Bitter Grudge Duel

Aggie Rivalry Intense

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Saturday when the Texas Aggies invade Houston for the 44th renewal of the Rice-A&M rivalry, the bitterest grudge duel in the Southwest Conference will take place.

The storied rivalry is deep in tradition, dating back even to the early 1920's.

Beginning in '25

It all started in 1925. The Aggies were going nowhere in the Southwest Conference, and Rice was going down, but the Aggies decided to have a corps parade in Houston to bolster spirit.

Down Main Street marched the Cadets with banners streaming from vans. All of a sudden two Rice boys, martyrs to the cause, that they were, popped out from the rear of a van displaying "To Hell With A&M" signs. And on went the rivalry...

Joe Hunt Era

The Aggies won the game that year, 17-0, but the Owls had had the better of the pre-game shenanigans. It was the era of Joel Hunt, and nobody was stopping the Aggie football team for the next few years.

Then came 1926. 20 Rice coeds produced a minor riot at Aggieland, the details of which were kept under wraps. Old Threshers merely make a passing mention of this "riot."

By 1930 the feud was snowballing, and the Aggies this time pulled a coup. Despite an A&M administrative ban on a corps trip to Houston, the Aggies, 2000 strong, came to watch their favorites push over the Owls.

Battle of Broom

Through the next nine years, the fire smoldered, but in 1939 came one of Rice's finest hours: The Battle of the Broom. Rice's elaborate spy system found groups of Aggies clustered around the grounds and slowly performed the task of elimination. The Owls were most convincing, mainly through an accomplished technique of barbering, which allowed them to give all loitering Aggies free haircuts. However, the Aggies were not to be denied, and an estimated 600 attacked the slime-guarded bonfire with torches and kerosene.

The valiant freshmen stood off the invaders with brooms and the bonfire remained unkindled.

But in 1942 Rice erupted. Over twenty freshman P.E. majors patrolled Main Street, picking up lone Aggies or Aggies in small groups, doling out free haircuts and collecting clothing. The Thresher voiced its disapproval in scathing terms, but the '42 slimes chalked up a big score for Rice in the running battle.

Aggies Fall

Things quieted down after that—the Aggies fell in their football fortunes, and Rice took ten straight games. A planned invasion to be co-ordinated with a similar attack by Cougar High failed to materialize in 1953 due to a norther.