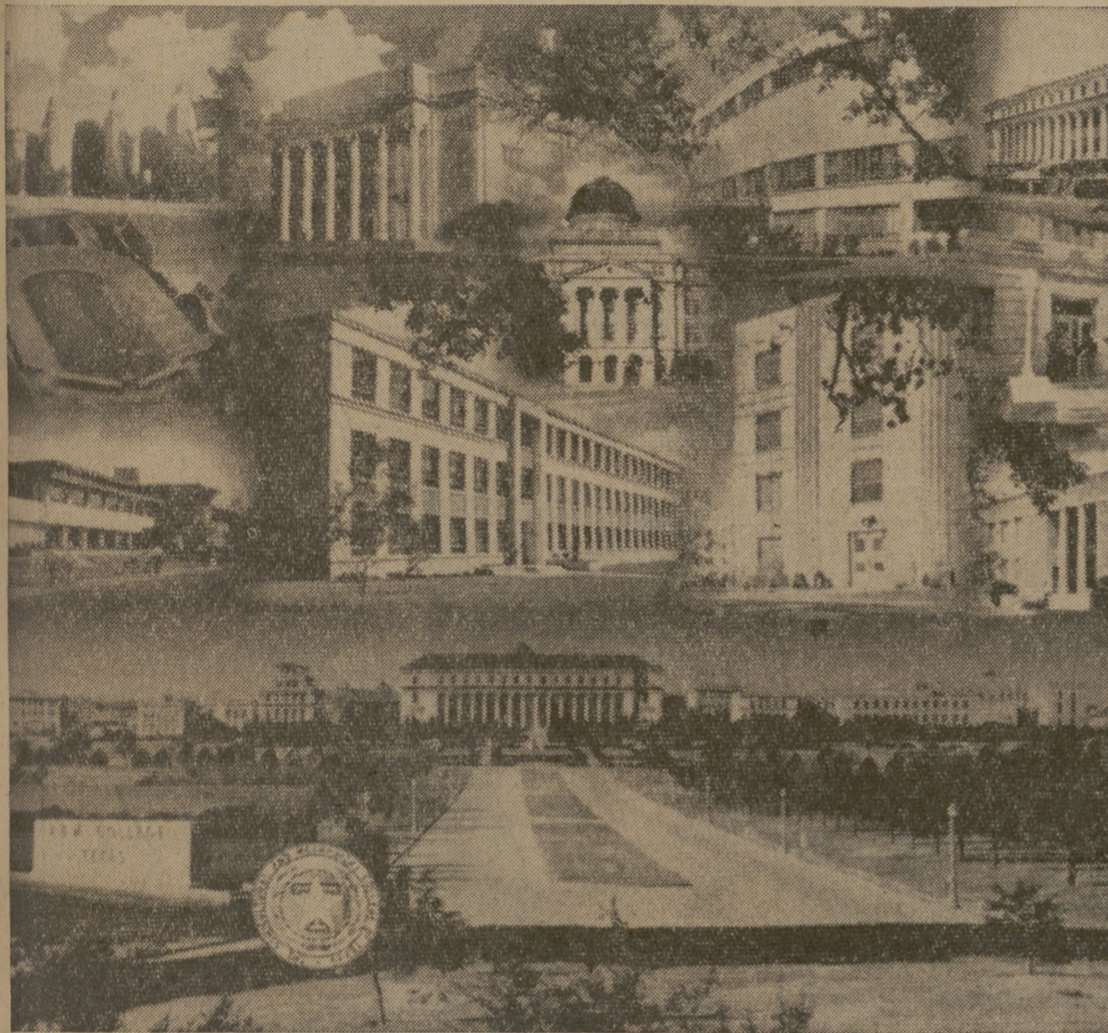


## Texas A&M—What It Means To Me



THE A&M COLLEGE OF TEXAS  
...various parts of the campus

What does Texas A&M College mean to the average student?

This answer was sought in a recent campus-wide essay contest sponsored by Beaumont Insurance-man C. L. Babcock and conducted by The Battalion.

The winning essay was written by Tommy Keith, a senior from Cleveland, Texas and follows:

TEXAS A&M—  
WHAT IT MEANS TO ME  
By Tommy Keith

An individual goes to college for various reasons, but primarily for one thing—an education. Certainly Texas A & M stands out as one of Texas' outstanding educational institutions, but it means much more than that to me.

