

# 1914 FIRE NEARLY RUINED W T

There were tears in the eyes of many who stood helplessly by while flames and smoke poured up and bricks crumbled to the ground from the infant West Texas State Normal College's beautiful administration building.

That was on the morning of March 25, 1914, and the one-building college, hard-won by Canyon citizens, and the pride of Plains people, seemed doomed because a workman's gasoline torch had exploded. Despite nearly three years of successful enterprise in West Texas, it appeared that higher education would move back permanently beyond the 98th meridian.

"Before the smoke was cleared away, the faculty met over in the president's home and after a brief prayer of consecration asking for guidance, formulated plans by which the institution resumed its labor on the morning of the next day," wrote the late President R. B. Cousins.

The prayer paid off, for on Wednesday West Texas State's Board of Regents will be dedicating the college's 29th and 30th major buildings. A special program, to which the public is invited, will be held in the Administration Building Auditorium at 10 a. m., and the buildings will be open to visitors at 2 p. m.

In the court house, churches, and vacant store buildings, where classes were held until frame shacks replaced them, was begun in 1914, the long fight to retain an institution in the Panhandle. Though the effort to build a recognized institution, with a sufficient physical plant, was checked perhaps a decade by the fire, West Texas State has progressively expanded since that time.

After building a second administration building in 1916, at a cost of over \$300,000, West Texas State began a period of expansion, climaxed this year with the completion of its new \$400,000 physical education building and its \$500,000 library.

West Texas State's growth may be marked in two distinct periods--from 1916 until 1942, when building was primarily a "pulling-up-by-its-own-bootstraps" process, and from 1942 until 1952, when two-thirds of the present plant was completed.

A residence for girls was the second major structure acquired for the campus, with Cousins Hall going up in 1920, costing about \$150,000. With additional women entering the college, the administration solved its housing problem by leasing Huntleigh Hall in 1922, and finally buying it in 1923. Its name was changed to Randall.

Because of the lack of sufficient funds from the state to expand as fast as necessary, Burton Gym was erected in 1925 through popular subscription, and a stadium was built in 1928 by the same means.

With West Texas State leading the way, training schools for prospective



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teachers were instituted in the several teachers colleges in Texas, and as a result of the effective program here, the legislature in 1927 appropriated \$300,000 for an education building. It was completed in 1928, located beside the Administration Building.

During the 1930's several buildings were constructed by Works Progress Administration labor, including an addition to Cousins Hall, Stafford Hall, residence for men, Buffalo Courts, which houses athletes, the Home Management House, the outdoor swimming pool, Pueblo Courts, a group of ten small residences, and the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society Museum.

In 1942 was begun a period of growth in which West Texas State became a college plant which more adequately can supply the demands of modern education. Through state appropriations, the Constitutional Building Fund, revenue bonds, and subscriptions, buildings costing, and valued at, well over \$2,000,000 have been added to the campus.

Science Hall was begun in March 1942, and after a delay caused by material shortages, was completed in 1944. Connor Hall, a residence for men, was completed in 1947, and the college cafeteria was completed the same year. An addition to Randall Hall, costing about \$190,000, was completed in 1945, and an addition to the museum was finished last year. Funds for Connor, the cafeteria, and Randall Hall came from revenue bonds.

The college acquired surplus government buildings in 1948, and with \$105,000 remodeled buildings from Camp Barkley and the prisoner of war camp at Hereford. These are Tierra Blanca Hall, English Building, Speech Building, the band house, and a number of apartments.



# DEDICATION PROGRAM, OPEN HOUSE FOR WT'S TWO NEWEST BUILDINGS

Climaxing a decade of rapid growth, formal dedication of two new buildings completed this year at West Texas State College will be held next Wednesday (Oct. 8) by the Board of Regents of Texas State Teachers Colleges.

A "Regents' Day" program, to which the people of the Panhandle are invited, will see the college's new \$400,000 physical education building and \$500,000 library dedicated, the Memorial Chapel re-named, and the new department of military science and tactics paid recognition. Dedication services are slated at 10 a.m., and an open house in the three buildings is scheduled at 2 p.m.

