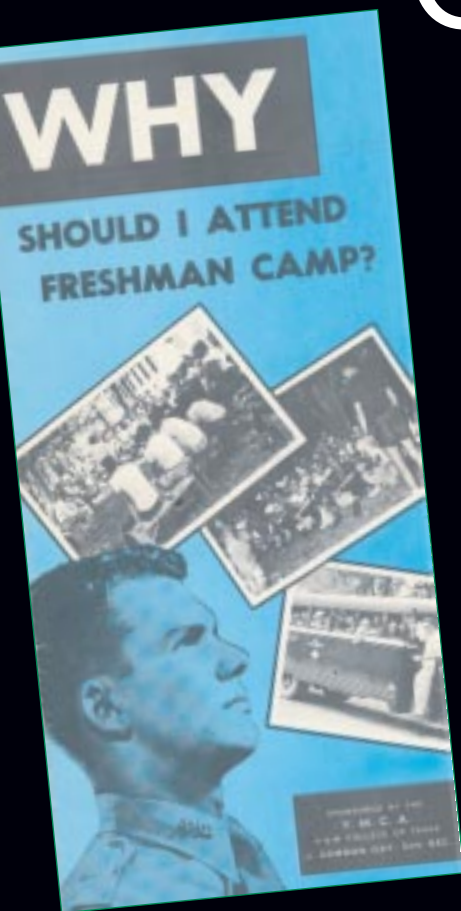


One of A&M's *finest* traditions



On Fish Camp's 52nd birthday, we look back to see how it became an integral part of Texas A&M

(story and photos
courtesy of Fish Camp)



Since 1876, Texas A&M University has evolved from a small agricultural and mechanical college into a world-renowned university. One of the traits that makes A&M so special is the many unique traditions. Fish Camp is one of those traditions that make A&M so unique. Fish Camp is proud to uphold its responsibility of officially integrating incoming students into the Aggie Family.

Fish Camp began 52 years ago when former YMCA director Gordon Gay took six incoming students camping at Fort Parker State Park. This park near Mexia, Texas, is located about 82 miles north of College Station.

Then called "Freshmen Camp," its purpose was to give new students the opportunity to gain first-hand information about life at A&M. The program gave students a well-rounded introduction to college life and facilitated lasting friendships before the maze of orientation. Back then, camp consisted of three nights lodging, eight meals, and transportation, which cost \$7.50.

After its fourth year, Fish Camp

moved its location from Fort Parker State Park to Lakeview Methodist Conference Center in Palestine, where it is still held today.

The university has undergone many changes since the first Fish Camp. As A&M underwent changes, so did Fish Camp. Women were permitted to attend for the first time in 1974, when 12 women went. Now, more than half of the participants of Fish Camp are women.

Each year, Fish Camp is growing to accommodate the size of the incoming freshman class. Currently, Fish Camp accommodates 70 percent of A&M's incoming freshmen, which equals 4,500 new Aggies this year. As an independent student run organization, Fish Camp boasts the leadership of 1,000 students.

While Fish Camp has grown, the focus on helping new students has always remained the same. By the time the last students have departed Lakeview, the Fish Camp staff hopes that all freshmen will leave camp excited and enthusiastic about making their mark at our unique university.

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