

More Than STONE

Texas Tech University has been ingrained in agriculture ever since its establishment. One example is when Gov. Pat Neff, standing on a cotton bale, addressed a crowd of 20,000 people gathered for the laying of the Administration Building's cornerstone on Nov. 11, 1924.

Texas Tech's ties to agriculture are maybe most evident when viewing the original seven buildings on campus. The word agriculture is one of the words engraved upon the Administration Building. Three of the other buildings – the Textile Engineering Building, Livestock Judging Pavilion, and Dairy Barn – were all constructed before the university even had a gymnasium. Consequently, the first basketball games were played in the Livestock Judging Pavilion. Playing basketball in a barn was somewhat of a reoccurring theme in Texas Tech's infancy.

The Texas Tech basketball team played in the Livestock Judging Pavilion until funds for a new gym could be acquired, which was no easy task. Lynn Whitfield, an associate archivist at the Texas Tech University's Southwest Collection and Special Collections

Library, said that Texas Tech had problems securing funds for their first gym. She said legislators were reluctant in supporting a gym considering its limited use. Texas Tech responded by asking for a livestock barn that could double as a gymnasium. Whitfield said the proposal was then approved and Texas Tech's new gym was appropriately nicknamed The Barn. The barns on

campus have been home to more than just basketball, the Dairy Barn also provided a unique opportunity for Texas Tech's first students.

"I think livestock and agriculture are very important to this university," Whitfield said. "When some of the first students went to school, that's how

they paid their tuition. They brought their own cattle up here so they could milk the cows and then they went around the dorms and they would sell the bottled milk."

The Dairy Barn and the multi-purpose Livestock Judging Pavilion still stand as a testament to the roots of Texas Tech. The other structures such as the Administration and Textile Engineering buildings have become guidelines for the architectural design presently seen throughout campus. Although this has not always been the plan during some of Texas Tech's construction booms.

Whitfield said that in the postwar era the buildings being constructed were very different from the original buildings on campus. She said those buildings, like the library, incorporated a more functional, modern design.

These buildings are characterized by geometric lines and smaller, narrow windows. In the 1990s, Texas Tech decided it would be beneficial to create a guideline for future construction projects on campus.

In 1997 the Texas Tech University Master Plan was put into action by the Texas Tech Board of Regents. The plan's primary purpose is to define guidelines that will assist in decisions regarding construction on current facilities and new infrastructure. The goal of the Master Plan is to create a beautiful and inviting environment that will entice more students to enroll at Texas Tech. The Master Plan draws inspiration directly from the original 1923 design plans, which are characterized by Spanish Renaissance inspired architecture and open spaces. With the campus encompassing 1,850 acres, Texas Tech is as wide-open as the state of Texas.

"I do see students really appreciating those open spaces," Whitfield said. "When I walk by the English and Philosophy building, I see people all the time sitting on the benches admiring the fountains and taking pictures outside."

Plans like these enable Texas Tech to provide a beautiful environment that will keep the university competitive against other schools. The steps that have been made since the early days of the Dairy Barn and Livestock Judging Pavilion will help ensure recruitment of every type of student including the next generation of agriculture students. With these guidelines Texas Tech can draw upon the past while looking toward the future.

"I think Texas Tech respects its history," Whitfield said, "and I think the way we do that is through our architecture and the fact that with Texans wide open space is important and we try to respect that here." **T**

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