The Traditions of Texas A&M University

Traditions Council - Student Government Association
The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas

- Opened October 2nd, 1876
- Texas’ first public institution of higher learning
- Renamed Texas A&M University – August 23rd, 1963
- 1963 – AMC President James Earl Rudder allowed women to attend under his discretion
- Eight years later, women were admitted equally
- 1965 – Corps of Cadets became voluntary

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Howdy!

- Official greeting of Texas A&M – makes us the friendliest campus!
- Origins of Howdy are unknown

Gig ‘em!

- Midnight Yell before TCU game, 1930
- P.L. “Pinkie” Downs ’06
  - “What are we going to do with those Horned Frogs? Gig ‘em, Aggies!”
- A gig is a spear with prongs on the bottom, held in one hand with the thumb up. The hand moves in a downward motion to replicate spearing a frog.
- We say Gig ‘em! to motivate and encourage one another, and to show our school spirit!
Aggie Jargon

- Ol’ Army
- Good Bull
- Bad Bull
- Wildcat
- Pull-Out
- Push
- Red Ass
- t.u.
- Tea-Sip
- Two-Percenters (2%ers)
- Whoop
- Horse Laugh
The 12th Man

• Dixie Classic, 1922
• The Aggies were “completely exhausted, both physically and mentally” –Head Yell Leader Red Thompson
• By halftime, every player but the 11 on the field were injured.
• Coach Dana X. Bible remembered E. King Gill was in the press box.
• E. King Gill stood ready to play, but was never called in.
• Aggies won 22-14!

“I wish I could say that I went in and ran for the winning touchdown, but I did not. I simply stood by in case my team needed me”.
–E. King Gill
Midnight Yell Practice

- 1913 – Corps outfits would practice yells
- 1931 – First Midnight Yell
  - Some cadets wanted to get all of the freshmen cadets to practice yells.
  - The Senior Yell Leaders said that while they could not approve the idea, they might just show up…
- Held Friday night before every home football game at Kyle Field.
  - Away games: held near the location of the game.
- Practice Yells, the War Hymn, the Spirit of Aggieland, and tell fables.
- At the end of Yell Practice, the lights are cut and you “mug down”.

Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University
Silver Taps

• For any current student who passes away during the year.
• First Silver Taps – 1898, for AMC President Lawrence Sullivan Ross.
• Held on the first Tuesday of any month following a student’s death.
  – Flags are lowered to half-staff, names are posted at the bottom of the flagpole and on the Silver Taps memorial.
  – At 10:15PM, the student body gathers in Academic Plaza.
  – The Albritton Bell Tower chimes hymns and the families of the fallen are guided in. The Ross Volunteers perform a Three Volley Salute and buglers play a special rendition of Taps called, “Silver Taps”.
• No other university in the world honors their students in this way.
Bonfire – History

• First Unofficial Bonfire – 1907, after victory over Tulane
• First Official Bonfire – 1909, Simpson Drill Field – made of trash
• Tallest Bonfire – 1969 at 109 feet tall
• Aggies from all across campus built Bonfire each fall:
  – Dorms
  – Corps of Cadets Outfits
• Two years Bonfire did not burn:
  – 1963, JFK Assassination
  – The 1999 Collapse
• Bonfire built the Aggie Spirit

Bonfire – Remembrance

• Bonfire Remembrance takes place every year on November 18\(^{th}\) at 2:42am, at the Bonfire Memorial.
• Components of the Bonfire Memorial:
  – The Traditions Plaza:
    • Wall engraved with the poem, "Last Corps Trip"
  – The History Walk:
    • 89 stones, each to represent a bonfire that burned (break for 1963, death of JFK)
  – The Spirit Ring:
    • 27 Stones, each representing a student injured in the collapse
    • 12 Portals, each representing a student killed in the collapse

Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University
Muster – April 21st

- A day to celebrate being an Aggie
- April 21st, 1899 – San Jacinto Field Day
- Evolved to include a remembrance during the World Wars:
  - WWI: Aggies met all across Europe and the U.S.
  - April 21st, 1942 – Roll Call held on Corregidor
  - April 21st, 1946 – A true Aggie Muster on Corregidor was held to honor all who were lost.
- Over 300 Muster Ceremonies are held worldwide each year
- 50-Year Reunion class returns to campus
- Muster Ceremony and the Roll Call for the Absent

Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University
Reveille

• Reveille I – found in 1931 on the way back from Navasota
• Between Reveille I and II, there were “unofficial mascots” - Ranger, Spot, and Tripod
• Mascot Corporal – 1960
  – Always a sophomore from Company E-2
• Reveille is the highest-ranking member in the Corps of Cadets with five diamonds

Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University
The Aggie Ring

- E.C. Jonas 1894 – Designed first Aggie Ring
- 1933 – Committee created to determine criteria for receiving Aggie Ring
  - From 95 to 90 credit hours, 45 of which must come from Texas A&M
  - Standardized Ring Design
- Ring has remained largely unchanged
- Last change: 1963 when name changed to Texas A&M University
- Turning the Aggie Ring to face the world

Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University
Thanks and Gig ‘em!

For more information on Texas A&M Traditions, visit www.tamu.edu/traditions.

Follow Traditions Council on social media for updates on Silver Taps, Bonfire Remembrance, the Ring Scholarship, and more!

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