

# College Has 78 Years of Stormy History

A&M now has 78 years of history, history significant mainly for the people who made it and what has been done. Some of the time has been stormy, but the result is the most important thing.

## Freshmen Have Own Drill Team

The military students of the freshman class have their own drill team, coached by military science instructors and led by its own elected officers.

At the first of the year, tryouts for the team will be announced. Membership is on a competitive basis, with about 80 trying out each year for the 30-man team.

Besides putting on drill exhibitions on the campus, the team travels to other cities to perform.

Texas A&M, like every other state's land grant school, was authorized by the Morrill Act of 1864. At this time, Texas and the rest of the South was a little too busy fighting a war to do anything about, but by 1866, they began looking around for a place to put a land grant college.

The school was not founded in the middle of the Brazos valley by accident, contrary to what upper-classmen think. The city of Bryan gave the land to the state. The story says that the school was to be two miles from Bryan, but someone perseverent state researcher discovered that Bryan had (at that time) 14 saloons, so the college was moved out another two miles to get away from the evil influence.

The school had the usual opening ceremonies in 1876, but there was a slight misunderstanding.

Only a few students showed up, so they told them to go home and bring some more boys back with them, and things got off to a start the next year.

The presidency of A&M was first offered to Jefferson Davis, former chief executive of the Confederacy. But Davis declined on the grounds of poor health, possibly because he had just gotten out of prison, and the job was then offered to Thomas Gathright. Although Gathright was then superintendent of instruction for the state of Mississippi, he could read and write, and accepted the job. He had five faculty members to help him.

The people of the state of Texas didn't think too much of their two-building agricultural and mechanical college at first. The faculty members were trained only in the classics, and the farmers and ranchers of Texas had no use for

an education in the classics. Some reorganization was necessary.

On to the scene came Lawrence Sullivan Ross, to save A&M as he had saved Cynthia Ann Parker from the Indians about 90 miles up the Brazos river.

Ross took the presidency of the school in 1890, and his personnel prestige gave the school the public prestige it so badly needed.

You'll hear about L. S. Ross until the day you graduate, but briefly, he was a Texas Ranger captain at 18, a brigadier general in the Confederacy, and a general all-round soldier, statesman, and knightly gentleman.

His statue, a bronze by Pompeo Coppini, is probably the most photographed object on the A&M campus.

He was also the first man to live in big white house that every president of the college has lived in since.

The school perked up and sung along from his time on. It has had a few student revolutions, a glimmer of a faculty revolution, and a few other things that a college needs to get out of its system while it is growing up. But since Ross' day, it has had the approval of the people of Texas, its owners, for the job of education it is doing.



THE OLD DAYS—Before the internal combustion engine replaced the war horse, A&M's artillery units used to practice with horse-drawn caissons. Here they are lined up on one of the campus drill fields, preparing to race to see which unit could get its weapon set up and ready to fire first.

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