Frosh Now Fall Heir To Much Safer Legacy

By LYN MARTIN

Freshman kidnappings and slime parades, greased pole climbs and bowing to Sammy, all have traditionally been a part of freshman life at Rice.

As the fall of 1963 begins a new chapter in Rice History, one notices that many traditions are becoming little more than memories. Happily, brutal and violent freshman hazing is one such tradition.

ORIGINS OF freshman hazing are somewhat vague, although the practice seems to have been well established by the mid '20's. Also established were administration rules against hazing; but rules were not sufficient to dampen the enthusiasm of Rice sophomores.

In 1928 the Thresher reports a $50,000 lawsuit instigated by a former student who was permanently disabled after being "unlawfully assaulted on October 1, 1926." The Trustees announced that they were not liable because of rules against such practices.

LATER IN the year the school began a campaign to stamp out all forms of hazing and violence, although there was no attempt to prevent milder disciplinary measures. Three students were placed on disciplinary probation. In spite of the 1928 incident, unofficial hazing and official opposition continued. In 1934 a sophomore was dismissed because of his treatment of freshmen. A Thresher editorial states approval: "There is much to be commended in this vigorous and prompt action on the part of school officials ... hazing has its proper place but the form it takes is open to question."

FALL OF 1940 saw renewed determination on the part of Rice officials. The suppression of freshman beatings and other forms of cruelty began as the Dean of Students announced that the usual procedure of grabbing freshmen as they completed their registration would not be tolerated. He further warned that "severe treatment would be in hand for those attempting to override the new regulations."

Bloodthirsty sophomores were not to give in easily, however. Unsuspecting freshmen were kidnapped, driven out Westheimer, and allowed to find their own way home. Again in 1941, University officials made their position clear; the ban on hazing was repeated.

THE LATEST crackdown came in 1956, as a result of the death of two students in the old Campanile tower. Since that time, the colleges have taken over freshman guidance, and upperclassmen have assumed the responsibility of orienting the new student in the academic and social aspects of Rice life.

The traditional slime parade, greased pole climb, and homage to the school mascot at football games remain for the enjoyment of this year's freshmen.

IN THE FIRST slime parades, freshmen roamed through downtown Houston clad in their pajamas, staging impromptu pep rallies on the stages of movie theatres. Freshmen now march in a more orderly fashion from the campus to the Shamrock Hilton for a pep rally.

The traditional attire has not changed, although the slimes are now treated to a skit put on by Jones freshmen before they begin their march. They may also expect a treat from sophomores in their own colleges in the form of shaving cream, oranges, eggs, and gallons of water dropped from the Main and Holcombe underpass.

OWL-BOWING began as a somewhat forced expression of loyalty on the part of freshmen to their school and football team. It was one freshman activity which caused no controversy. In 1957 the colleges could not force freshmen to bow, but freshmen continued the tradition voluntarily. An attempt at a more sophisticated guidance program in 1961 brought the end of all bowing; it was resumed in 1962 by all the men's colleges except Will Rice.

The greased pole climb is truly an event which all freshmen may anticipate with eagerness. It officially marks the end of freshman guidance. Both sophomores and freshmen participate in this activity, as amid the slush and grease, they try to skin the pole and reach the beanie at the top. The freshmen, sadly enough, rarely succeed.