

# Six students present for classes on opening day

By DON MIDDLETON  
and  
JOHN ADAMS

As you fight your way through herds of bicycles to class this fall — as you bite and claw for a chair in classrooms designed to hold the single traditional class — as you compete with 28,000 other Aggies for a place in every conceivable type of line — pause for a moment to let your thoughts drift back to an October morning 100 years ago when the doors of the A&M College were opened for the first time.

If you were one of those original six students you would have arrived at the entrance to the campus by way of railroad and walked down the dirt trail that led straight to Old Main, past what is now the Grove and through what would eventually become the Coke Building. After presenting yourself to College President Thomas Gathright for matriculation, you would have been shown to your lodgings on the third floor of the same building. As enrollment increased, reaching 48 by mid-November, you would be lodged in Gathright Hall.

Try to forget that as you drove to campus in 1976, many of the roads are still dirt trails, and that you had

to carry a dozen loads of potted plants, stereo records and cinder blocks from a parking lot miles from your fourth floor dorm room.

Upon registration in 1876 each student was issued textbooks to be used in courses that were all elective. A fixed college curriculum was not established until 1880.

If you're concentrating hard enough on this illusion you will forget that monstrous check you wrote for that book required for the course you didn't want to take but your advisor said you had to in order to graduate.

In those early days rabbits, deer, wild cattle, mustangs and other wildlife freely roamed the Brazos valley. One faculty member reported that, "It was no uncommon sight at that time to see a pack of wolves leap out in front of us, at the sound of footsteps from among the tall rank weeds that encompassed the campus grounds. One prospective student — a fish — who had arrived to enroll was attacked by wolves during the day "in full sight of the main building."

Of course, the wild bicyclists leaping out from between buildings and maverick salesmen peddling newspapers and insurance policies

pose no less of a threat in this day and time.

Of the six faculty members present on opening day, 22-year-old R. P. W. Morris was chosen as acting Instructor of Military Tactics and Commandant until a regular officer of the U.S. Army could be detailed for duty. Morris organized the cadets into companies A and B. Since most of the professors had fought in the war for the South, the traditional gray uniform with two rows of brass buttons was chosen as the cadet attire.

The environment of the new college was raw and rugged. The students were equally tough and rowdy. A former state senator wrote that he "had rather give his boy a pony, six-shooter, bottle of whisky and deck of cards and start him out to get his education than send him to A&M." Equipped in that manner, the senator's son or anyone else's son would have made friends quickly.

Life was simpler in October, 1876 and the cost of living was definitely lower. There were no lines and no insurance salesmen.

Walking to class meant a leisurely stroll across the grass to the main building. Doesn't it sound nice?



View of Gathright Hall circa 1885. University Archives

AUGUST 20-26

FORT WORTH — Today, the editor, the merchant, the teacher, the lawyer, the saloon keeper has to be the same as if it was 100 years ago. Ought not some laws be passed for their protection?

FORT WORTH — Let's hang their fans by a two-inch cardinal ribbon, caught at the top on the left side. The bright ribbon, with a flashy, pretty contrast with both dark dresses.

AUSTIN — The Legislature adjourned sine die Monday, 21. Before adjourning a number of routine measures not pass the Galveston bill or a bill to increase taxes by 15 cents. Proposed tax increase contended necessary to avoid further debt.

SAN ANTONIO — Commanding a scouting party Staked Plains, reports the Indian camp recently about Shafter says the camp was and the Indians escaped with the horse they rode. There were no Indians were killed.

GRIFFIN — The buffalo somewhat depressed, there are more hunters than former period. The herd being poisoned on the river but few will be brought in October. It is thought 100,000 hides will be shipped this point next season. 6 years will suffice to exterminate buffalo, and thus prevent depredate on the frontier.

GALVESTON — The heat of weather seems to have the potency of the reign of cholera, and likewise the qualities of his subject, slightest provocation is a resort to blows, and were made by the police p.m. to midnight on a fighting.

RICHMOND — The cotton made their second appearance about a week ago, and getting through their work eaten up almost all of the crop. Some of the planters portion of their crop was green, but not many.

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## Medical ethics to be studied

Afficionados of Texas medical history have a rare treat in store Sept. 16 at Texas A&M University when they actually made much of that history come alive.

Dr. Truman G. Blocker Jr., president emeritus of the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston, and Dr. A. A. Price, dean of Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine during 15 of its most formative years, are among speakers at a two-day conference on the implications of ethics to human and veterinary medicine.

The joint conference is thought to be the first of its kind in the nation and will discuss a number of controversial issues common to, and involving each, of the two professions.

"Dr. Blocker is an exceedingly famous man," says Texas A&M

Dean of Medicine Dr. James A. Knight.

"He has been the major force in building one of the best history of medicine collections in the world at UTMB. He has enjoyed a distinguished reputation in medical history and the humanities in medicine," Knight explains.

