

# FOR Parents

## A Review of Tech Traditions

There are many special traditions here at Texas Tech. Here are a few of them which we'd like you to become a part of:

- **BANGIN' BERTHA** - Bertha is the victory bell carried to all Tech football games and home basketball games by the Saddle Tramps. It was donated by the Santa Fe Railroad and is considered a spirit-raiser and tradition at Texas Tech. Bertha was designed in 1959 by Saddle Tramp Joe Winegar.
- **BLARNEY STONE** - This artifact, discovered by engineers on March 7, 1939, turned out to be a missing stone from the Blarney Castle near Dublin, Ireland. The Blarney Stone at Tech carries the belief that if you kiss it, you will be given the gift of eloquent speech. It is displayed under the central arch, slightly behind the Electrical Engineering Building.
- **CARILLON** - Located in the west tower of the Administration Building, the carillon was a gift of Ruth Baird Larabee. It contains 36 bells that were cast in The Netherlands. The carillon's songs, which sound like a cross between bells and an organ, are heard ringing out over campus during special events and celebrations. The bells were cast, tuned, framed and installed in 1966 for approximately \$26,000.
- **CAROL OF LIGHTS** - This favorite of Tech's traditions began in 1959 and is celebrated throughout the month of December. All the campus buildings on the Broadway entrance to Memorial Circle, on the Science Quadrangle and Engineering Key are covered in thousands of red, white and yellow Christmas lights. A formal ceremony, torch-lighted parade, trumpets and seasonal music proceed the throwing of the switch that begins the month-long observance of the Carol of Lights. Traditionally, the kick-off event is held on the first Friday of December and is sponsored by the Residence Hall Association.
- **CHRISTMAS AT TECH** - Several annual events are held at Texas Tech during the month of December. Kicking off the holidays is the Carol of Lights on the first Friday of the month. The theater department presents a

holiday play, such as “A Christmas Carol,” and the School of Music is busy with several productions. Among them is the popular Madrigal Dinner, in addition to the choral concert following the Carol of Lights, and other musicals throughout the month. The Museum sponsors Celebration of Joy, an open house and program, and the Ranching Heritage Center offers two nights of Candlelight Christmas, where visitors can witness the holidays as they might have been celebrated by the community during the early ranching days of West Texas.

- **DAIRY BARN & SILO** - These structures were built in 1925 because agriculture was a prime academic area for students and an economic stimulus to the region. Over the years, efforts to save the barn from destruction have been waged by students and alumni, who see it as a landmark and reminder of Tech’s earliest history.
- **DOUBLE-T** - An image study in 1989 brought out loud and clear that to Texas Techsans the Double-T represents tradition, pride and school identity. Historical evidence suggests that Tech’s first football coaches, E.Y. Freeland and Grandy Higginbotham, are the originators of this campus trademark, first using it on letter sweaters. No campus symbol is so readily identified with Texas Tech as the Double-T.
- **DOUBLE-T BENCH** - Located in the courtyard behind the Administration Building, this special bench was given by the seniors of the class of 1931. It was an announced tradition that no freshmen were allowed to sit on it.
- **FIGHT SONG** - The Fight Song was written by Carroll McMath and updates the Matadors, Tech’s original name for the athletic teams, to the Red Raiders. The spirited song is sung at many of Tech’s sporting events.
- **GUNS UP** - The hand sign of Texas Tech is the “Guns Up,” made by extending the index finger outward while extending the thumb upward and tucking the middle, little and fourth fingers to form a gun. The idea is that Tech fans will shoot down their opponents.
- **HAPPY VI** - One of the horses used by the Masked Rider, Happy VI, had appeared in TV commercials before coming to Tech. He was one of the first horses ridden by the original Marlboro Man, later Carl “Biggum” Bradley, wagon boss for the 6666 Ranch.
- **HOMECOMING** - Held each fall, this weekend event brings back Tech-exes and fans to join with students for a bonfire and pep rally, parade, open houses, organizations’ breakfasts, lunches and dinners, awards programs, float competitions and, of course, a football game. A highlight of Homecoming is election of a queen, the first being Suzanne Matteson in 1954.

