

# Crowd Pleasers

## From the Farmers to the Aggies, A&M football is rich in Aggie tradition

By JUSTIN SMITH  
THE BATTALION

Aggie football, an integral part of Texas A&M's identity and traditions, was non-existent during the school's first 18 years. When the Agriculture and Mechanical College of Texas fielded its first team in 1894 with the "Farmers" as its mascot, few would have predicted it would evolve into one of the most prominent college football programs in the country.

A&M played only two games its first season. The first was against the University of Texas (UT), where the Aggies

were shutout by the Longhorns, 0-38.

The second game, a 14-6 victory against Ball High School from Galveston, was the Aggies' first win and first home game. By today's standards, it may seem unusual for a college team to play a high school team, but A&M played several high schools until the turn of the century.

The Aggies had no football team the year after their inaugural season. Led by head coach J.D. Perkins, they regrouped and returned in

1896 and have played ever since.

In 1898, A&M suffered its largest defeat when UT blasted A&M, 48-0. Afterward, several coaches led the team until C.B. Moran stepped in for the 1909 season.

Coach Moran only had one losing season in his six-year stay at A&M.

In 1915, the Southwest Conference (SWC) was formed and remained until 1996

when the Big 12 took its place. The UT team made its first visit to Kyle Field in 1915, losing to the Farmers, 13-0, in front of an estimated 10,000 fans.

Two years later, in 1917, Coach Dana X. Bible took the helm and led the Aggies to their first perfect season with a record of eight wins, no losses and a first-place ranking in the SWC.

Two years later, the Aggies had another perfect season, 10-0.

In 1920, A&M destroyed Daniel Baker, 110-0, giving the Aggies their largest margin of victory ever.

At the end of the 1921 season, the Aggies went to their first bowl game, the Dixie Classic, and battled against the "Champions of the South," Centre College. Centre only allowed six points to their opponents all season, but A&M came through with the upset, winning, 22-14.

This game holds the roots of the 12th Man tradition. E. King Gill, an

Aggie basketball player, asked Bible if he could help spot players from the press box. Near the end of the first half, Bible called Gill down to the field and asked him to be ready to play. Gill changed into the uniform of one of the injured players under the stands and stood on the sidelines for the rest of the game, but he was never called.

A&M did not see another bowl game or perfect season until 1939, when Homer Norton's Aggies went to the Sugar Bowl to fight for the National Championship against the Tulane Green Wave. The Aggies had an early lead until Tulane's Bob Kellogg ran a quick kick back 76 yards to tie the game. The Green Wave scored another touchdown, but Herbie Smith, who had been sick before the game, blocked the extra-point attempt making the score 13-7.

In the fourth quarter, on the Tulane 26-yard line, quarterback Cotton Price passed to Smith who ran the ball to the 10-yard line where he gave a lateral pass to Aggie legend John Kimbrough, who rushed the rest of the way for the winning touchdown. With a 14-13 final score, A&M won its only national title.

In 1941, A&M made its first appearance in the Cotton Bowl, losing its last regular season game to Texas and settling for a co-championship with Southern Methodist University.

In 1957, John David Crow rushed for 562 yards and caught five interceptions to become the only Aggie to win the Heisman Trophy. As the years passed, the Aggies continued to attend bowl games, 26 total, under the leadership of several coaches, including Paul "Bear" Bryant, Gene Stallings, Emory Bellard, Jackie Sherrill and R.C. Slocum.

The Aggies have won 18 SWC Championships and two Big 12 South Championships in A&M football history.

A&M won the Big 12 Championship in 1998 in a memorable double-overtime victory over No. 1 Kansas State.

There have been 42 First Team All-Americans in A&M football history, beginning with Joe Routt in 1936 and ending with Shane Lechler in 1999. A&M has produced 202 professional football players, including Ray Childress, John David Crow, Lester Hayes, John Kimbrough, Dat Nguyen and Jack Pardee, who later became a professional coach.

Of those players, 42 are playing in the NFL today.

