

War Hymn' author dies

Pinky Wilson never thought song would be a hit

by BECKY SWANSON
Battalion Staff

The author of "The Aggie War Hymn" died Thursday. James Vernon "Pinky" Wilson, who wrote the words of the music to the War Hymn, died in Burnet at the age of 83.

When Wilson wrote the words to the song, originally titled "Good-bye to Texas University," he never thought it would be the success that it became, John A. Adams Jr., author on Texas A&M history, said.

Adams, a 1973 Texas A&M graduate, interviewed Wilson several times, and included a section about him and "The War Hymn" in his book, *We Are the Aggies*.

The story that Wilson, then a Marine Corps private, wrote the "War Hymn" on the front line during World War I while bombs burst overhead is a myth, Adams said. Wilson, a music buff since childhood, wrote the words to the back of a letter from home while on guard duty on the Rhine River in May 1918. He committed the song to memory and discarded the letter.

The song, Adams said, is a combination of several old Aggie yells and some original words written by Wilson.

"Hullabaloo, Caneck! Caneck!" and "Saw Varsity's Horns Off" were A&M yells.

After returning from the war, Wilson re-enrolled in Texas A&M as a senior in the veteran's unit. In 1920, while a senior, Wilson organized a glee club of cadets which made public appearances, most notably those at two Bryan theaters.

In return for free passes to see the show, Adams said, Wilson and his quartet would entertain the audience by singing while the cameraman changed the film reels.

On one occasion, several of the Aggie yell leaders were at the theater and heard "Good-bye to Texas University" sung slowly, as a ballad, Adams said. They approached Wilson, saying the song should be "jazzed up" and presented to the student body.

The "War Hymn" was introduced at a yell practice in Fall 1920, Adams said. There were several songs in contention for the official fight song of the college, he said, but Wilson's song was officially adopted in 1921.

The verse of the song sung by A&M students today constituted the original song, Adams said. The second verse was not written until 1928 at the request of the yell leaders and former students in an attempt to get away

from a fight song purely oriented toward the University of Texas.

Adams said Wilson told him that he doubted the Aggies would ever adopt the second verse he wrote. Several attempts to promote the verse have been futile, Adams said.

"Just as well, the spirit is with the student body — they'll sing what they want to," Wilson told Adams in a 1975 interview.

One of Wilson's noteworthy accomplishments while at Texas A&M was becoming a Ross Volunteer as a sophomore, a privilege normally reserved for juniors and seniors.

When Wilson was inducted into the Texas A&M Athletic Hall of Fame in 1979, he was wearing the Ross Volunteer pin given to him in 1917, Adams said.

Wilson was born in Florence on Feb. 12, 1897, and was a rancher in Williamson and Burnet counties for 46 years.

He was a member of the Masonic Lodge for over 50 years, and a member of the Kiwanis Club.

Wilson served as president of the Williamson County A&M Club and organized the Highland Lakes A&M Club.



Staff photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

James V. "Pinky" Wilson is pictured here being inducted into the Texas A&M Letterman's Association Hall of Honor in 1979. Wilson, the author of the "Aggie War Hymn," died in Burnet Thursday.

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Dallas no longer recording record heat

Lower temps, no new deaths

A 2-week-old heat wave let up somewhat Monday in Dallas — which has been hardest hit by the searing temperatures — but claimed its first fatalities in Tennessee, raising the heat-related death toll in a nine-state area to at least 198.

In Dallas, where 60 of the 84 heat-related deaths in Texas occurred, no new deaths were reported Monday, and, for the first time in two weeks, the city's official high temperature of 103 degrees failed to break the daily record.

"Compared to last week, when it was 113, a 10-degree reduction seems to have made the difference," said a Dallas medical

examiner. A National Weather Service forecaster said the mercury reached 103 shortly after 4 p.m., but was unlikely to top the 105 mark set in 1914.

