Aggie spirit remains constant, but campus is ever-evolving

By John Salerno
THE BATTALION

There was a time in Texas A&M's history that students could be dismissed for "giving, accepting or bearing a challenge to fight a duel." This may seem like an odd proposition to students today, but the Rules and Regulations Handbook of 1883 enumerated this specific, yet probably commonplace occurrence, in its section on discipline. It is just one of the small pieces of A&M's history that has helped to build the rich tradition of the University and gives great significance to the 125th anniversary celebration.

The theme of the celebration, "spirit of tradition, spirit of tomorrow," calls students to look at A&M's past and future. With programs like Vision 2020, A&M plans to provide greater expansion and more opportunity.

Looking to the past and understanding A&M's development during the course of the last century is important. Dr. Janis P. Stout, dean of faculties and associate provost, has been digging through the archives at the Cushing Memorial Library uncovering facts about A&M's past, like the one mentioned above.

"[I have found many] interesting facts," Stout said. "Things that look odd to us today; things that are sort of funny. That kind of thing."

For example, the 1896 Orders Governing the Corps of Cadets mandated, "During the visiting hour, cadets are allowed to dance on the second floor of the Main Building," and, "Sentinels must allow no wood or water to be carried during study hours."

Of course, there is more to A&M's history than these small facts. Stout uncovered the Acts of the Legislature of Texas and the Proceedings of the Board of Directors, which describe the creation and development of the University.

A&M's history begins many years before it opened its doors to students in 1876. President Abraham Lincoln approved the Morrill Act in 1862, that provided public land grants to some states for the establishment of colleges; a few years later, the Texas Legislature accepted the act and declared that "the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, established by an act of the Legislature, passed April 17, 1871, located in the county of Brazos, is hereby made ... for instruction in agriculture, the mechanic arts and the natural sciences connected herewith."

After the creation of the A&M College of Texas, the A&M Board of Directors met in Bryan in 1875 to organize the college's administration. Several meetings later, the rules of the college were established, and among them were provisions that the faculty would consist of a president and five professors; that the minimum age of admission would be fifteen years old; that tuition would be free and that boarding for students would not exceed $12 per month.

Finally, the board ended their second meeting with the following declaration: "It was determined that on the fourth day of October, the College should be formally opened by an address from the governor."

This history is part of the celebration. The anniversary of the University is a look forward and a look back at those who helped create and shape A&M.

And now, 66 years after his own attendance at A&M, William G. Breazeale, Class of 1935, former staff member for the Department of Student Affairs and director of University mail services, reminisces how times have changed.

"There wasn't anything on the other side of the tracks, unless it was an animal science lab or something like that. And I think the veterinary school was there, but all the other classes were on the east side of campus," he said. "As far as our own schedule, we had 10 minutes between classes, most classes were small, from 20 to 30 students, and probably some professors taught many more courses than they do now."

Breazeale also recalled the social atmosphere of the town.

"Money was scarce, but once in a while we'd go to a show," Breazeale said. "I believe we had one movie a week in what was called the assembly hall, where the chapel is now. I also think the activities that are available have increased, of course, and there's just so many activities, a student can do what he's able to do or what she's able to do."

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Study Techniques/Test Anxiety
Nov. 8th Thursday 9:35-10:35 a.m.

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Oct. 22nd Monday 3:00-4:00 p.m.

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Nov. 29th Thursday 9:35-10:35 a.m.

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Pre-registration for workshops and counseling is necessary!

If you have any questions about the Academic & Career Resource Center, please contact the Student Counseling Service, Henderson Hall, Rm. 115, (979)845-4427 ext. 108.

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The Student Counseling Service is a Department in the Division of Student Affairs

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