 6,000.

On October 1, 1907, the library took a "transitory step forward" by the addition to the staff of Miss Willie Davis (now Mrs. W. H. Thomas of College Station) who came to the college from the University of Texas to become librarian. She was the first person with professional library experience to become connected with the college.

From its beginning, the library was housed in the old Main Building. When the building burned in 1912, the library was completely destroyed.

Miss Davis rejoined the staff in 1914 after an absence of five years because of insufficient funds to pay her salary. Her return coincided with the appointment of President W. B. Bizzell, and together they took steps to rebuild the library.

The library was now housed in two rooms on the first floor of the new Academic Building, and the collection was quickly built up to 4,000 volumes. During the next five years the library did not materially progress.

At about this time, Dr. Thomas F. Mayo came to A&M to teach English and become librarian. He continued in this capacity until 1944 when he gave up his library duties to become head of the English Department.

For a number of years the progress of the library continued to lag, but in 1930 the new Cushing Memorial Library was completed at a cost of \$250,000. By the mid 1930's the library was growing in earnest.

During this period, the Agricultural Experiment Station, in response to mounting research needs, began providing a large sum of money annually for the purchase of library books. From that time on, there have been increasingly large expenditures for books, staff and maintenance.

During the 25 years that Dr. Mayo was librarian, there were many improvements beneficial to students. Mayo's main objective as librarian was to "Make it (the

library) a force for broadening the intellectual experience of students in a technical college."

He recalls that the library once housed the music room. This was necessary because at the time there were no other adequate facilities in which the students could enjoy good music.

He contributed an old phonograph, and at the suggestion of some students made several speeches to local clubs in an effort to secure money with which to buy records. Around \$45 was contributed.

A record player, 1,200 records and a book on the lives of some of the great composers was given to the college library by the Carnegie Corporation, after Mayo wrote them several letters. At one time the Ashbury Browning Room was turned into a meeting room for intellectual clubs. During this time no books were kept in the room. Each club was allowed to use it two nights a month.

In 1940, books on fiction and biography were moved into the room because there was no other available space for them.

Mayo resigned in 1944 and Paul S. Ballance became librarian. In 1949, Ballance asked that the administration appropriate funds to conduct a full-scale survey of the library facilities of the college.

Two of the top land grant college librarians of the country, Robert W. Orr of Iowa State College and William H. Carlson of Oregon State College conducted a survey in which 45 key faculty members, 20 representative students, college officials and members of the library staff were interviewed.

This report was published in the late spring of 1950, and stated, "It is hoped that the results of the survey will prove an important milestone in the library growth and development at Texas A&M College."

This year, 1950, finds the library continuing to expand, and with the largest appropriations for books and periodicals in the history of college. A large scale reorganization program is now underway to build up the library to the high levels recognized by the surveyors.

Today the library has over 175,000 books and periodicals, and some 2,500 scientific and technical periodicals. Quite an improvement over 1879!



Granddaddy to today's "North Gate" was this 1920 era structure

## Guinea Pigs in Bed . . .

# Cadets 'Used' College Zoo

Imagine waking up in the middle of the night and hearing from across the campus the boisterous, bellowing roar of a hungry, carnivorous lioness.

Well, it wasn't so much out of the question back in the early twenties, according to Professor D. B. Cofer, archivist of the College. In those days, a pair of Asiatic lions were kept with numer-

ous other animals in a College Zoo, located west of the present Creamery. It wasn't uncommon at any time during the night for the loud hollow cry of a yawning "cat" to arouse campus residents from deep dreams. Families living as far as Walton Hall and even further were exposed to the intermittent frowls.

Established by William Bennett Bizzell president of the College from 1914 to 1925, the complete little menagerie included monkeys, racoons, coyotes, wolves, bears, birds, elks, deer, foxes, ostrich, buffalo, javelin, pheasants, partridge, and quails. Purpose of the institution was to acquaint youngsters with animal life and to have on hand a representative group of the state's fauna. Physically, the (See ZOO, Page 8)

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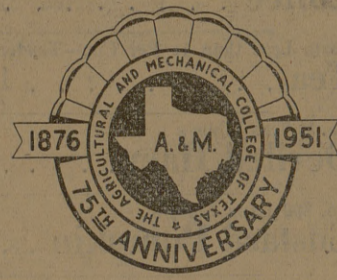
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