

Burning Desire Goes Up In Flames Tonight

Bonfire Work Quiets Campus

Most of the Texas A&M University campus was unusually quiet Monday, with the exception of the south end where a beehive of activity centered around the 1972 Aggie bonfire.

The administration had cancelled undergraduate classes for one day to give students the opportunity to build what is billed as "the world's largest bonfire."

Hundreds of logs have been stacked to three levels around the 85-foot center pole, according to Head Yell Leader Hank Paine of La Grange.

Work will continue through the night and most of Tuesday, before staff instructors from the Texas Firemen's Training School begin fueling operations at about 6 p.m.

Aggies claim the bonfire signifies their love for the university and burning desire the beat the University of Texas Longhorns Thanksgiving Day. At 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, five yell leaders will circle the logs with the Aggie Band before throwing torches and lighting a blaze that can be seen for miles.

A yell practice follows featuring Aggie football players and Coach Emory Bellard.

Logs for the structure were taken from a road right-of-way construction project 13 miles from the campus. All trees used had been bulldozed previously, Paine said.

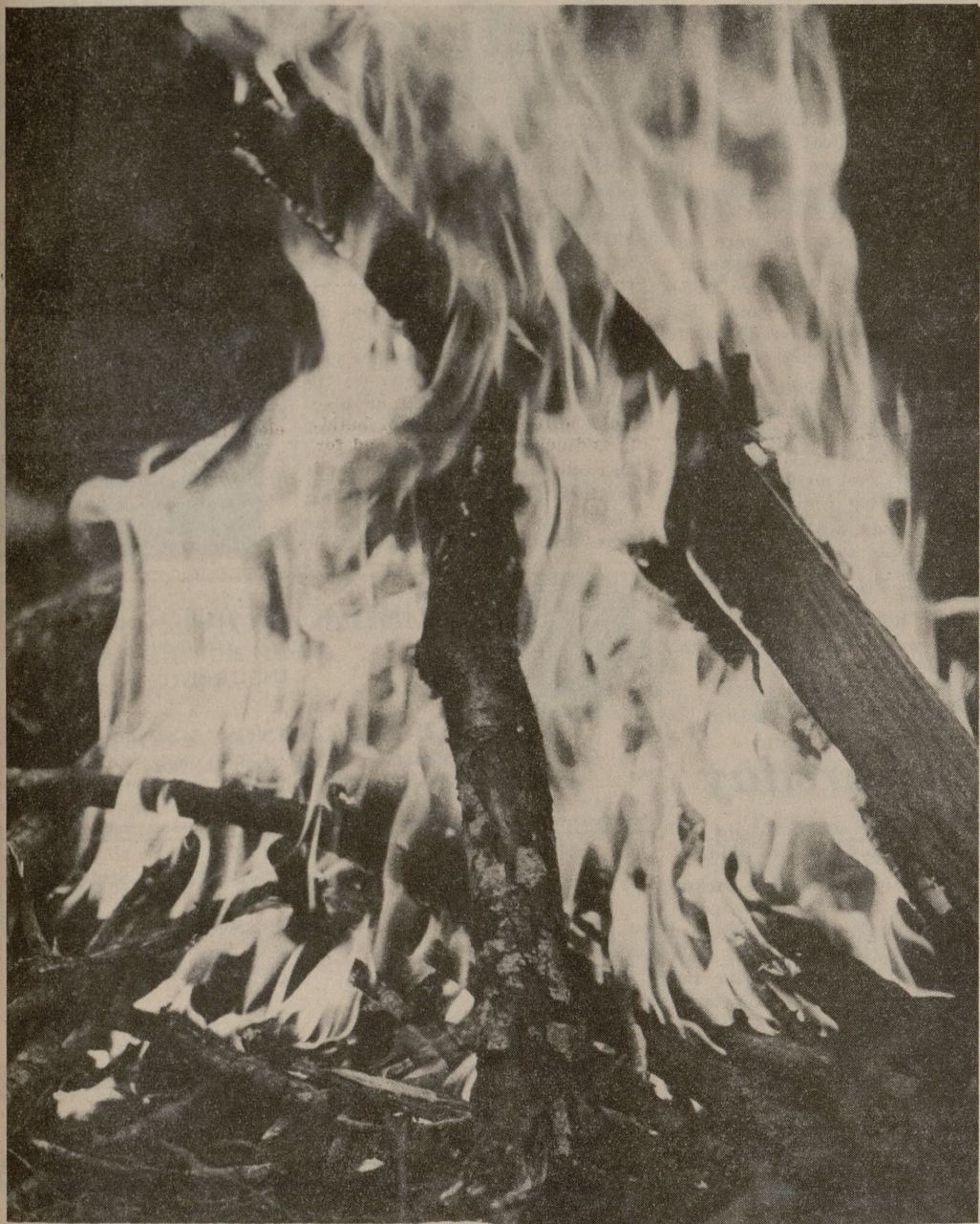
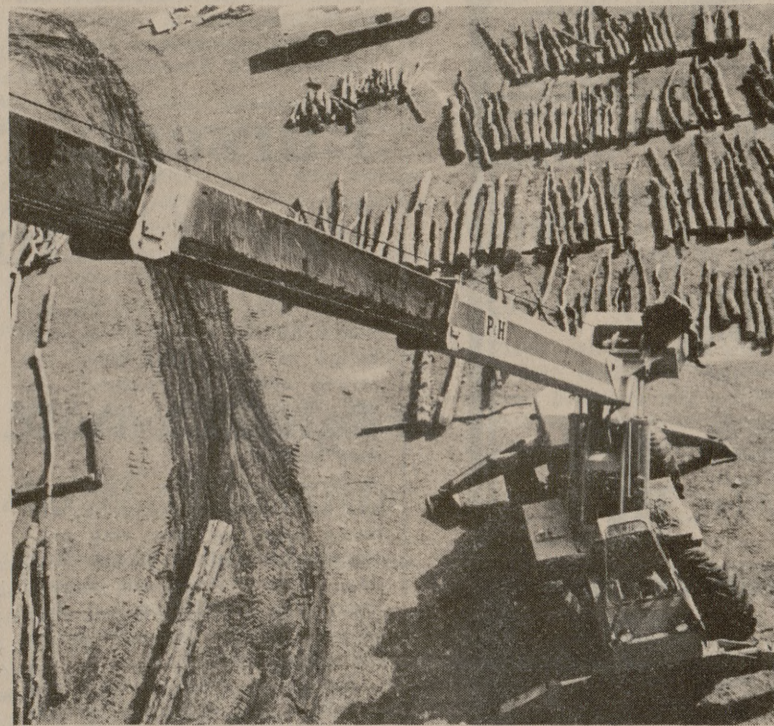
While bonfire work at the site south of Duncan Dining Hall is a 24-hour operation, the cutting area efforts are restricted to daylight hours. Paine reported no serious injuries over the past three days.

TAMU coeds have participated for several years, but this season more than 300 assisted at first aid and refreshment stands, and mobile cookie-coffee units. Paine estimated more than 3,500 students cooperated in the building process.

Adding to the affair is the nationally-televised Thanksgiving Day football classic, scheduled to begin at 8 p.m. over ABC-TV.



Photos by Steve Ueckert and Matt Crossland



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