- **MASCOTS** - The first mascot was not a horse; in fact some remember it being a buffalo. Official records show that a black and white calf was donated after Tech's 30-0 victory in the third game - the Matador's first win. The calf was branded with the score then killed and barbecued. The next mascot was a bull named The Black Invader, which proved to be a jinx, and he was replaced with a horse name Blackie. Contemporary mascots are the Masked Rider and Raider Red.
- **MASKED RIDER** - Also known as The Red Raider, this is a dramatic mascot and one with strong tradition. Early Tech students started the tradition on Sept. 26, 1936. Called Ghost Riders because no one knew their identity, the rider wearing a scarlet cape and mounted on a palomino stallion, would appear mysteriously during football games, circle the field at break-neck speed, and disappear for the remainder of the game. Years later, George Tate, a member of the class of 1937, owned up to being the first Ghost Rider. On Jan. 1, 1954, when Tech played in the Gator Bowl, a horse named Blackie was loaned by Jim St. Clair to Joe Kirk Fulton, a student chosen to ride him. Wearing Levi's, red shirt, red and black cape and a black cowboy hat, Fulton led the team onto the field. The Atlanta Constitution described Fulton as a "cowboy in a red cape on a charger" and noted that the event was "typically Texas." The dramatic entry by the horse and rider electrified the crowd as well as the team, which beat Auburn 35-13. Ed Danforth of the Constitution wrote: "No team in any bowl game ever made a more sensational entrance." The Masked Rider, with reins in teeth and both "guns up," riding hell-bent for leather down the sidelines at football games, has become one of the most impressive university mascots in the nation. The name of the Masked Rider's horse, currently, is High Red.
- **MEMORIAL CIRCLE** - This area of campus was dedicated in 1948 by the Tech War Veterans Association to all Tech men and women "whose service in World War II brought honor to the University and the United States." It is located in front of the Ad Building and contains a set of flagpoles in its center, which are also used in memorial services.
- **NEON DOUBLE-Ts** - The class of 1938 donated the first neon Double-T sign, which today is affixed to the east side of Jones Stadium and is visible from University Avenue. It was reputedly the largest neon sign in existence at the time it was purchased and presented to Tech. On Aug. 16, 1987, another neon Double-T, this one 24' x 26', was added to the west side of Jones Stadium, on the back of the press box. It was funded by Bill McMillan. A week later, on Aug. 23, the words TEXAS TECH were added to the Double-T. The letters are 10' high and were paid for by the athletic department.

- **RAIDER RED** - Prior to the 1971 season, the SWC passed a rule that prevented members of the conference from taking live animals to non-home games unless the host team had no objections. So Jim Gaspard, a member of Saddle Tramps, created Raider Red from a drawing by Lubbock cartoonist Dirk West as an alternative to the Masked Rider when the horse couldn't travel with the football team. Raider Red's student persona is kept a secret from the Tech community. Red is a public relations mascot who shakes hands with the crowds at athletic events and poses for pictures. He changes from boots to high-top tennis shoes for basketball games. Raider Red fires his two 12-gauge shotguns using powder-filled shells after every Tech touchdown and field goal. Red once had a counterpart named Arena Rita, but she just didn't catch on.
- **RED RAIDERS** - The name-change from Matadors to Red Raiders came from Lubbock Avalanche-Journal sports writer Collier Parris, reflecting on their red uniforms and a strong season. Covering a football game in 1932, he wrote: "The Red Raiders from Texas Tech, terror of the Southwest this year, swooped into the New Mexico University camp today." The name caught on and by 1936, the Matadors had faded into history, replaced by the Red Raiders.
- **TEXAS TECH SEAL** - Designed by the campus' master planner, William Ward Watkin, in 1924, the Tech Seal's symbols are the lamp, which represents "school," the key for "home," the book for "church," and the star for "state." Cotton bolls represent the area's strong cotton industry and the eagle is suggestive of our country. The seal first appeared on Tech diplomas in 1948, but it wasn't officially approved as "The" Seal of Texas Tech University until 1953. On April 27, 1972, the seal was placed at the Broadway and University entrance to the campus in what became known as the Amon G. Carter Plaza. It is made of red granite and stands 12 feet high. It has been referred to by students through the years as "the Oreo."
- **VICTORY BELLS** - The class of 1936 gave the Victory Bells as their gift to Tech. They rang for the first time at the group's graduation. They rang all night the next fall after Tech beat TCU, keeping Lubbock residents awake. Thereafter, the ringing of the bells was limited to 30 minutes after men's and women's athletic victories and special occasions. The Victory Bells - one large and one small - hang in the east tower of the Administration Building.
- **WILL ROGERS & SOAPSUDS** - Will Rogers, a humorist in the 1920s and '30s, donated \$200 for the Tech band to play at the football game against TCU on Oct. 20, 1926. He wanted people in Fort Worth to hear a "real band." During this trip, Rogers was encouraged by his long-time friend Amon G. Carter to put up \$1,500 to buy the band new uniforms. Carter

matched the contribution. In 1948, the Amon G. Carter Foundation presented to Tech a statue of Rogers and his horse, Soapsuds, titled "Riding Into The Sunset." Executed by Electa Waggoner Biggs, who was only 18-years-old at the time, the statue is one of four like it in the United States. The statue was physically erected on what was known as Soapsuds Pavilion east Memorial Circle and offset 23 degrees north from west in order to face the rear of the horse toward Texas A&M, a favorite Tech rival.

Source: *Tech Traditions* by Marsha Gustafson and Curt Langford.