

## The Campuses of A&M Consolidated High School

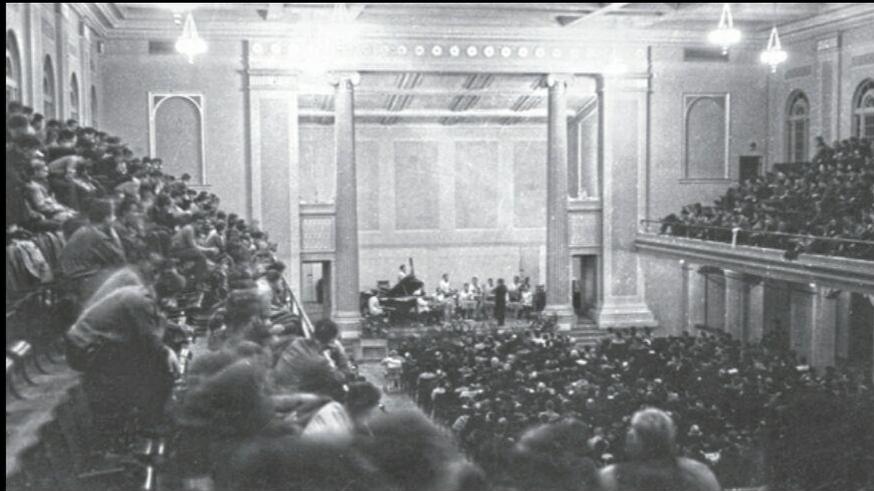
The decision to create a high school on the campus of Texas A&M in 1920 came with numerous challenges. Chief among them was the future location of the school. Revenue of the newly created district was insufficient to construct a new building, and TAMC was uninterested in supplementing the difference. The first building for A&M Consolidated would have to be an existing structure on the A&M campus. The first doors opened for students in October 1920, in the auditorium of Guion Hall.

Located near the present day site of Rudder Auditorium, Guion Hall was the center of campus life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It's classic Roman structure was a sign of Aggie confidence in the future at the time it was dedicated in May of 1918. Its auditorium could seat 2,500, roughly the size of the student body at the time. It was named for John Isaac Guion Jr., a judge from Ballinger, TX and President of the A&M Board of Directors under A&M President W.B. Bizzell.

Born in Mississippi in 1852, Guion Jr. made his way to Texas at the time of Texas A&M's birth in 1876. He was the son of former Mississippi governor John Isaac Guion Sr., who was born in 1802 and served during the antebellum period in the 1850s. Guion Jr.'s own son David Wendel Guion became an accomplished musician of national stature in the 1930s; his version of "Home on the Range" transformed the song into an American favorite.

Guion Hall was demolished in 1971 to make way for Rudder Hall.





Interior of Guion Hall. *Photo courtesy of Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University*

Guion Hall was intended as a temporary location for the A&M Consolidated school, until a more permanent facility could be constructed on campus. Around 1923, work on a new building was completed. It was a two story building located on what is now the Texas A&M Corp of Cadets Quad. Concerns about the inadequacy of the structure were voiced almost immediately.

From the book "Over at College," by A&M Consolidated graduate James Knox Walker Jr.:

"The new school was not yet completed; a couple of years later, upon its completion, grade school and high school students began attending classes in the two-story stucco school on the Campus. But, this body of high school and grade school students crowded in one building was unrealistic, and the school appealed to A&M for more space. Responding to the problem, A&M granted the use of Pfeuffer Hall, vintage 1887, to the Consolidated School for the high school."

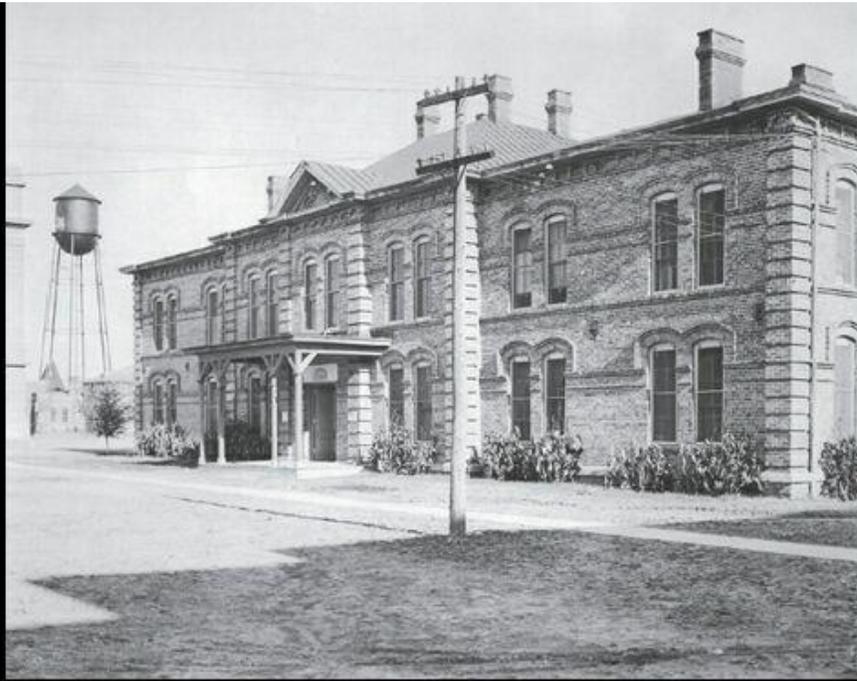


**Original Consolidated School shortly before it was razed. *Photo courtesy of Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University***

Pfeuffer Hall, constructed in 1887, was originally a dormitory. It was built just south of the A&M Academic building. P.L. "Pinkie" Downs, class of 1906, was a resident; Downs is credited as the creator of the "Gig 'em" phrase. The building was named for George Pfeuffer. Pfeuffer immigrated from Bavaria, and settled with Germans in New Braunfels. His business ventures eventually led into law, and finally politics. Like Guion, Pfeuffer was appointed by Governor Oran Roberts in 1883 as the President of the A&M Board of Directors. Pfeuffer Hall was the home of A&M Consolidated school for the remainder of the 1920s and the entirety of the 1930s.

