

Texas Tech IN RETROSPECT

BY CINDY MARTIN
SOUTHWEST COLLECTION

AMELIA EARHART VISITS TECH

No one in West Texas guessed this woman flew across the Atlantic alone.

The Dec. 17, 1933, *Avalanche*-Journal carried front-page stories on Charles Lindbergh's visit to Brazil and on the Lubbock visit of Amelia Earhart, known as the "Lady Lindbergh." Earhart was brought to town to present a lecture as part of the Tech artists course.

Ms. Earhart intended to fly to Lubbock in an auto giro, but because of problems with the airplane, she borrowed a friend's car in Fort Worth and drove in with stops in Wichita Falls and Amarillo. After arriving, she reportedly asked, "Why do people travel so slowly on these good, straight roads?"

Her lecture, held in the Lubbock High School auditorium, was illustrated with motion pictures of her air travels. Students were admitted at no charge, but others paid 50 to 75 cents to hear the famous flyer. According to reports, none were disappointed.

Earhart proved to be a lively speaker and told of being mistaken for Colonel Lindbergh's mother, Mrs. Roosevelt and a swimmer of the Atlantic. She also gave a detailed account of the thrills and perils of her flights, particularly her solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean.

Though it was her first trip to West Texas, she was already familiar with dust storms. During her lecture she described some of the storms she had encountered, noting that "They often reach an altitude of 10,000 feet and are sometimes difficult to avoid. In the air, you can see the dark, whirling mass approaching, and if



Earhart as she appeared in Lubbock in 1933.
(La Ventana photo)

you get above it, a dusky haze covers the earth."

Earhart also spoke about the future for women in aviation and in other fields.

As an advocate for equal opportunity for women, she commented that "A girl, just because she is a girl, should not be forbidden in an engi-

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neering school, and a boy should not be limited to one."

She also noted that her solo flight across the Atlantic was no special contribution to aviation but was something she did for her own personal satisfaction and which she hoped would interest women in flying.

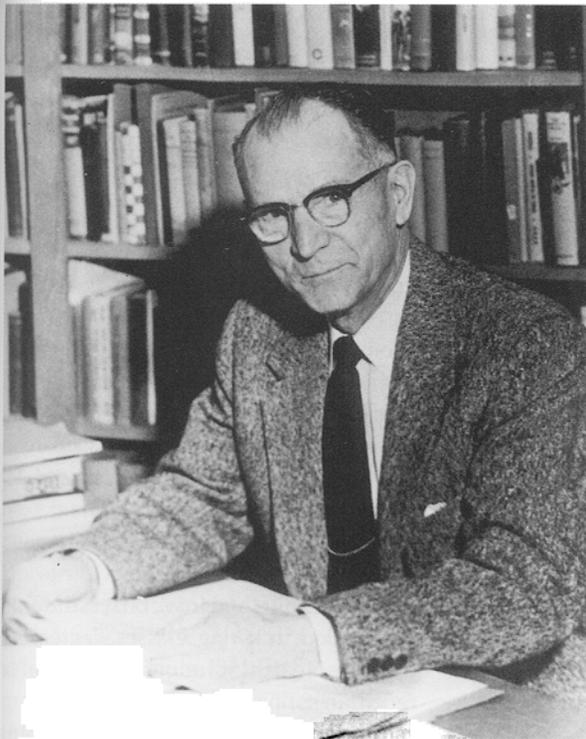
After flying across the Atlantic in 1928 as a member of the crew of the "Friendship," Earhart eventually became the first woman to fly it alone. Later, she established several speed and distance records and became the first woman to make a transcontinental flight and to fly an auto giro solo.

She was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and, along with Charles Lindbergh, was made an honorary member of the Lafayette Esquadrielle. She disappeared in the Pacific in 1937 during an attempted around-the-world flight.

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BY JANET NEUGEBAUER
SOUTHWEST COLLECTION

TEXAS TECH'S FIRST DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR



In 1951, Dr. Carl Coke Rister was the first person to be appointed to a distinguished professorship at Texas Tech. The 51st Legislature of the State of Texas authorized such appointments in 1949.

Rister had been Research Professor of History at the University of Oklahoma for 12 years before his appointment. His hiring was intended to strengthen the history department at Tech, which was beginning a Doctor of Philosophy program. Rister's Ph.D. from George Washington University and his rich background in Southwestern history made him especially suited for the task.

Arriving in time for the opening of the 1951-52 school year, Rister began teach-

ing graduate courses and worked to increase the fledgling Southwest Collection, then located in the Library. In addition to teaching, Rister was a dedicated researcher who authored 12 books and numerous articles during his lifetime. He also filled numerous speaking engagements. It was in Rotan, Texas, after a strenuous round of these engagements that he died of a heart attack on April 16, 1955. Rister was only 65 years old. His last book, "Comanche Bondage," was published posthumously.

