The College Buildings

By WM. WARD WATKINS

Ground was broken for the building of the Administration Building in the summer of 1910.

The initial work on the plans for the Rice Institute began in the summer of 1909 in the offices of the firm of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson, Architects, of Boston.

The land upon which the buildings were to be built consisted of some three hundred acres, of approximately triangular shape, located more than two miles beyond the then built section of the city. It was bordered by only one road; the county road, which was the extension of Main Street. The land was subject to frequent overflow from the small bayou which runs through the southern section. There were but few old trees and these were grouped into two separate areas—one at the end nearest the city and the other along the banks of the bayou.

With these natural characteristics as determining factors, the general plan was designed. This envisioned the future improvement of the Main Street Road as a city boulevard and the most important avenue of approach as well as the most important permanent frontage of the campus.

From the corner where the Institute's land bordered Main Street nearest to the city, the main entrance driveway was laid out as an axis of maximum length across the site. At approximately one quarter of a mile, the main building was to be located. This main building would be the Administration Building. Around it to right and left the main driveway was to turn and lead to building areas to the east and west. The main axis continues into an open Academic Court, some three hundred feet in width and seven hundred feet in length. Beyond the Academic Court, a greater court, one of larger width and length, would begin. At right angles to the main axis, minor axes were laid out, one to extend from Main Street and to lead to the Academic Court and beyond it on to the Engineering Quadrangle, and another to lead to the buildings of the residential halls. The planning expressed the broad spaces of Texas in contrast to the crowded campuses of the East. We thought of the buildings as permanent, of an endless continuity, and avoided the oft-repeated sameness that marks the classical and modern alike. We were picturing an environment possessing warm and welcoming human qualities.

All of the buildings were to have a pleasant colorful appearance in economical material. This basic material was to be brick. Houston had for many years possessed local brick plants which made a brick of unique beauty of color, a soft silvery pink shade. With this as a basic color value, an interesting design motif was provided which permitted the mingling of limestone and marble trim with the brick in the major buildings and the more economical mingling of the brick and stucco pattern in the residential groups. Infinite variety in bonding brick and stone had been indicated in the wonderful brickwork of north central Italy and this served as an inspiration for still more new and interesting arrangements.

When the Institute opened for the first academic year in the fall of 1912, and still later when its inaugural ceremonies were held in October, 1912, there were built but three buildings, the Administration Building, the Engineering Building with the Power Plant and Campanile, and the South Hall and Dining Commons. These stood out bare upon the wide open, undeveloped prairie. There were no trees around them or between them. The tree and hedge planting began in 1913, continued through 1914, and has been extended each year since.

The original conception of the late Bertram Goodhue had been of wide sunny courts, dazzling light, in contrast to thick mass foliage along all roads, giving a deep dark continuous shade. Each year this picture has come to be more complete and convincing.

When one looks back to the land of the Institute as he first saw it in 1910, one recalls how, gradually through the years, its beauty has grown. The bare prairie has been transformed by the buildings and their color, and by the growth of the trees and shrubbery, and by the passing of time into beauty. It gives tremendous faith in its future. A generation is but as a day in the life of a great university. The Institute is still young and we all wish for it continued growth toward beauty and completeness in all of its activities.
Navy Blue Christmas

By ALICE MARION DENARD

The waitress put the foaming glass on the shiny black table in the booth. The glass was wet and the clear golden liquid slid down the smooth surface, forming puddles of beer on the table.

"Anything else?" No, there wasn't anything else.

"Then, Merry Christmas, and come back soon."

There's that Merry Christmas stuff again. Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas. Can't they think of some other way of saying it, if it has to be said? ... Happy Christmas. No, that goes with Easter ... Joyful Noel. Jerky. And Bounteous felicity to you, too, Mr. Friesbinder. Christmas.

Dan stared at the frosty glass of beer before him. He wasn't sure just why he had ordered it. He didn't like beer very well. But now that he had it, he may as well drink it. He lifted the glass and took a swallow. Green, always green beer.

He pulled his bill-fold out of the tight hip pocket of his dress blues and extracted two nickels. He walked to the brightly lighted juke box and searched for the selection of tunes "Together," "White Christmas," "Always," "Silent Night," "I'll Be Home for Christmas." Why did they all have to be these sickly sentimental songs? Number 18 was "Is You Is, or Is You Ain't?" Dan punched the button by the title slip and dropped in a nickel. More like it, now. Get some life into the old joint.

When Dan returned to his booth, there was a man sitting across from him, "Excuse me, mister, but I was sitting here," Dan said. The man smiled broadly.

"Oh, you don't mind a little company, do you, Sailor? I saw you sitting over there, and, seeing as how it's Christmas, thought I'd come over and buy you a drink. No harm in that, eh?" The man sat back with a "doing-my-bit-for-a-serviceeman" expression on his face.

"Christmas rolls around before you know it. Yes, sir! Before you know it, here's old Christmas again. Thought I'd drop in for a beer before I go home. We're going to have the tree, tonight. Yes, sir. Always have the tree on Christmas Eve, at my house. I'm old Saint Nick, myself—and with this punch I make a convincing one!" The man laughed loudly. He was a good-natured fellow, very jolly. Yes, sir! He could poke fun at himself and take it...

...Why doesn't the old stew leave? Who gives a darn for his Christmas, anyway? This Christmas stuff is for little kids and old fools ... Not disturbed by Dan's failure to answer, the little round man continued: "Say, girlie, bring the sailor boy the best beer you got. Yes, sir! only the best for our sailor-boys! ... You seen any action yet, boy? Where you from?"

"Hartford, Connecticut." What difference does it make to the old fool, anyway. "And, yeah, I've seen plenty of action. In physics, and chemistry, and math. Address me in care of F.P.O., Houston, Texas." These furrows in my pure white brow are my battle cars, and this virgin white stripe is my hashmark. Veteran Morrison late of the Battle of Rice Institute ...

"Hartford, huh, let me see, I used to know some people named Jameson, or Johnson, or Johnston, anyway something like that. They were from Hartford. Don't guess you'd know them, though... That's too bad you're not home for Christmas. I know your folks will miss you."

"Oh, it isn't so bad. I figure there are plenty of things more important than Christmas. The whole idea strikes me as kind of silly, anyway. Like this business of giving presents to everybody you know. The only reason you do it is because you think they're going to give you a gift, and you don't want to seem like a piker. I can't see any reason for all the hullabaloo... Good Lord, Christmas is just another day in the year. The way people go fraksh, hate everybody one day, then Bang! it's Christmas, and everybody's going wild with this brotherly love stuff. Frankly, I don't get it." Dan stood up and reached for his pea-jacket.

"Well, now, don't go off in a huff, boy. There's really pretty much sense in celebrating Christmas, you know. It's all symbolic. Like the gift-giving is symbolic of the gifts that the wise men or the three kings, or somebody gave the Christ-child. See, it's all symbolic. Here, finish your beer before it gets warm."

Dan sat back down. No need to be rude to the old boy, after all. Maybe he liked being a fool, and there was