Experts said the heat in North Texas was being moderated by an influx of moisture from the Gulf Coast, which put some high cumulus clouds above Dallas for the first time in weeks.

Besides the 84 deaths in Texas, Arkansas reported 69, with 29 in Oklahoma, five in Kansas, two in Louisiana and one each in Alabama, Mississippi and Missouri. Four elderly people — two of them sisters aged 80 and 90 — were found dead in their

Memphis, Tenn., homes Monday, apparent victims of the eastward-moving heat wave. Two other deaths in the state have been positively linked to the 100 degree-plus temperatures.

"There's not going to be any substantial relief, like a major break in temperatures," said Kermit Keeter of the National Weather Service's Fort Worth bureau. "The major system that's causing the heatwave is still there and it locks out the movement of other systems."

"What's been unusual is that this system came so early — it usually doesn't come until late July or August — and that it has persisted for so long."

Keeter said the weather service's 10-day forecast did not include a cooling trend. Reports of the area's scorching temperatures have resulted in an international outpouring of advice on how to ward off heat stroke. A Golden, Colo., man even has offered to drop the temperature 20 degrees for \$1.1 million.

Frank Bosco of the Crop Improvement Institute said his plan involves sending up a chemical cloud that would stimulate cloud development and rainfall. He wants \$100,000 up front with a \$1 million bonus if he is successful.

Bosco blames good ol' boys who are seeding clouds in dry West Texas for producing the heatwave.

"They're messing around with the clouds and they don't know what they're doing," he said. "It's cruel the way they're cooking you people."

Other sympathetic people have suggested their own surecures, such as drinking a mixture of mustard and fresh orange juice, a vinegar-pickle concoction and swallowing tobacco juice.

"We've had all kinds of wild stories. Some of them get pretty gross," said Michael Darst of the Dallas County medical examiner's office.

The heatwave was even blamed for a five-car train derailment near Fort Gibson, Okla., because heat had expanded the rails.

East Texas' 16 million-acre Piney Woods, the state's most important forest resource, was tinder dry and ready to burst into flames at the slightest spark. Forest Service officials said the only saving point had been that the hot weather kept potentially careless humans indoors.

The Arkansas Health Department also warned of a bat danger, saying many of the rabies-carrying mammals had been forced from their roosting places by the heat.

The Weather

Yesterday	Today
High 102	High 103
Low 76	Low 73
Humidity 40%	Humidity 40%
Rain 0.0 inches	Chance of rain None

Sinkhole renews two towns' rivalry

WINK — The citizens of this town of 1,000 have revived a 50-year-old rivalry by claiming a neighboring burg is unjustly taking credit for the West Texas sinkhole that has become the area's only claim to fame.

Although the residents of Kermit, population 7,884, call the 400-by-360 foot sinkhole the Kermit Krater, Winkonians point out they are closer to the cavity, and therefore it should be called the Wink Sink. The depression began growing June 3 in the arid range of West Texas and attracted nationwide headlines and scores of tourists.

Both cities have jumped on the bandwagon, producing such fast-selling items as T-shirts and bumper stickers. A hamburger stand in Kermit has started selling Kermit Krater Taters and Wink Sink Drinks.

"If it settles down and they make a fitting hole out of it, we'll take it," said Odie Thompson, former mayor of Wink.

But other Wink citizens are more aggressive in their bid to have the hole identified with Wink, which is 2 miles from it, instead of Kermit, which is 4 miles away.

"That's the way it is around this county — Kermit takes credit for everything," said

Wink welder James Wicker.

The Winkler County News published a 40-page booklet entitled "Kermit Crater — The Hole Story." But the Wink Bulletin — which declares under its nameplate that it's "The Only Newspaper in the World That Cares Anything About Wink" — has identified the hole as a Wink phenomenon.

"If this turns out to be our freshwater lake, you can bet Wink will claim it," said Linda Houston, a Kermit booster.