Rister's death gave life to the modern Southwest Collection. It was born in 1955 when the Texas Tech Board of Directors purchased his books and papers and hired Dr. Seymour V. Connor as archivist, thus giving the research center a separate identity.

Now, 40 years later, the Southwest Collection has increased to include more than 50,000 volumes and over 20 mil-

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lion documents—enough to require a separate building. Distinguished scholars come from across the world to use this material, including the rich personal collection of Carl Coke Rister.



Dr. Carl Coke Rister with his papers—a familiar sight for all who knew him. (Photos provided by the Southwest Collection)

Texas Tech IN RETROSPECT

BY FREEDONIA PASCHALL
SOUTHWEST COLLECTION

THE CONSTRUCTION OF JONES STADIUM

Before the completion of the Clifford B. and Audrey Jones Stadium, the Red Raider football team played in what was then known as the Tech Stadium. With the popularity of Texas Tech football, there quickly arose a need for more seating for spectators.

In December 1945, former Tech President Clifford B. Jones offered \$100,000 toward the estimated \$300,000 cost of construction of a new

stadium which was to seat some 17,000 football fans, with the possibility for later expansion.

The board of directors agreed to supply \$50,000 toward the project, with the final \$150,000 pledged by the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce.

Dedication of the new stadium was on Nov. 29, 1947, during a game between Texas Tech and Hardin-Simmons. Despite being two-touchdown

underdogs, Tech won the game, thus securing the Border Conference title and a bid to the Sun Bowl.

The accompanying photographs are available for use at the Southwest Collection.

Various views of construction are shown below (clockwise from left) March 28, 1947; Aug. 29, 1947; Sept. 19, 1947; and halftime ceremonies during the dedication of the new stadium on Nov. 29, 1947.



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BY LANCE VANZANT
SOUTHWEST COLLECTION

LETTERS HOLD REMINDER OF THE PAST

Many Americans have been witnesses, either through personal experience or television, to campus unrest created by America's involvement in foreign conflicts.

An editorial in a Lubbock newspaper sounds a familiar theme.

"There is in the minds and hearts of many a veteran of the '60s a memory of the dark days of American life—a picture that they could not eradicate if they would."

The reference, however, was not to a foreign war, but rather to the tumultuous 1860s, a decade of division that was symbolically relived in Lubbock shortly after Texas Tech's founding.

When Paul W. Horn assumed the presidency of Texas Tech in 1925, he was charged not only with hiring faculty and administrators, he also



"Lincoln was lucky enough to become identified with the cause of human liberty, and with the manifest destiny of the Republic."



President Paul W. Horn

had the unique opportunity of helping to plan the college's architectural style and construct its first buildings. One of the embellishments to be placed on the north facade of the new Administration Building was a set of 10 medallions, five featuring prominent historical figures from American history and five famous Texans.

Dr. Horn made the seemingly innocuous decision of including former President Abraham Lincoln in this distinguished group.

As found in the correspondence file in his presidential papers, the

memories of Confederate veterans and their relatives were slow to fade.

The content of the letters ran from support to extreme disapproval. In concurring with Dr. Horn's proposal, Judge James Wilson stated that "the World War and our experiences in that should have had the effect of removing all such prejudices branch and root."

W.A. Covington, son of a Confederate veteran, wrote that "Lincoln was lucky enough to become identified with the cause of human liberty, and with the manifest destiny of the Republic."

However, the majority of letters were not so favorable. One spokesman for the Sons of Confederate Veterans stated that Lincoln "should not be selected as an example of citizenship or statesmanship for the youth of any Southern state." A Civil War veteran, a former private in the Army of Northern Virginia who was wounded and captured at Gettysburg, wrote Dr. Horn a vehement letter in which he stated that "the name of this skallawag Kentuckian will go down in the history of the South with scorn and contempt."

No doubt, Dr. Horn was genuinely dismayed to find that he had stirred sectional rivalries and prompted a wave of protest before the paint had dried on the Administration Building.

However, he and the Lincoln medallion survived the criticism. 

