

evolve into a thriving institution

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dents died while in service. In 1951, the Memorial Student Center was dedicated to those former students who gave their lives while serving their country.

The postwar period saw a massive influx of veterans returning as students, most on the federally-sponsored GI Bill; enrollment grew from a 1943-44 low of 2,000 to 8,651 for the 1946-47 school year. The College as a whole, however, retained the goals, aims and traditions of the 1920s and 1930s. Traditions such as bonfire, muster and yell practice took on a semi-sacred status and other less desirable traditions also became entrenched — such as hazing.

Hazing, prohibited by state law but nevertheless practiced at times, became so bad that in 1946 freshmen were moved to the annex at the Bryan Army Air Force Base. There, they were still a part of the Cadet Corps, but had their own separate command structure and were spared the vast majority of the hazing. They remained there for four years, many living in tents initially.

Returning veterans shunned not only the hazing but the uniform itself; they would not accept the idea of a "youngster" telling them what to do. The Board of Directors discontinued the long-standing practice of requiring non-military students to wear a uniform. A dean of men was appointed in 1946, and the commandant was given responsibility only for students wearing a uniform. For the first time in its history, Texas A&M had a recognized civilian student body.

Cadets resented the changes and more than 200 upperclass cadets marched on College President Gibb



The YMCA building hasn't changed much over the years.

Gilchrist's home, threatening to resign unless the changes were repealed. When Gilchrist, to the marchers' surprise, accepted the resignations — "with regret" — the effort collapsed. After three days of individual meetings, 143 cadet officers were reinstated, but the new rules remained unchanged.

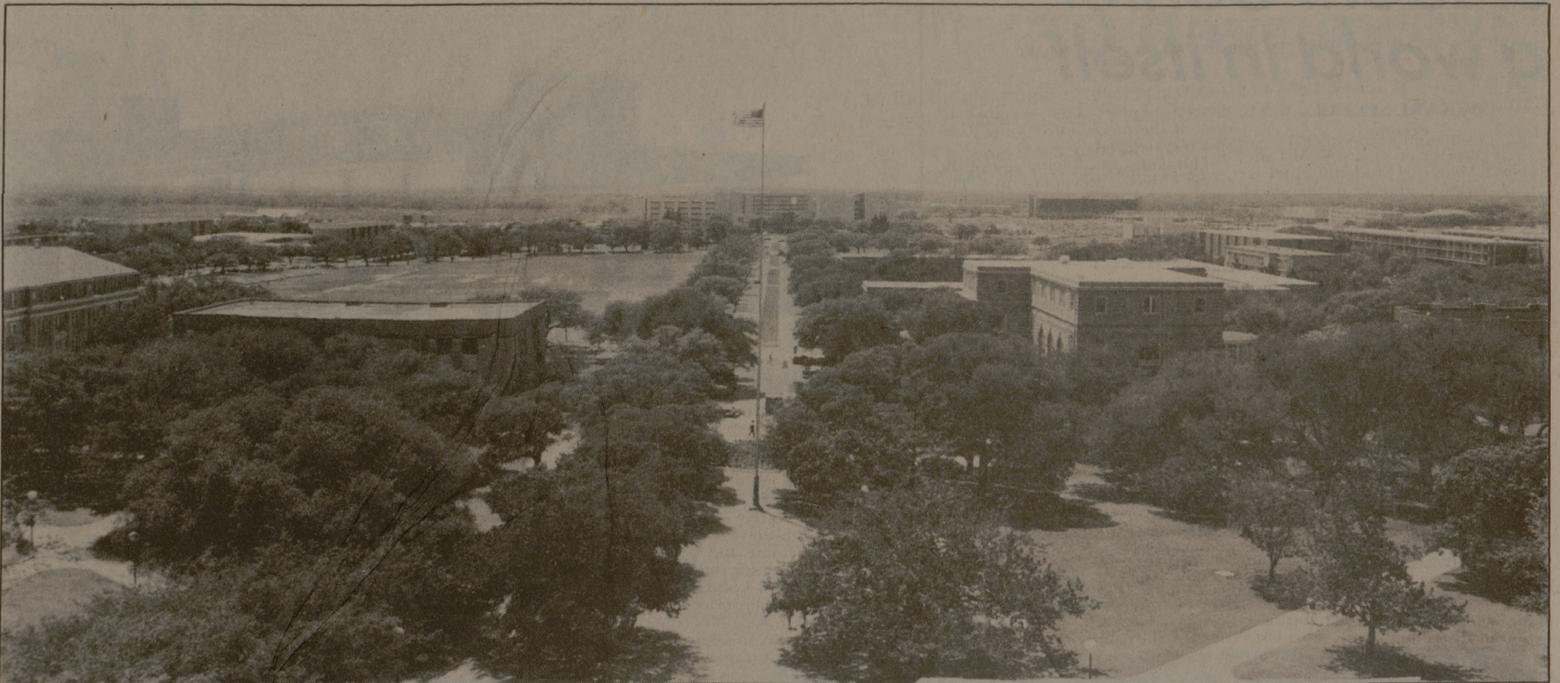
In 1948, the Texas A&M College System was formed, and Gilchrist moved up to the System's chancellor's chair. The new System included the main campus at College Station, John Tarleton State College, the North Texas Agricultural College and Prairie View A&M College.

