

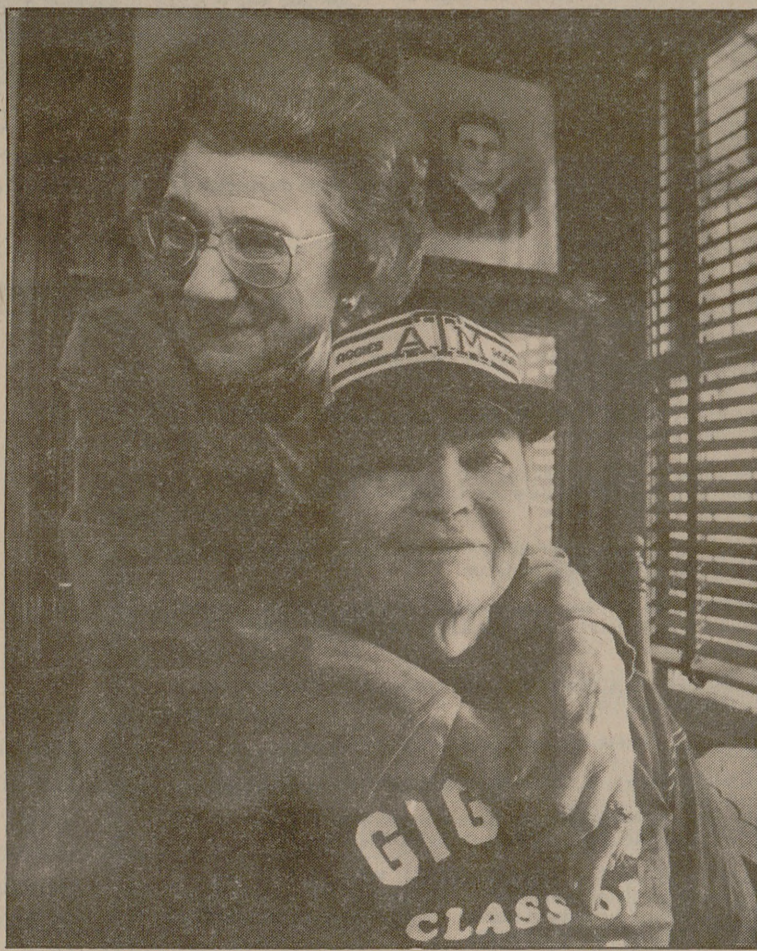
Hull-of-a-barn Caneck! Caneck!



Kirkpatrick purchased his Aggie class ring in 1924 for \$14.



Thagard Kirkpatrick gives the thumbs-up in front of the familiar barn that he repainted in 1980.



Above: Thagard Kirkpatrick, an Aggie, has been married to Mary, a Baylor Bear, for 54 years. Left: Travelers have been bringing gifts to the Kirkpatricks ever since they painted their barn. This shirt was given to Kirkpatrick when he was 80 years old, the first year the barn was painted.

Sometimes Mother Nature has a peculiar way of bringing fame to people.

Thagard Kirkpatrick, Class of '24, is the proud owner of a maroon "Gig 'em Aggies" barn and the ranch on which it sits, 60 miles north of College Station in Reagan.

For people traveling Highway 6 to Texas A&M by way of Waco, the barn serves as a signpost marking the path to the University.

The barn was once an eyesore, a rusted tin shack that housed the First State Bank of Reagan before Kirkpatrick bought the 200 acres of land in 1942. However, in 1980, fate changed the lives of the Kirkpatricks forever.

"We had a big storm that blew off some of the tin on the side of the barn," Kirkpatrick said. "After I put the tin back on, it looked ragged."

At first, he painted it red, but later painted it maroon, for his alma mater. Then he added the "Gig 'em Aggies" design. "I made my teaspinner son-in-law paint the S," Kirkpatrick said.

Since then, many people have stopped to take pictures of the Kirkpatricks' barn. "The people are wonderful," said Kirkpatrick's wife, Mary.

"It's especially fun during the football weekends," she said. "When they pass by, they'll honk 'Hullabaloo Caneck! Caneck!'"

The biggest surprise visit came in 1982, when former A&M head football coach Jackie Sherrill brought his team to the ranch for a picture ses-

sion on their way to Dallas for the SMU game.

Sherrill gave Kirkpatrick a jersey with the number one underneath his name, and an A&M cap, which he still wears.

"I wrote Jackie Sherrill and asked him to bring the team back for a barbecue, but he never answered," Kirkpatrick said.

Through the years, Kirkpatrick has heard many stories from Aggies about where they have seen pictures of the barn. "One boy saw a picture of the barn in Spain," he said. "Another one saw a painting of it in the (Rio Grande) Valley."

Though he never intended to popularize the barn, Kirkpatrick likes the notoriety. "I've gotten a million dollars worth of fun out of it," he said.

Kirkpatrick is the first of three generations of Aggies. His son Donovan Kirkpatrick, Class of '62, is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army, and his two granddaughters are also Aggies.

Kara Kirkpatrick graduated in 1986, and Kathy Kirkpatrick is a senior English major.

Although old age has kept the 90-year-old retired rancher from going to an A&M football game since the last time they went to the Cotton Bowl, Kirkpatrick said he hopes to see A&M make it to the Cotton Bowl again before he dies.

Kirkpatrick also hopes new head coach R.C. Slocum will bring the football team to his ranch the next time they pass by. "I still want to throw a barbecue for the team," he said.

Story and Photos by
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