

No cobwebs, disintegrating papers

A&M Archives kept systematically

By MARLA RAGLAND
Mention the word 'archives' and images of cobwebs covering piles of dusty books and disintegrating papers comes instantly to mind. But not at the Texas A&M University Archives where papers are neatly and systematically filed.
The Texas A&M University Archives are located in the old section of the library facing the Academic building. Within the files is information on anything about Texas A&M from Aggie traditions to corre-

spondence of the president's office. "Most students come in here trying to find information for a class theme or a term paper," said Dr. Charles R. Schultz, university archivist. "Professors sometimes assign papers having to do with the traditions of A&M and the students come in to do research in our files."
"Freshman Corps members also come in to obtain information about the Aggie Band or the answer to a 'cush' question," Schultz said. "Sophomore Corps members ask

questions of freshmen and give them a certain length of time to find the answers. Some of the questions have no answers, but usually we can help the student. We have a short list of 'cush' questions and answers on file."
Along with the answers to 'cush' questions, there is information on Aggie Spirit, the Aggie Ring, mascots, bonfire, Silver Taps, athletics, Muster and many other facets of Aggie life. There are also copies of all the university catalogs and year-

books. The archives contain architectural information on all the major buildings on campus, as well as photographs of buildings, activities and student life.
"The archives preserve anything of administrative, historical, legal or fiscal significance," Schultz said. "We are trying to avoid the destruction of any material related to the University by encouraging the various offices to give us valuable records and papers so that they can be preserved."
The papers of Congressman Olin E. Teague, former Congressman Graham Purcell and Texas legislator Will L. Smith have been added to the collection. Also included are files from the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.
As a part of the Oral History Collection, Dr. Robert Calvert has conducted interviews with 50 of the nation's prominent oceanographers. Interviews also have been done with Mexican Americans who fled from Mexico during the Revolutionary War period of 1910-1920.

The archives were organized in 1950 and have been funded by the University and by the Association of Former Students. The Association of Former Students initially gave \$10,000 to support the program two years. They continued to provide funding and paid the salary of the archivist for several years. Today the program is budgeted through the University Library.
David Brooks Cofer was appointed part-time archivist in 1950. He took on the responsibility along with his teaching duties in the English Department and began building the resources. Cofer retired in 1957 and Ernest Langford of the Architecture Department faculty assumed his position. Dr. Schultz came on as full-time archivist in 1971. Today, there is also a full-time assistant archivist, David Chapman.
All files of the archives are available between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Documents must be used in the archives reading room.

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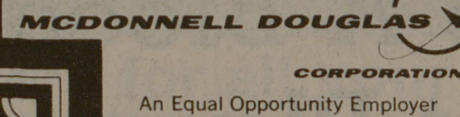
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