As the Great Depression was replaced by war in Europe in the late 1930s, the community of A&M families on campus began to ponder a future outside of the university. Texas A&M was increasingly negative on subsidizing the housing of this growing community; meanwhile, neighborhoods off campus in the Oakwood, College Park, College Hills, and South Knoll neighborhoods were growing large enough to support a taxable school district of their own. As Texas A&M football was earning a national championship in football in 1939, A&M Consolidated families began relocating to these new neighborhoods, started the work of creating a school district independent from the University, and began to think about the location of a new campus in a new city.

The city of College Station was incorporated in 1939. Pfeuffer Hall was demolished in 1954.



**Pheuffer Hall, home of A&M Consolidated High School in the 1930s. *Photo courtesy of Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University***

The growth of A&M in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century gave birth to College Station, TX, and the new city took ownership of its public education in 1940. The city finally decided on a new location for its new A&M Consolidated school. After the passage of a highly debated city bond in 1939, land was purchased on the corner of Jersey (now George Bush Dr.) and Holik, and set aside for the construction of the new school. The new school opened its doors in 1940(?); An auditorium, gym, and athletic field were added in February of 1942.

# Students at A&M Consolidated School Are In Favor Of Bond Issue For New Building

AN OPEN LETTER TO  
MR. CAESAR HOHN

We the undersigned students of A. & M. Consolidated high school read with great dismay and regret your letter in the Bryan Daily Eagle.

In the first place we wish to suggest that if you wish to give your son the benefits that you cite, why not send him in to Bryan high next year and leave us alone. However, it might not be amiss for us to point out to you some of the reasons why we are desirous

of having the school we attend remain independent.

Bryan high, without a doubt, is a very fine high school; but we contend that our school is just as fine and fully as efficient. Should we not be proud of the fact that not a single graduate of our school busted out of A. & M. this year? A record of that kind should be conclusive evidence that our school is doing a good job of educating its pupils.

We have access to the A. & M. library, the A. & M. Physics lab-

oratories, and the A. & M. Industrial Education shops. We are also allowed to use the college gym and football field. We believe that there is not another high school in the state of Texas with better equipment along these lines.

You said that we needed to make more contacts. We want to point out to you that we are attending a school on the campus of an institution that has nearly six thousand students from all over Texas. Many of them we number as our friends. That seems to make up a

good number of "contacts."

You said that we have no school spirit. We excuse your ignorance on the grounds that you have only been a resident of this community for six months and therefore cannot be expected to know much about the conditions.

Many of us have been raised in the A. & M. traditions. The closer contact we have with A. & M., the better we like it.

We believe that you will be willing to admit that any com-

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# A-M Consolidated Auditorium, Gym Opening Tonight

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A china shower and family night will be the leading features of the opening of the new auditorium of A. & M. Consolidated school Thursday at 7:00 p. m.

The auditorium, which will house the new cafeteria, the gymnasium, and serve as an auditorium for the school and community, has been under construction for some time. It will be formally opened to the public at this time.

Each family with children in the school, is asked to provide enough glasses, cups, saucers, plates, knives, forks and spoons for its children to eat in the cafeteria, when it is opened for use on Feb. 23. A booth to collect this shower of china will be at the supper and opening, it has been announced.

Supper will be prepared and served by the members of the Mothers Club of the school, with Mrs. A. B. Stevens heading the arrangements. Stunts and games will be in charge of Spike White, and music and the general sing-song will be under the direction of Mrs. Ford Munnerylyn.

The public is invited to take part in the entertainment, the supper and in viewing the auditorium of the school.

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Post WW2 growth fueled a population boom in College Station, and new schools were built to accommodate. An elementary school in the College Hills area opened in 1961, and the South Knoll neighborhood opened its own elementary school 1967. Oakwood Intermediate School was established in the early 1970s next to A&M Consolidated to alleviate overcrowding at the high school.



Eventually, the original A&M Consolidated High School campus became untenable due to growth. Plans were put into work to convert the old high school into a Jr. High School. A new, modern high school would be constructed south on FM 2818; the new high school opened in 1973.



Renovations and expansions have occurred at periodic intervals over the last 40 years. Football and baseball fields were built in the 1990s, and new classrooms were added in 2000. The new campus in 1980 remains in use in 2020.

Today, the College Station Independent School district comprises two high schools, three middle schools, three intermediate schools, and ten elementary schools.

The 100<sup>th</sup> A&M Consolidated graduating class will attend school at a campus that differed from many years that came before. But they'll still finish their academic careers at the same place where it all began. They'll walk the stage at Rudder Auditorium, the site of ol' Guion Hall where the first A&M Consolidated class did the same.