

Texas A&M University: A Historical Resume

Texas A&M University was organized by act of the Texas Legislature on April 17, 1871, as the State Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, under the provisions of the Morrill Land-Grant College Act approved by President Abraham Lincoln on July 2, 1862. Texas A&M College, with a faculty of six, formally opened to students on October 4, 1876, and thus became the first state supported institution of higher learning in Texas. On August 23, 1963, the 58th Texas Legislature changed the name of the Agricultural and Mechanical College to Texas A&M University, the "A&M" being retained as a symbol of a link with tradition. In 1971, Congress recognized Texas A&M University as a Sea Grant College under the authority of the Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966.

The Morrill Act, by which Texas A&M University receives its designation as a Land-Grant institution, provided for the "endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college (in each state) where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agricultural and to mechanic arts . . . , in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." The Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966, directs the University to provide "training and research in the fields of marine science, engineering and related disciplines." The State of Texas and other authorizing agencies have from time to time directed Texas A&M University to administer special programs

in education, research, extension and public service including the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Engineering Experiment Station, Texas Transportation Institute, Texas Engineering Extension Service, Texas Forest Service, and Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.

Governor Richard Coke (1829-1897) was governor of Texas and president of the Board of Directors of the Agricultural and Mechanical College at the time of its opening in 1876. Coke was born in Williamsburg, Virginia. He began the practice of law in Waco, Texas, in 1850. He served in the Confederate army, as judge of the Texas Supreme Court, governor of Texas, and United States Senator. The Board of Directors elected Thomas S. Gathright (1829-1880) the first president of the College. He was born in Monroe County, Georgia and served as president of the College from 1876-1879.

A commission created to locate the College accepted the offer of 2,416 acres of land from the citizens of Brazos County at a site some four miles south of Bryan, Texas, in June 1871. The five tracts of land transferred to the College through the agency of Harvey Mitchell, representing the citizens of Brazos County, included three tracts of 102 acres, 40 acres, and 838 acres respectively belonging to Harvey Mitchell; one tract of 1,226 acres owned by J. Frederick Cox, and one tract of 210 acres, the property of Rebecca Rector and Nelson W. Rector. The deeds are recorded in the Deed Records of Brazos County, volume M. Over the years, acquisitions of property by the Board of Directors have increased the size of the main campus at College Station to 5,142 acres.

Texas A&M University has provided Texas and the nation leadership in war and in peace. During World War II, 20,000 A&M men served in the military. Of those, 14,000 were commissioned officers and 29 held the rank of general. Texas A&M University has awarded, as of 1974, more than 66,000 academic degrees, including more than 2,000 doctorates, and almost 10,000 at the master's level. The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has assigned specifically to Texas A&M leadership at all levels for Agriculture, Engineering, Architecture, Science, Veterinary Medicine, Liberal Arts, Business Administration, and Education.

Texas A&M University is accredited by and is a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Texas Colleges and Universities. Curricula and degree programs are also accredited by appropriate professional accrediting agencies.

Texas A&M University will hold its centennial celebration commemorating a century of service to the people of Texas and the United States in conjunction with the American Bicentennial Celebrations during the calendar year 1976. It is to commemorate this historic occasion that Texas A&M University desires to locate on the campus an Official Texas Historical Marker.

A brief selected bibliography includes:

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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - HISTORICAL MARKER (Supplementary Data)

(1) Date when the agricultural extension service was set up at A&M.

A Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Department of Agriculture under the terms of the Smith-Lever Act (1914) was approved by the Texas A&M Board of Directors on June 29, 1914. The Directors named Clarence Ousley director of Agricultural Extension on August 25, 1914. The Texas legislature accepted the terms of the Smith-Lever Act on January 29, 1915, naming Texas A&M the administrative agency and recipient of federal funds.

Extension work at Texas A&M, however, pre-dated the Smith-Lever Act, the A&M College having completed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Plant Industry, USDA, on October 1, 1912.

(2) Summary of A&M's pioneering in animal health.