Price returned as dean of Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine in 1972 and now is administrator of biomedical science at A&M. He became dean in 1957 and during the years won A&M Board of Directors praise for his initiation of academic and research programs and his coordination of major expansions necessary to accommodate expanded enrollment and broadened programs.

Price first joined the A&M faculty in 1949 and holds three degrees from his alma mater. He handed the

reins of dean to Dr. George C. Shelton in 1973.

Blocker and the former A&M dean are featured in an 8:30 a.m. program Sept. 16 that kicks off the overall conference on ethical implications.

Also on the morning program with the two is Dr. W. W. Armistead, dean of the University of Tennessee - Knoxville College of Veterinary Medicine, who will discuss history of the medical arts.

Cornell University historian Dr. L. Pearce Williams will relate the implications of history to modern medicine as the conference enters such realms as animal patient rights, human obligations, patient-physician relationships, food and companion animal ethics, law in medical ethics and ethics in experimentation.

## Crash cushions save lives on Texas roads

Someone once said, "The penalty for running off the road in your auto shouldn't be death."

This credo was taken to heart by Texas A&M University engineers who recently published a report on work they've been doing for the last seven years, indicating they've come up with what may often be a pardon for that dismal sentence.

The latest figures from A&M's

Texas Transportation Institute show a new crash barrier system already in use in Texas has saved more than 100 lives, although they say that this figure is a very conservative estimate. This barrier evolved after a study in Houston, from 1965 to 1968, showed that eight separate fatalities occurred at three highway locations in just three years.

"All three of these locations had elevated gores (highways divided with a large concrete abutment)," explained researcher E. L. Marquis. "To keep the crashes from being fatal, researchers here at TTI developed and built crash cushions made from steel barrels and tires filled with sand."

"Houston now has 60 of these sites, Dallas has 61 and Austin, Fort Worth and San Antonio all employ significant numbers of these barriers," he said.

"Since the crash barriers were installed, they have been smashed

into 363 times in the Houston area alone," added principal investigator T. J. Hirsch. "In the 363 accidents there were only 65 injuries and one fatality in seven years. An even broader projection for all the locations state-wide show more than 450 accidents involving the crash cushion with only one other fatality during the same time span."

"We feel that even a conservative guess would be that out of the 450 accidents at least half would have caused major injuries, and of that, probably half would have included fatalities," Hirsch went on. "That means a saving of more than 100 lives."

One collision in Houston involved a car, traveling over 70 mph, crashing head-on into a crash cushion which protected occupants from the concrete barrier. The two passengers, who weren't belted in, suffered only a broken nose and a broken collarbone.

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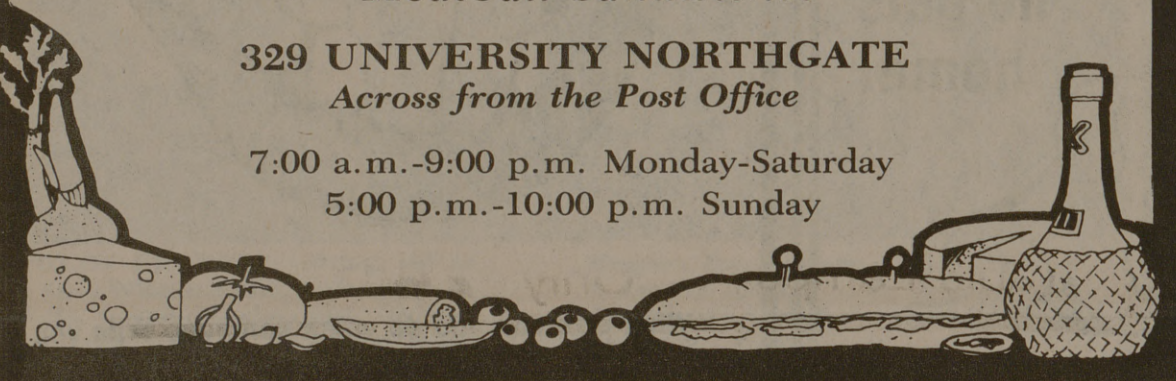
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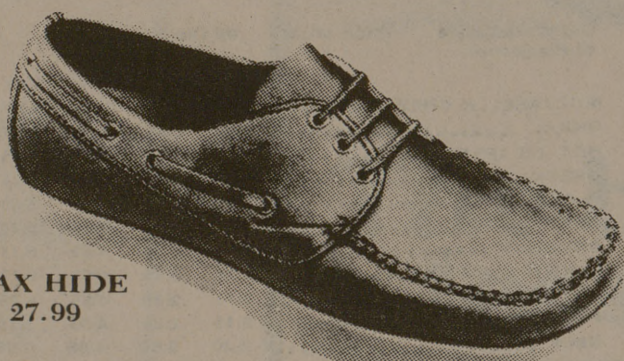
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