One of the first things that comes to my mind as I think of what A & M means to me is how it has assisted men in growing up and maturing. I came to Aggie-land straight off the farm. I attended a small high school where, nearly everyone, even I, was a "wheel" of sorts. I had a highly exaggerated opinion of myself which certainly needed to be destroyed.

It took only about two days in the Corps and approximately an equal number of days in class to knock the props completely out from under me. Everything I did seemed wrong. I decided that the thing to do was get out of the terrible old Corps, but changed my mind after a man-to-man talk with an upperclassman to whom I am still grateful. I became convinced that the real thing to do was to stay and fight it out instead of running away, even if I did have to sacrifice my curls and see my

"steady" only three times a semester.

Turning Point

This was undoubtedly one of the turning points of my life. I could fill the entire space of this essay enumerating duties, pressures, and so forth, that I was subjected to. But the important thing is that I had to cope with these things to remain at A & M and I feel that facing them helped me greatly in the long climb from boyhood to manhood.

At A & M I learned tolerance that was unheard of, to me at least before I entered. As in any military organization that is to achieve any measure of success, certain disciplinary steps must be taken. Walking the "bullring" is not my idea of the perfect way to spend a sunny Saturday afternoon, nor is "call to quarters" my concept of an entertaining night. But I had to endure them and I feel that even though their value can't be measured in dollars and cents the training they and similar things provided will be most valuable on jobs I hold.

To me it is impressive that some of the things that are standard procedure and just routine at A & M, though unheard of at most other colleges, can be of such value. For example, "whipping out" (introducing oneself) provides valuable training in meeting and remembering people.

Traditions

No discussion of what A & M means to me would be complete without mentioning traditions. I may soon forget many of the formulas taught in freshman math, but I will never forget how I feel at

Silver Taps. I may forget the skeletal makeup of my body, but I shall never forget the first Muster I attended. I have already forgotten many of the laws of physics, but memories of the Aggie bonfire shall stay with me always. Traditions will most assuredly occupy a big portion of my memories of A & M.

I stated in my opening paragraph that an individual goes to college primarily for an education, and though A & M is outstanding in this field, it means much more to me.

I have listed a few of the other things which could be classified as more or less accessory benefits and could enumerate many more if room permitted. However, I don't want to minimize what A & M means to me from the standpoint of education, for I feel that this would have to be listed in the position of top importance. I don't mean to completely divorce education from the other things I have discussed because I think they are certainly a vital part of it. But in this particular discussion I am referring to education as the training and knowledge one gains in his particular field of study.

The Big Reason

I am strong in the conviction that A & M is unsurpassed in this category. Before I came to college I was interested in agriculture and knew several leaders in the field who were A & M graduates. This is probably the biggest reason I entered. I might add that it was the logical reason since theoretically a person goes to college mainly for one reason—so he can "live a little higher off the hog." So naturally I wanted

to pick the school I thought would do the best job.

But not until after I started to college did I become fully aware of A & M's prestige as an institution of higher learning. Students in almost any field are confronted with a difficult schedule designed to do the best possible job of preparing them for their work after graduation. It is also significant to me that a number of employers seem to be aware of this.

This means a lot to me. It means that while I am in school I have the benefit of top training and preparation, and it means that when I am graduated I carry with me the reputation and prestige of an educational institution which is widely recognized for its success in turning out top men.

No Girls

A common Aggie complaint is that we have no girls and not enough parties, as co-educational institutions do. But even this means a lot to me. It means added prestige and helps to set A & M apart from the run-of-the-mill schools. Of course there are other factors involved, but the lack of many so-called "good times" gives people the true impression that we are here for what we should be—an education.

As I look over this essay, I realize that I have fallen far short of adequately telling what A & M means to me. But as I think about it, this is quite natural. I feel that Aggies have a lot to be proud of—and I challenge any man to attend Texas A & M almost four years as I have and put what it means to him in a meager 1,000 words.

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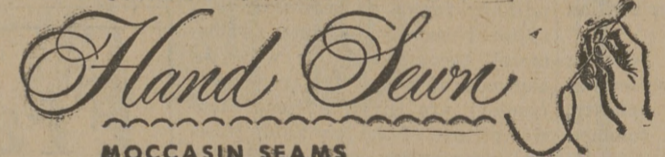
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