Veterinary Science became a regular course of instruction at Texas A&M in 1879. Mark Francis was the first trained veterinarian to join the faculty in 1888, as head of the newly created Department of Veterinary Science, and veterinarian of the Agricultural Experiment Station organized in 1888. Mark Francis' pioneering work in discovering the causes and prevention of Texas Fever have earned him the epithet "father of the Texas cattle industry." Texas A&M established the School (now College) of Veterinary Medicine in 1916, under the direction of Dr. Mark Francis. Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine has trained Texas veterinarians since that time, and its staff has contributed significantly to the control of anthrax, black leg, tetanus, rabies, and hog cholera. The College has pioneered in many facets of animal surgery, and overall has had a profound impact on the Texas livestock industry.

(3) Extensiveness of A&M's contributions to the Texas Highway Department

Authorized by the Fifty-first Texas Legislature, establishing Texas A&M as the research agency of the Texas Highway Department, the Institute obtains indirectly a policy-making role in the regulation and control of Texas transportation, particularly in regard to highway construction specifications and highway design and traffic engineering. Texas A&M's involvement in transportation research dates back to 1914, when highway experimentation was begun in the College's engineering laboratories. Located at the Texas A&M Research Annex, the Institute operates field offices, including a surveillance and research control center on the Gulf Freeway in Houston and a computerized traffic control center on North Central Expressway in Dallas. Work at the Annex is conducted on paving materials and highway design, structural research, traffic control, and automobile impact and safety measurements. Since its founding in 1950, the Texas Transportation Institute has become one of the most important public-service operations of the University.

- (4) A&M's position as headquarters for the statewide Agricultural and Mechanical College System, if that is still in force, if not in force when was it invalidated?

The Texas A&M University System is in effect and is composed of Texas A&M University, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Engineering Experiment Station and Texas Transportation Institute, Texas Engineering Extension Service, Moody College of Marine Sciences and Maritime Resources and Texas Maritime Academy (Galveston), Tarleton State University (Stephenville) Prairie View A&M University (Prairie View), Texas Forest Service, and Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, all under the administrative supervision of the Board of Regents, Texas A&M University.

- (5) What is A&M's ruling board?

Board of Regents, Texas A&M University. (Styled Board of Directors, 1876-1975.)

- (6) How many colleges are now in the university?

Texas A&M University comprises eleven colleges, including:

- College of Engineering
- College of Geosciences
- College of Education
- College of Medicine
- College of Agriculture
- College of Liberal Arts
- College of Business Administration
- College of Science
- College of Architecture and Environmental Design
- College of Veterinary Medicine
- Graduate College

- (7) Where are the campuses other than that at Bryan, including the campus for the Sea Grant College?

- Moody College of Marine Sciences and Maritime Resources and Texas Maritime Academy -- Galveston
- Tarleton State University - Stephenville
- Prairie View A&M University - Prairie View

The Sea Grant College designation, as does the Land Grant College designation, applies to the overall programs of Texas A&M University and its various marine related centers and laboratories.

- (8) When did coeducation begin at A&M?

Ethyl Hutson who attended classes for two years beginning in 1893 as a "lecture student" was the first woman to attend Texas A&M, but she received no credits toward degree. Her sisters, Sophie and Mary completed

studies in Civil Engineering in 1903, and were awarded certificates of completion but no degree. A number of women attended as lecture students for the next decade. In 1909 the Texas Legislature authorized regular summer sessions for the A&M College, open to both sexes. Exceptions to the "male-only" policy for regular sessions occurred periodically. About thirty women were enrolled as regular students in 1925, one of whom was awarded a degree. From 1925 until 1963 no women attended as special or regular students. In 1963, the Board of Directors opened admissions to include wives or daughters of enrolled students or faculty members, or women pursuing studies not available at other state-supported schools. All women could enroll in graduate studies. The administration followed an increasingly lenient policy of admission until in 1971, the Board established a full coeducational policy admitting all men and women to all academic studies without regard to race, creed, color, sex, ethnic origin, religion or unrelated physical or mental handicaps.