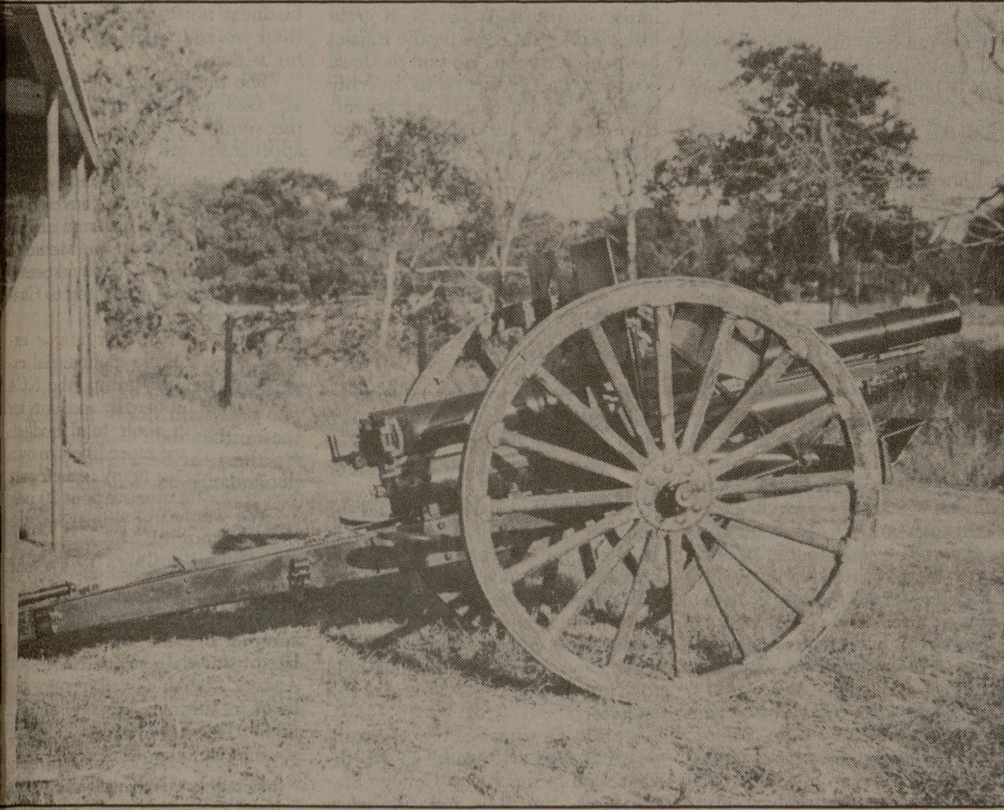


Artillery piece may re-enter Texas A&M history

Found in a ravine, 1902 cannon only lacking wheels to be ready for combat again



Staff photo by Pat O'Malley

Parsons' Mounted Cavalry, with the help of former students, have almost finished rebuilding this 1902 cannon. The gun needs new

wheels and metal strips around the wheels to be ready to roll. Since its discovery six years ago, the gun has collected dust until now.

By MARCY BOYCE
Battalion Staff
About six years ago, while cutting wood for bonfire, Corps of Cadets freshmen discovered a 1902 cannon believed to be a part of Texas A&M University history.

Because of the efforts of Parsons' Mounted Cavalry and John Gunter, a former cadet from the class of '78, all but the wheels of the cannon have been restored to top-notch condition. The project cost about \$2,000. Gunter, who spent some of his summer working on the cannon in Muleshoe, traveled to Maryland and Ohio scrounging up parts for the cannon and harnesses and saddles for the six-horse-drawn cart that carries it, said Pete Normand, a former cadet from the class of '71.

Until Gunter began working, instead of being used in parades, march-ins and at football games like he had hoped, the 1902 field artillery piece gathered dust in an old warehouse near campus for the past several years.

Normand is a self-proclaimed "history nut" who has been researching the recovered cannon. And it was his letter to Corps Commander Ken Cross two weeks ago that rekindled an interest to make the cannon functional.

"The only thing holding us back is

the wheels," said Tom Wilson, Corps personnel officer.

Wilson is in charge of a door-knocking campaign this week to collect donations for new wheels estimated to cost \$3,000.

The wheels have a metal hub that will have to be machined specifically to fit the cannon's metal axle, Normand said, explaining the high estimate.

"Our goal is to get it ready to go for the t. u. march-in and the parade in downtown Austin," Wilson said.

Normand said a search for someone who could make the 54-inch cannon wheels ended with a gunsmith in Oklahoma City who makes the coaches for a beer brewer's commercials.

Wilson said the gunsmith eagerly accepted the job. A former student of Oklahoma University that still fosters a rivalry with the University of Texas, the gunsmith promised to try to have the cannon ready for the Aggie-Longhorn game Nov. 29.

Coincidentally, Wilson said, the model year of the cannon was also the first year Texas A&M beat UT. There has been some talk about naming the cannon "The Spirit of '02," but Wilson said he would rather students have a voice in naming it.

"This is the perfect chance for everyone in the student body to real-

ly pull together on a project. This is a University-wide project, hopefully not just the Corps," he said.

However, before the cannon can be shipped, Wilson said he and his committee must raise at least a \$1,000 deposit.

"The student body should be able to raise at least the \$1,000 so we can go ahead and ship it, and then hopefully the alums can help us pay the remainder," Wilson said. He noted former students have already put several thousand dollars and a lot of time into the cannon's restoration.

Tales surrounding the cannon and how it got into a ravine by Easterwood Airport are numerous. One

tale claims it was among a dozen or so cannons distributed to Texas A&M College before World War I as part of an intensive ROTC program.

Other rumors contend it was one of the pieces of artillery used in the filming of "We've Never Been Licked," a movie about Texas A&M College in the 1940s.

"They (the Corps) might have had as few as three cannons, so you can bet this cannon was one of the three," he said. "And if it wasn't, it's identical to the ones used (in the film)," he said.

"No one really knows the truth, though."

Extensions of streets proposed

By STARR MOORE
Battalion Reporter
The city planners of Bryan and College Station presented an arterial street plan to the Brazos County Commissioners Court Monday morning.

The long-range plan will allow major streets like Southwest Parkway and Welch Street to be extended out to the rural areas.

Commissioner Bill Cooley said this is a needed plan because the county has to have arrangements for future expansion.

The commissioners court will approve the arterial plan within 30 days.

Also at a later date, the commissioners will have to amend their budget for the payment of two new

part-time bailiffs that were hired by district judges, Tom McDonald and Bradley Smith.

On the agenda under other business, tax assessor Buddy Winn announced that only 500 voter registrations without a permanent address remained. Without a permanent address, Texas A&M students may not vote in Brazos County because their voting precinct will not be known.

Last week, there were 1,500 Aggies who had given their post office box or their parents' address instead of their residence in Bryan or College Station.

Many students have gone to the tax office to correctly fill out the voter registrations and the tax office has contacted the rest.

Testimony continues in assault trial

The trial of 35-year-old Connie Vaught, who is charged with aggravated assault, continues today.

Vaught gave her fifth child up for adoption and was told she could not have the name of the adoptive parents.

When it was refused, the state claims, she fired three rounds into the welfare office before locking herself in one of the rooms.

Vaught entered a plea of innocence by reason of insanity before an 11-woman, one-man jury.

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