

'Colorful history' shows soi

(Continued from cover.)

"They had advertised for students to stay here during the holidays to be extras," Kunze said. "Most of the kids that stayed needed the money. This was one way of earning a few extra dollars. Besides, it was more than I could earn at home."

People then didn't react to celebrities in the way they do today, Kunze said. "Actually, we paid very little attention (to the film crews and stars)."

But the mere fact that the picture was being filmed on campus, affected just about everyone in one way or another.

Professor Harry Kidd, Assistant Dean of the Graduate College, has a story about the movie, too.

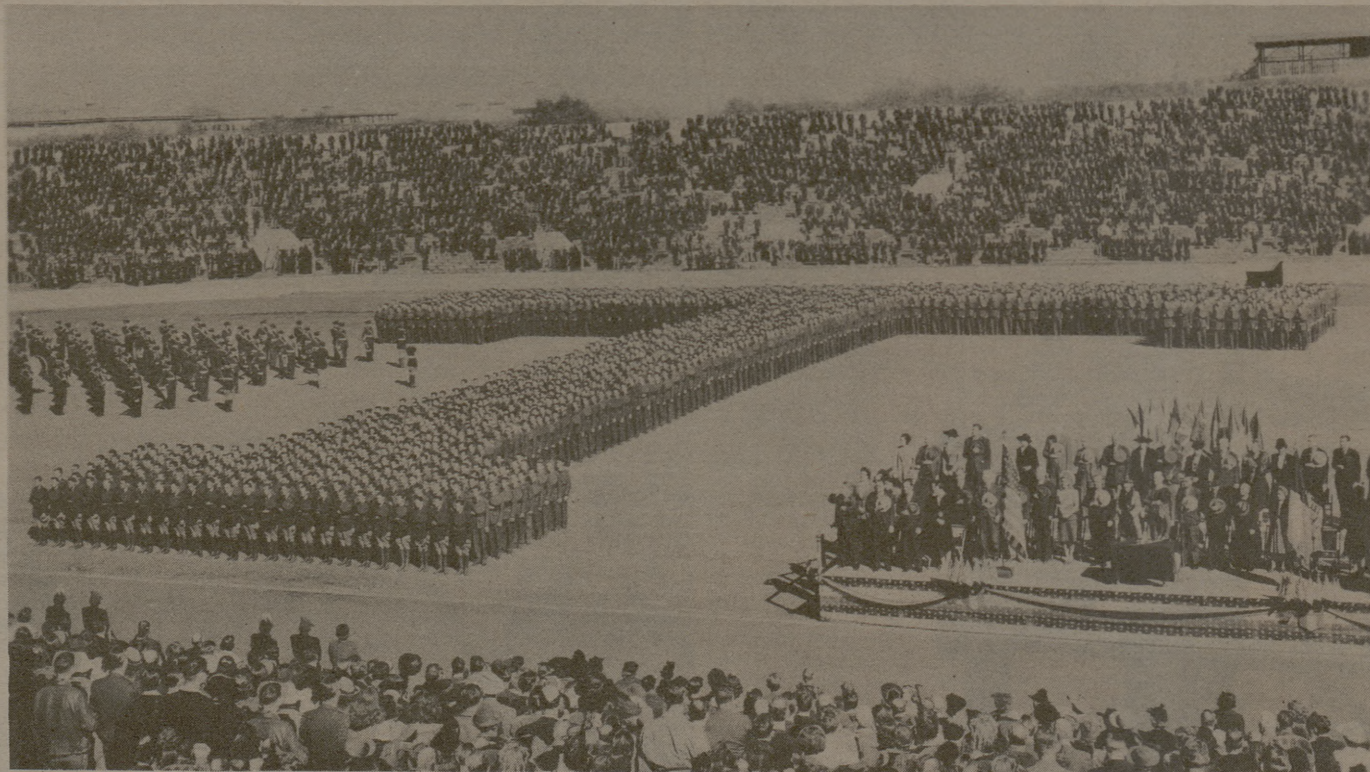
"I was teaching, I don't recall whether it was 301 (English) or a literature class. Anyway, the door burst open and there was this Hollywood type in a roll neck sweater. He said, 'Prof, we got to get 'em outa here, we're filming.' I told him I wasn't going anywhere, that I was teaching. Well, it wasn't long before I got a note to clear out, that they were in fact going to film there. We sat in the Rotunda (of the Academic Building) for half a day."

Kidd has been here for "40 years. I came in the Fall of '39."

Weirus and Kunze agree that the movie does present a slightly exaggerated account of life at A&M then.

"I really enjoyed the scenes of the campus," Weirus said. "But most of us were a little embarrassed by the silliness of the plot, even though we got a kick out of seeing ourselves."

"I guess my initial reaction was they weren't portraying A&M the way I thought it was," Kunze said. "However, there



Courtesy University Archives

are a lot of things of historical value in it."

Kunze said he had friends who walked in the "Bull Ring" on Saturday afternoons to get rid of "rams". A ram is sort of like a demerit, but not as serious.

And in the movie, Cyanide Jenkins (Noah Beery, Jr.) warns Brad Craig (Richard Quines) that he better watch out or he'd be "paddle-footing around that Bull Ring" after a run-in with Panhandle Mitchell (Robert Mitchum).

And in the Aggie Corps of

Cadets, many things are the same today, too.

Jenkins tells Craig "you better get hip to the chatter, son, or you won't eat." The chatter is the special language used at corps dining tables.

Mustard is baby, salt is sand, pepper is dirt. Catsup is blood, meat is bull neck and so on.

And the fish still have only four answers to upper-classmen:

- Yes, Sir.
- No, Sir.
- No excuse, Sir.
- Sir. Not being informed, I

hesitate to articulate for fear that I may deviate from the true course of rectitude. In short, Sir, I am a very dumb fish and do not know, Sir.

The film treats its audience to a recital of this speech at the beginning. Craig was walking on the sidewalk, a no-no for freshman.

Weirus said that then, freshman couldn't even walk even walk on the curb. Today, the corps wants fish to walk on the sidewalk. It's the seniors who get to walk on the grass nowadays.

The dance scene in Sbisla is also a tradition upheld today. Most of the major military balls are held there.

The music for the dance scene was actually recorded in the old Assembly Hall, where the Chapel is today.

"They checked out the acoustics," Weirus said. "Man, they were really good."

And for the dance scene, TSCWites were invited. The Ft. Worth Star-Telegram reported on Sunday, Nov. 22, that "next Friday 300 Texas State College for Women girls will come from Denton to become temporary movie actresses. They will dance for half a day with 300 A&M students while cameras turn on a corp dance scene that will be a highlight in the production."

Many girls showed up for screen tests, Weirus said, hoping to be discovered.

The scene showing the women arrive for the dance was factual. Anne Gwynne tells Martha O'Driscoll (they had the two lead feminine roles) that they'll be put up in one of the dorms.

"On the weekends, when the women would come up," Weirus said, "all the men would move out of a dorm or two, so they'd have a place to stay. If the girl could get here, she fulfilled her end of the deal. The guy would have to put her up and pay for her meals."

Weirus said that was a big thing, if you could get your picture made with one of the "girls."

"Look at those dimples," Weirus said while looking at a picture of Gwynne. "Gosh, you could fall in love with them."

The bonfire is the original thing, too.

"That's what a raunchy bonfire looked like. In those days," Weirus said, "they were really trash fires. We didn't have one of those engineered things."

"It was a state supported, land grant, all male military academy," Weirus said.

Times have changed.

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