It beats Sbisa's edgs

Happy 103rd!

Texas A&M had it rough during the good 'Old Army' days

By DOUG GRAHAM Focus Staff

Nobody's breaking out the re-quired 103 birthday candles, but today Texas A&M University is having a birthday. Thus, the birthday school's long

and rustic history should receive the examination it deserves. Aggieland was built after the Civil

War under authorization of the War under authorization of the United States Congress under the Morrill Act of July 2, 1862. The act set up Land Grant schools in vari-ous states to provide agricultural and engineering graduates. The schools were also instructed, by law, to provide military training and reserve officers. reserve officers

Other Land Grant schools in-clude Florida A&M and Oklahoma State University

This is the reason Texas A&M College, as it was then known, was

College, as it was then known, was a cow college with a cadet corps. The school was opened for reg-istration Oct. 2, 1876, and classes started with 40 students and 6 fac-ulty members on the fourth. That is a long way from today's enrollent of over 31,000 students and the muria of accordences

and the myriad of professors, teaching assistants and others who teach them

Life was rough in the early days. Wolves were a problem. So was lodging; for a while cadets lived in tents. The mode of transportation was horse or train. Eventually a trolley was built to connect the school with downtown Bryan.

Academically A&M suffered. The presidency was first offered to Jefferson Davis, who refused it. Thomas Gathwright later accepted the position.

Soon he and his instructors were handed their walking papers. It seemed that they were teaching a classical, rather than agricultural and mechanical curriculum.

In 1890 Lawrence Sullivan Ross, Texas' Governor at that time, assumed the presidency. His sta-tue stands in front of the domed Academic Building. Under Ross the school acheived a certain measure of respectability that it had earlier lacked.

The school was increasing in size. By 1900 the Corps of Cadets was 327 strong. The physical plant consisted of two main buildings. Disaster soon struck. In 1912

when enrollment climbed to 1,200, the old mess hall burned. Soon after the dining disaster, the Main Building went up in smoke.

That fire destroyed many of the college's early records. However, Sbisa Dining Hall and the Academic Building were built soon afterward.

When America entered the

When America entered the Great War, the entire senior class at Texas A&M volunteered for duty. The 55 Aggies who died during the first of the two World Wars are commemorated by plaques on the 55 trees surrounding the drill field behind the Memorial Student Cen-ter ter

It was during the war that J.V. "Pinky" Wilson, serving with the AEF, wrote "The Aggie War Hymn."

The school continued expanding, adding new traditions during its arowth

In 1922 the Twelfth Man was born. In a footall game against Centre College in Dallas, the Ag-gies were decimated by injuries. Gil King, who had been on the team earlier, came out of the stands to suit up. Though he didn't play, he started one of A&M's most original traditions. By 1941 6,500 were enrolled.

Almost 70 buildings stood on campus.

In between wars, some cadets found a black mongrel puppy on road from Navasota. They named the dog Reveille, who became the school mascot. The rest of the Re-veille's(the school is on its fourth

Rev) have been pureblood collies. WW II struck America, and Texas A&M responded with more soldiers than any other single in-stitution, including the military academies.

18,000 Aggies served in the war, of whom 13,000 were officers. In 1943, Hollywood did it to Ag-gieland with the unforgettable war classic "We've Never Been Lick-

The end of the war caused a massive housing shortage as Aggie veterans returned to complete their education. 1946-47 had a peak enrollment of 9,000. The College utilized the air base out on Highway 21 as an annex. Also, because of excessive hazing, the freshmen were separated from upperclassmen and kept out at base

for a while. In 1954 mandatory four year par-ticipation in the Corps was struck down, but was reinstated in 1957. The struggle over Corps member-ship grew out of a concern over declining oprollment end atoms declining enrollment and stagnation.

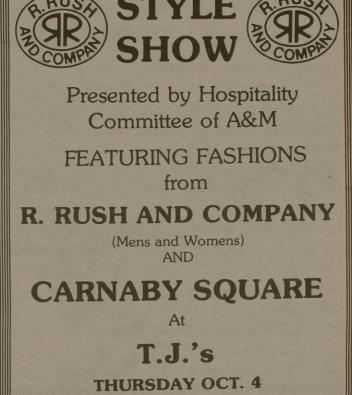
Texas A&M College was changed to Texas A&M University August 23, 1963.

August 23, 1963. Soon afterwards, in 1965, mem-bership in the Corps of Cadets be-came voluntary again. In 1964 Gen. Earl Rudder, famed for leading the ranger as-saults during D-Day, took over as president. Under his authority the school became coeducational. Women are being admitted for a

while without regard to previous requirements that they be either the wives or daughters of Aggies. In 1971, the year Rudder died, the rules were formally struck down. In 1974 women were admitted to the Corrector the first time in a unit. the Corps for the first time in a unit, W-1

After Rudder died, Dr. Jack Williams took over the job of presi-

dent. He was then elevated to Chancellor. Jarvis Miller was named president of the university in 1977



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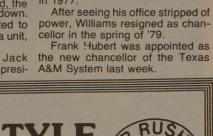
HAPPY HOUR



esident M. T. Harrington, Judge John W. Goodwin a member of the first class of A&M, Charles McGill, then a freshman and Texas Gov. Allen H. Shrivers pose in Kyle Field after the 50th birthday presentation.

Photo Courtesy Archiv

Texas A&M's 50th birthday included a bar-b-que picnic lunch near Kyle Field.



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