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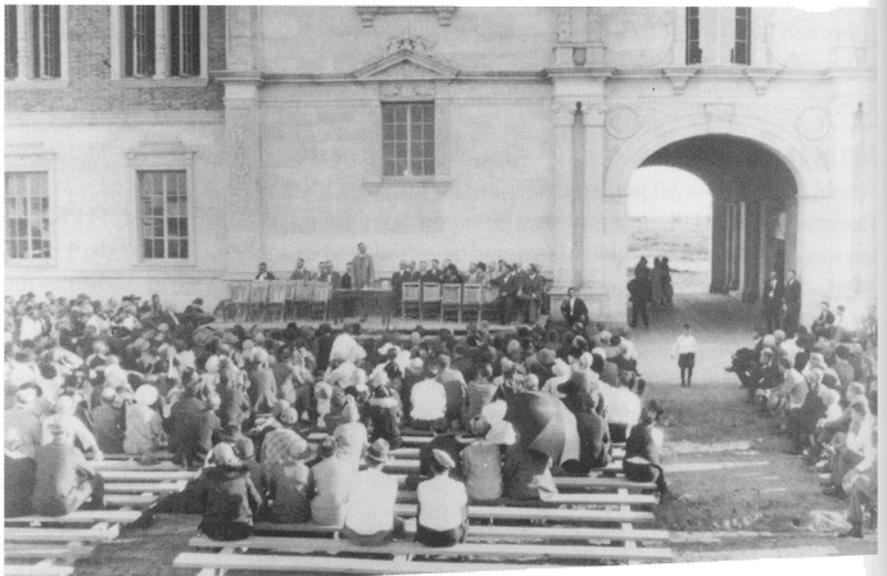
BY DR. DAVID MURRAH
SOUTHWEST COLLECTION

TECH OPENING BROUGHT RAIN TO THE DRY PLAINS

Seventy years ago in 1925, the rain fell mainly on the plain — sometimes in large quantities on the new Texas Technological College campus — providing a pleasant diversion to those very first historic meetings and convocations.

Several Tech professors missed the first meeting of the Texas Tech faculty, held on Sept. 15, 1925, because of high water. Two more would have missed. However, thanks to a taxi driver, who willingly carried two of the women teachers across a water-filled ditch in front of the Administration Building, the meeting progressed with a quorum.

The opening public convocation on Sept. 30, staged in front of the Administration Building, with cinder block and plank board benches, was staged without interruption from the weather. But on Oct. 1, at the first student convocation, the rain returned, chasing the crowd inside the Administration Building.



Texas Tech's opening convocation for the public on Sept. 30, 1925, saw no interruption from the weather, but the following day's student convocation was forced inside by a rain shower.

Tech President Paul Horn took the weather in stride and noted to the student body that, ever since the establishment of Texas Tech on the plains, the normally dry region has

experienced abundant rainfall. "Look at the good that Texas Tech has already done," he said.

Undaunted by the weather, the principal speaker for the event, Dr. J.A. Hill, president of the then-named West Texas State Teachers' College at Canyon, (now West Texas A&M University), gave a stirring address about the obligations of a college to the students. Hill was followed by short speeches by the presidents of Southwest Texas State and the University of Texas.

South Plains farmers today would probably like to see Texas Tech restage those opening ceremonies to see if the much-needed rain would return to the plains.

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BY TAI KREIDLER
SOUTHWEST COLLECTION

THE BRIEF STORY OF TECH'S NUCLEAR ENGINEERING PROGRAM

In the early 1960s, Texas Tech University joined the nuclear age. Housed in the West Engineering Complex, Tech's "sub-critical" nuclear reactor went on-line and brought to fruition a project that had been the focus of considerable discussion and planning. The brain-child of College of Engineering dean Dr. John R. Bradford, Tech's reactor became the focus of its fledgling Nuclear Engineering Program that had been launched in 1957.

Bradford energetically supported Tech's entry into nuclear research soon after his arrival here in 1955. Bradford, who had been a Tech undergraduate and graduate student, had also worked in private nuclear industry for a number of years. At the helm of Texas Tech engineering, he successfully established the nuclear engineering program and outlined a plan to build a nuclear research reactor. After three years of rigorous site surveys, safe-

ty reports and building approvals, the Atomic Energy Commission (now, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission) in February 1959 tentatively granted approval.

Unfortunately, final approval was denied. Instead, the Atomic Energy Commission only permitted Tech a "sub-critical" assembly. Essentially, it was a "pilot plant." Though initially disappointing, the AEC decision was perhaps a blessing. Bradford explained that a full-fledged research reactor would have demanded very strict operational rules and involved inordinate security difficulties, maintenance headaches, and the continual safety problem.

Meanwhile, Tech's "sub-critical" unit powered-up and provided a vast amount of research data for a myriad of research projects. Essentially creating an "intense neutron flux," the reactor produced "lots of information on a cheap basis," according to Southwest Collection documents.

Engineering operated it for five to six years and then transferred the reactor to the physics department, which used it for research projects. It was eventually shut down and dismantled and shipped back to the government. During that entire period, the reactor ran smoothly and without any mishap.



From left: I.C. Lankford,
Dr. John R. Bradford and
Ted Hannah