Occupied only in August, the gleaming white stone and brick structure is the first separate building in the history of the college to be devoted entirely to the library. Featuring every convenience and modern design of the nation's outstanding college libraries, the building contains two large reading rooms, several smaller reading rooms, a browsing room for leisure reading, a typing room, several conference rooms, a rare book room, cataloging and accession rooms, map rooms, offices, and lounges.

Four stack rooms, which may be expanded in the future, provides ample space for the library's hundreds of thousands of books, periodicals, and government documents. The college film division is given offices, storage rooms, and a projection room in the building's basement.

The new physical education building encompasses just about everything a modern athletic plant should, having classrooms, training rooms, boxing and wrestling rooms, offices, storerooms, shower and locker rooms, and a playing area for basketball, volleyball, and tennis. A fitting home for the Buffaloes, sometimes called "the tallest basketball team in the world," the field house has a seating capacity of 4,000.

Built by donations from Plains people who saw a need for a religious center on the West Texas State campus, the Memorial Chapel was completed in the fall of 1950. The small sanctuary, non-denominational in construction and use, is beautifully furnished, and features an organ and chimes. It is a place of worship at all times of the day, for students and faculty, a place for special services, and is a place for appropriate services by all church groups of the area.

West Texas State's department of military science and tactics was opened this fall, when the college obtained one of the Army's new "Branch General" Reserve Officers' Training Corps units.

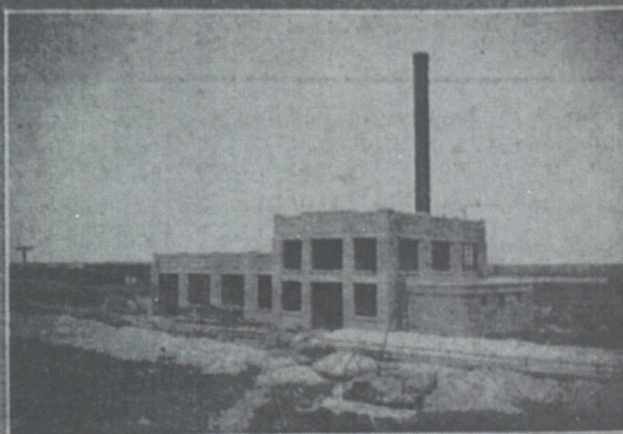
Presiding at the dedication program in the Administration Building Auditorium will be H. L. Mills, Houston, president of the Board of Regents. Participating will be the board's "local" committee for West Texas State, including William L. Kerr, Midland, John C. Calhoun, Corsicana, and Walter F. Woodul, Houston. Other regents expected to attend are Melvin C. Eidson, Laredo, R. L. Thomas, Dallas, Miss Emma Mae Brotze, Marshall, Newton Harrell, Claude, Charles P. McGaha, Wichita Falls, and Claude Isbell, executive secretary, Austin.



Dedication Program, Open House  
(Continued)

Besides the planned program and open house, the regents will be entertained at luncheon in the college cafeteria, and faculty and regents will have a steak fry in the afternoon. Mr. Harrell, who is sponsoring the steak fry, will show movies of the Harrell family's recent trip to Africa.

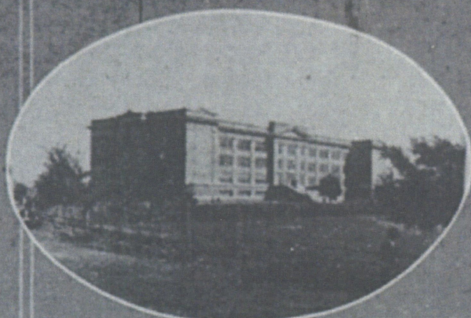




W. T. S. N. C. Power House  
Under Construction



President's Home



Administration  
Building  
W. T. S. N. C.



Cousins Hall- Girls' Dormitory  
Ready for Occupancy Sept. 1st.



The PRAIRIE

March 7, 1921