Autry House Still Open For All Rice Socials

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Thresher Religious Editor

During the summer of 1921, a large building was constructed on the expanse of unused land to the east of the Rice campus across Main Street.

The building was Autry House, built in honor of Judge J. L. Autry by his wife to serve as a student center for Rice students and faculty.

First Student Center

Autry House replaced a refreshment stand that had been established on the corner of Main and Outer Belt by the Rev. Harris Masterson as the only place in the area where Rice students could buy snacks and gather socially. Under Mr. Masterson’s guidance Autry House opened with a cafeteria, snack bar, chapel, lounge and study facilities, barber shop and pressing shop.

Autry House was donated to the Episcopal Diocese of Texas by Mrs. Autry, and the Diocese has borne the expense of maintenance and staffing through the years; but the building has always been available to all campus groups, originally serving as the meeting place of Rice clubs, literary societies and religious organizations. The stage facilities were used for Rice productions until Hamman Hall opened last year.

Religious Offices, Too

With the addition of the student center and auditorium on campus, the use of Autry House has changed somewhat. It presently serves as offices for the Rev. Lane Denson, Episcopal chaplain at Rice and the Texas Medical Center; the Rev. Edwin Shaw, director of the Methodist Student Movement at Rice; and the Rev. James Gunn, Presbyterian University Pastor.

The Collegiate Chapel of St. Bede in Autry House is used by several of the campus religious organizations for worship services throughout the week.