The long-running feud between the two towns goes back to the 1920s when Wink,

then an oil boomtown of nearly 25,000 people, forced a county referendum to move the courthouse from Kermit.

Kermit voters, the story goes, turned out faithfully to reject the proposition, while Wink voters were reportedly partying and carrying on.

The hole, which some say is a result of underlying salt deposits subsiding, was filled with oily, black water during its nascent period but now has clear, green water that reportedly is better fit for drinking than the nearby city of Midland's water supply.

Nelson fans brave heat

Country music entertainer Willie Nelson held his last annual Fourth of July Picnic at the Pedernales Country Club last weekend. Those who braved the traffic and the unseasonably (even for July in Texas) heat were entertained by a host of country celebrities. Below, a county sheriff gazes skeptically at one of the thousands of revel-

ers at the picnic. Right, fans of every shape, size and description loaded their ice chests and sun suits for the long hike from wherever they could park their cars to the picnic site. Some enterprising landowners near the country club were charging up to \$25 per car for parking.

Staff photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.



Free-bleeding Ags donate 254 units

by DEBBIE NELSON
Battalion Staff

Student Government and Wadley Central Blood Bank collected 254 units of Aggie blood last week, despite excessive heat and equipment breakdowns.

Around 70 people were deferred from donating blood during the July 1-2 drive, John Joyce, Student Government co-chairman of the blood drive, said.

The blood drive was still more successful than the last summer blood drive, which was held two years ago. Janet Golub, the other Student Government co-chairman of the Blood Drive, said barely 100 units (a unit is almost a pint) of blood were collected during that drive.

Joyce said students are usually deferred from donating blood when they have recently recovered from an illness or if they could be done medical harm by donating.

Due to high temperatures both outside and inside the collection center during the blood drive, Joyce said, any student with any chance of an adverse reaction or with a history of fainting was deferred from donating blood.

Golub said they would rather defer donors this time and not collect as much blood than for students to have a bad experience and not donate again.

"At least they're trying," Golub said.

"It's kind of funny. The first-time donors are so disappointed when they're deferred because they finally got up the nerve to donate."

There were also problems with the bloodmobiles. The generator on one of them blew out because of the heat, and the other one broke down on the second day of the drive, Golub said.

People who went to the Commons planning to donate blood were taken by van to the donation center at the Memorial Student Center.

Golub said few businesses want to have blood drives right before holidays. The amount of blood coming in drops almost to zero.

Although doctors don't schedule much surgery for holidays, the demand for blood remains high, because of the large number of holiday accidents.

Because Wadley Central Blood Bank holds drives on the Texas A&M University campus, it assures all Texas A&M students, faculty, staff, former students and their families blood when needed, in any United States hospital.

No suspects in gold theft from lab

Texas A&M University police had no further information Monday on approximately \$30,000 worth of gold stolen from a laboratory during the weekend of June 28-29.

The gold, in the form of hollow tubes, was taken from the Geosciences Building, Detective William Scott said. The gold was kept in a small wooden box on top of a cabinet in the lab, Scott said. Whoever took the gold apparently knew about it beforehand, he said, "because the untrained eye the tubes would appear to be made of brass."

The theft was discovered the morning of June 30 morning by Assistant Professor Robert K. Popp, who shares the lab office. When he came to work at 8:30, Popp found that while the main door to the four lab rooms was locked, the door to the lab itself was not. The blinds were also closed, indicating that someone had wanted to avoid being seen.

Scott said he suspects that the thief used a key to enter the room. He plans to interview all employees who have keys to the room, he said.

Many of the people in the department are not in town right now, which is holding up the investigation, Scott said. There are a few leads in the case, Scott said, but no suspects now.

Popp said the gold was used by the department as a container for rocks and minerals in experiments done to determine their stability with regard to heat. Gold, silver or platinum can be used in these experiments because they can be heated to high temperatures without melting, and without reacting with the substances being tested.