In 1954, after the Korean War had soured the American public's attitude toward military service in general, College President David H. Morgan, with the approval of the Board of Directors, abolished mandatory military training starting with the Fall 1954 semester. A 1957 faculty survey included the question, "Should military training be optional or compulsory?" The Academic Council favored the optional plan 49-1, but the Board of Directors voted 5-4 to restore mandatory military training, effective September 1958.

Other than the military training controversy, however, the decade



The Memorial Student Center looked quite different in the 1960's.



This view of the Texas A&M campus was taken from the Academic Building before construction began on the Albritton Bell Tower.

from 1948-58 was relatively peaceful. Growth of the physical plant and the academic curriculum continued, but enrollment stabilized at about 7,000 and the number of agricultural and engineering students declined slightly as the College of Arts and Sciences gained strength.

James Earl Rudder, a 1932 Texas A&M graduate and retired Army brigadier general, came to the System in 1958 as the College's vice president. The positions of System chancellor and College president had been combined, but were separated again in 1959 when Rudder became president.

Rudder, who commanded forces in World War II's D-Day invasion, to the surprise of many — and the dismay of some — set out on a decisive course to bring the school into the modern day.

In 1962, a Blueprint for Progress was adopted by the Board of Directors, which set both broad and specific goals for Texas A&M. Within a year, women had been admitted on a limited basis — they had to be a spouse or daughter of a student or a faculty member — and Texas A&M College became Texas A&M University. September 1963 saw 150 women enroll.

The Board of Directors authorized Rudder in 1965 to use his "discretion" in admitting women, and more applicants were approved. On Sept. 1, 1965, Rudder became president of both the System and the University.

All the changes were not accepted readily, either by the student body or the Association of Former Students. Another change that was less than welcome for many was the abolition of compulsory military training in September 1965. Freshmen and sophomores were given as choice as to whether they wanted to join the Corps or not. By the 1970s the Corps, once the all-encompassing student organization, made up less than one quarter of the University's enrollment.

The Corps changed, but did not die. Concentrated in 12 dorms on the Quad, the uniformed portion of the student body gained a measure of enthusiasm and spirit of virtue by its all-volunteer status, and now bill themselves as the "bearer of the flame" — preserving much of Texas A&M's traditional heritage.

Under Rudder's supervision, Texas A&M began to be a university in fact as well as name. The cyclotron complex was completed, the library was expanded and the College of Education split from the College of Liberal Arts. Rudder saw to it that

the unweeping many of the country's spouses did not interfere with the educational process at Texas A&M

Many projects were completed in the early 1970s were given their impetus by Rudder, who died in 1971. The \$10 million Zachry Engineering Center was finished in 1971. The University Center complex at \$8.5 million Commons dorm complex were completed in 1971.

By September 1971, the Board of Directors had all pretenses and admissions on an equal basis with men.

Admitting men and abolishing mandatory military training marked the beginning of an explosive decade for the former male military college. Enrollment jumped from the Fall 1970 figure of 4,221 to 21,463 three years later in 1981, pushing the University's capacity to the limit.

Jack K. Williams took over the reins of both System and University leadership and remained until 1977, when the position again separated. Dr. Jarvis took over the University until 1980 after Williams' death, but was ousted by losing a power struggle to System Chancellor Frank Hubert over the responsibility of the University president.

Hubert reorganized the administrative functions of the system to reflect a more even approach: the College Station, the original and by far largest of the system, had long exerted influence over proportionate parts of the System's operations. It had the heads of all System units report to him as chancellor. The System had no president, but Hubert was making plans for a confused chain of command.

After a year-long search by the Texas Board of Regents, the System's first president, Frank E. Vandiver became University president in September 1981. He took his place along with other chief executive officers of the



The Clayton Williams Jr. Alumni Center will be the Association of Former Students' first permanent home in its 105-year history. The building will occupy a five-acre plot on Houston Street at the southern edge of campus, next to the Floral Test Gardens and across the creek from the President's Home.

of the System, the state-supported agricultural and engineering extension and experiment stations, Prairie View A&M, Tarleton State, the Texas Forest Service, the Texas Transportation Institute and Texas A&M at Galveston.

What was once an agriculture and engineering-oriented military college now boasts 11 colleges: agriculture, architecture, business administration, education, engineering, geosciences, graduate studies, liberal arts, medicine, science, and veterinary medicine. It also claims the largest and fastest-growing college of engineering in the nation, and largest college of agriculture anywhere. It annually commissions more military officers in all three services than any other school except the service academies. Academic standards have been raised to control the explosive enrollment growth, and a \$21.5 million engineering and physics building is slated for completion in 1986.

The Board of Regents drew sharp criticism in 1981 when it began looking for a new athletic director. After being turned down by G.E. "Bo" Schembechler of the University of Michigan, what the Regents finally found was an athletic director/head football coach. They lured Coach Jackie Sherrill away from his job at the University of Pittsburgh with a six-year \$1.6 million dollar contract loaded with both salary and benefits, making him the highest-figure in the American education establishment at the time.

The revolving door in the head football coach's office is not a new phenomenon, however: Coach Emory Bellard bowed to alumni displeasure in mid-season 1978, and Coach Tom Wilson — who moved up from the ranks to replace Bellard — was canned for the same reason after a 7-5 season.

In July 1982 the Regents approved more than \$19 million for design contracts alone; construction, expansion and improvement are the order of the day throughout the system although spending is far from reckless.

Today's Texas A&M is a far cry from its tumbling start on the Texas prairie.

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