

# Yells, Yell Leaders Stay Unchanged Over Years

I could stand with the Corps at a football game today and go right along with the yells," a 1943 Texas A&M graduate remarked. The evaluation of similarity in the way the A&M student body conducted yells during World War II and today was made by John Longley of College Station, an insurance executive. He was student body president and editor of the "Longhorn," A&M yearbook which later became the "Aggieland." With only minor differences, yells and the way they will be led by Neal Adams of Tyler and other yell leaders Saturday at the A&M-Florida State game will be the same as more than a half-century ago.

As a true tradition, yell leading instructions received by Adams, Wayne Porter of Dalhart, Mike Baggett of Waco, Barney Dawson of Wichita Falls and Bob Segnor of San Antonio have been passed on orally from yell leader to yell leader.

The head yell leader has charge of bonfire construction. Plans include more detailed organization with Porter and Baggett to coordinate cutting and stacking operations.

A convoy of buses for the Arkansas game in Fayetteville Nov. 4, midnight yell practice at Texas Woman's University Oct. 20 and full-Corps formation of the block "T" at the Thanksgiving game are being arranged.

The precise manner in which 11,000 students blanket all stadium sounds with "Yeaaaa, Gig 'Em Aggies" was perpetuated by former yell leading great such as "Catfish" Goodman, of El Paso, class of '15; J. A. (Hop) Reynolds of Dallas, '32; Jack (Bigfoot) Nagle of Houston, killed in WW II; Clarence J. (Foots) Bland of St. Louis, '41, and W. H. (Chuck) Chambers of Houston, '43.

A yell leader's nickname was usually characteristic of the way he performed in front of the Corps.

Every Aggie becomes thoroughly familiar with the yells as a freshman, so yell leaders' personality differences that would tend to alter "Gig 'Em," "Aggies," "Farmers Fight" and "Lizzie" are smoothed over by the student body.

"The same signals and directions were used when I was a student," commented James E. (Jocko) Roberts, A&M farm manager who graduated in 1932. His younger brother, Lewis, was head yell leader in 1936.

J. Gordon Gay watched yell practices on the YMCA steps in the early '40s, when Mrs. Ford Munerlyn taught "The 12th Man" to the Corps.

J. O. Alexander of Wellborn, senior yell leader in 1942, said occasional new yells have been introduced and "Saw Varsity's Horns Off" of the "Aggie War Hymn" was formerly a yell.

He noted that Herbert P. (Hub) Aston and Charlie Trail installed "Old Army" in 1939.

"Fifteen for Team" included 15 raps when retired mechanical engineering professor Charles W. Crawford was a student in 1911-15.

"It was shortened to nine and then to three," the veteran Aggie explained. "Yell leaders under Goodman had what we called the 1,000-mile walk and skyrocket was frequently done. Company yell practices were common then."

Crawford said Corps yell practices were held on the steps of Mitchell Hall, the "Y" balcony and Goodwin Hall steps.

"Yell leaders dressed the same as the corps then. When it came time to yell, they pulled off their ties, rolled up their sleeves and got with it," he said.

Roberts feels yell leaders' qualities relate to athletic successes. "If the yell leader really had the spirit, he transferred it to the Corps and they let it be heard," he remarked.

The former Aggie cage star cited Reynolds for the talent. "He had an effervescent way, a contagious smile and could talk his way out of prison. Hop had a tongue like a motorboat," Roberts declared.

Several exes agreed Jack Nagle was one of A&M's great yell leaders.

"Bigfoot originated stomping in yell practice," Barney Welch says. "He was one of the greatest," Roberts added. "He left school after the Thanksgiving game his junior year to go into the service. When he went down with a bomber on his 25th mission, Nagle had a sack of dirt from Kyle Field with him."

Some natural yell changes have been made—the rote of yell practice, frequency of certain yells over others, the number of yell leaders, due to increased student body size, and the way football has changed.

Marion Pugh pointed out one of the latter cases. The quarterback of A&M's 1939 national champion explained that substitutions were infrequent. When a player left the field for a sub, the Corps usually spelled out his name. Signals indicated the specific player.

"Once when Coach (Homer) Norton took me out, I looked over and saw the head yell leader holding his nose as a signal to 'spell it out' for Pugh."

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