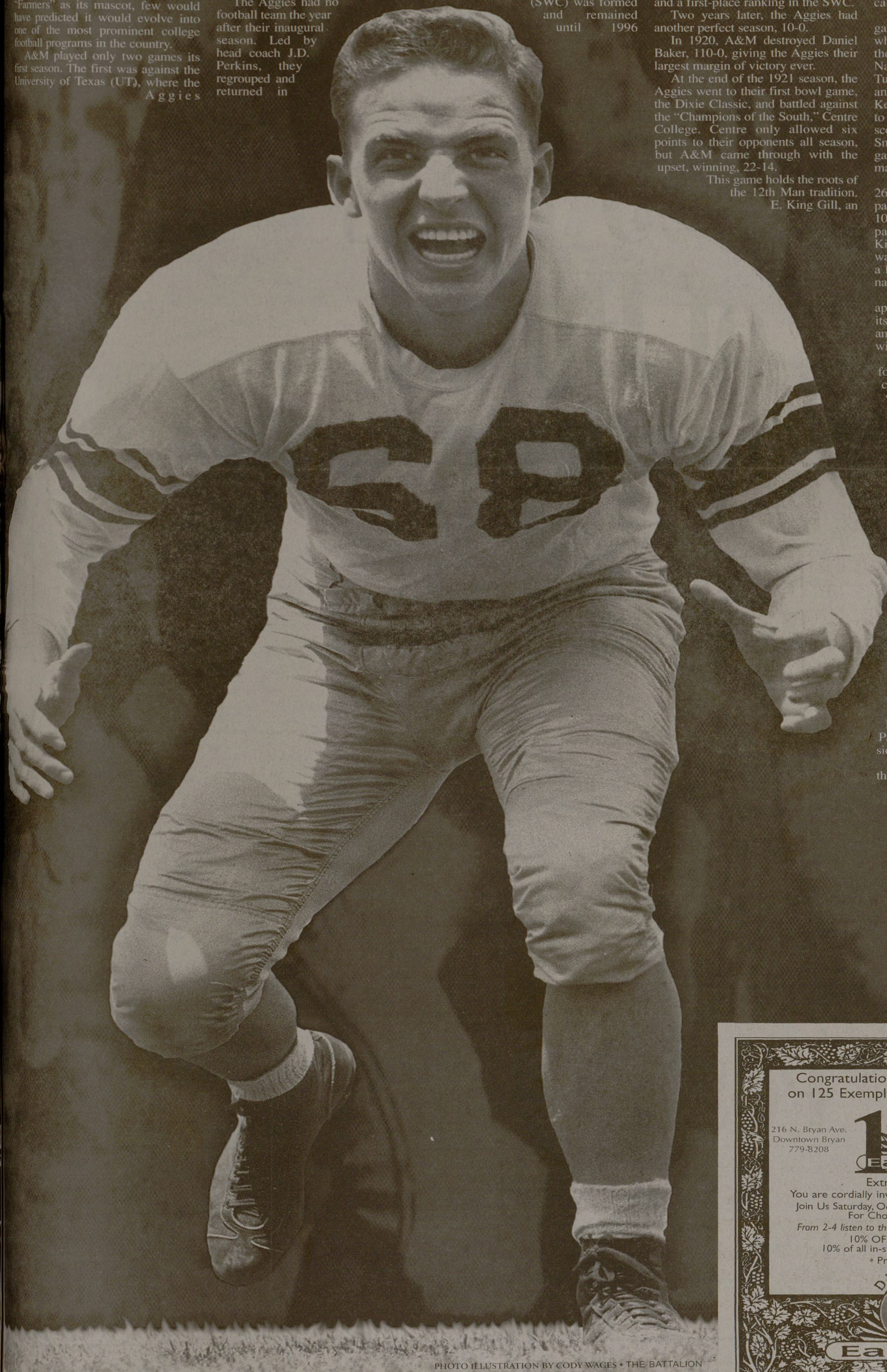


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