

# Famous Are Thy Halls

Rupert N. Richardson



## FAMOUS ARE THY HALLS

In this book Rupert N. Richardson, who has known Hardin-Simmons University longer and more intimately than any other person, recounts events as he has seen them unfold and has shared in shaping them.

He insists that he has not written a history but has dealt with features and people that have impressed him most and he feels will interest others. The sketches of his life that he sets forth from time to time serve to add contrast and variety to the Hardin-Simmons story.

Writing with enthusiasm and with frequent touches of humor, he joins hands with every student generation. There are accounts of student escapades from the days of famed Valhalla of the 1890's to the present. Cowden Hall, Scott Hall, Toly Hall, Needmore, and the "corner" are not neglected. He has given the history and the saga of campus shrines: the old cannon, the Cowhand, the old bell, and the historic Triangle. The story of Dam-it is told in full.

There are accounts of great problems and decisions, such as the two changes in name, the grim days of the depression when a little check was to be had just every now and then, caring for swarms of G I's, and adjustments after the Abilene Hall fire.

This second edition encompasses the story of a substantial increase in endowment, of the greatest plant improvement in the history of the University, and an account of the remarkable general progress of the institution during the past twelve years.

Richardson has known most of the people linked with Hardin-Simmons since it was launched as Abilene Baptist College in 1891, and the glimpses of them that he gives the reader are interesting and meaningful.

This book will stir the memory of every Hardin-Simmons man and woman and every friend of the university.

Hardin-Simmons University  
Press



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FAMOUS ARE THY HALLS

*Hardin-Simmons University as I Have Known It*

*With Autobiographical Sketches*

**(Second Edition)**

By

Rupert Norval Richardson

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## CONTENTS

Preface.....	vii
I Off to College.....	1
II My Transcript and Credentials.....	8
III Simmons College Before I Came, 1890-1907 .....	17
IV College Years, 1907-1912 .....	28
V The Interim, 1912-1917 .....	51
VI The Golden Age, 1912-1918.....	60
VII Bugle Calls and the New Freedom, 1917-1920.....	78
VIII Some Worthy Beginnings: Good and Poor	
Endings, 1920-1925 .....	93
IX Fat Years and Lean, 1925-1934.....	113
X A New Name and a New Outlook, 1934-1937 .....	132
XI Making the Best of Hard Times, 1922-1940 .....	145
XII The End of an Era, 1940-1943 .....	161
XIII World War II Years, 1941-1945 .....	173
XIV The G I Invasion, 1945-1950 .....	182
XV Life in the G I Era .....	200
XVI Looking Ahead.....	212
XVII Quality Education .....	222
XVIII Reaching Out: An Era of Activism .....	242
XIX Our Heritage.....	269
Index.....	283

INDEX

1. Introduction ..... 1

2. The History of the ..... 2

3. The History of the ..... 3

4. The History of the ..... 4

5. The History of the ..... 5

6. The History of the ..... 6

7. The History of the ..... 7

8. The History of the ..... 8

9. The History of the ..... 9

10. The History of the ..... 10

11. The History of the ..... 11

12. The History of the ..... 12

13. The History of the ..... 13

14. The History of the ..... 14

15. The History of the ..... 15

16. The History of the ..... 16

17. The History of the ..... 17

18. The History of the ..... 18

19. The History of the ..... 19

20. The History of the ..... 20

21. The History of the ..... 21

22. The History of the ..... 22

23. The History of the ..... 23

24. The History of the ..... 24

25. The History of the ..... 25

26. The History of the ..... 26

27. The History of the ..... 27

28. The History of the ..... 28

29. The History of the ..... 29

30. The History of the ..... 30

31. The History of the ..... 31

32. The History of the ..... 32

33. The History of the ..... 33

34. The History of the ..... 34

35. The History of the ..... 35

36. The History of the ..... 36

37. The History of the ..... 37

38. The History of the ..... 38

39. The History of the ..... 39

40. The History of the ..... 40

41. The History of the ..... 41

42. The History of the ..... 42

43. The History of the ..... 43

44. The History of the ..... 44

45. The History of the ..... 45

46. The History of the ..... 46

47. The History of the ..... 47

48. The History of the ..... 48

49. The History of the ..... 49

50. The History of the ..... 50

51. The History of the ..... 51

52. The History of the ..... 52

53. The History of the ..... 53

54. The History of the ..... 54

55. The History of the ..... 55

56. The History of the ..... 56

57. The History of the ..... 57

58. The History of the ..... 58

59. The History of the ..... 59

60. The History of the ..... 60

61. The History of the ..... 61

62. The History of the ..... 62

63. The History of the ..... 63

64. The History of the ..... 64

65. The History of the ..... 65

66. The History of the ..... 66

67. The History of the ..... 67

68. The History of the ..... 68

69. The History of the ..... 69

70. The History of the ..... 70

71. The History of the ..... 71

72. The History of the ..... 72

73. The History of the ..... 73

74. The History of the ..... 74

75. The History of the ..... 75

76. The History of the ..... 76

77. The History of the ..... 77

78. The History of the ..... 78

79. The History of the ..... 79

80. The History of the ..... 80

81. The History of the ..... 81

82. The History of the ..... 82

83. The History of the ..... 83

84. The History of the ..... 84

85. The History of the ..... 85

86. The History of the ..... 86

87. The History of the ..... 87

88. The History of the ..... 88

89. The History of the ..... 89

90. The History of the ..... 90

91. The History of the ..... 91

92. The History of the ..... 92

93. The History of the ..... 93

94. The History of the ..... 94

95. The History of the ..... 95

96. The History of the ..... 96

97. The History of the ..... 97

98. The History of the ..... 98

99. The History of the ..... 99

100. The History of the ..... 100

## PICTURES

Two Founders and two Early Presidents.....	30-a
The Presidents .....	30-b-30-d
Administrators of Recent Years .....	30-e
Some Teachers Who Have Stayed On.....	30-f
Cowboy Varsity, 1971-72 .....	30-g
Women's Varsity Basketball .....	30-h
Dam-it, College Mascot, 1916-1920 .....	104-a
Chapel Choir .....	104-b
Julius Olsen & Scholarship Society.....	104-c
Pershing Rifles, Capers .....	104-d
The Cowboy Band and Three Founders .....	104-e
President and Mrs. Sandefer .....	104-f
Some Campus Shrines.....	104-g
The Old Cannon.....	104-h
John G. Hardin .....	162-a
Sid Richardson Science Center .....	162-b
The Cowboys Ride Again.....	162-c
Some Great Coaches .....	162-d
The Richardsons.....	162-e
Trustees, 1959.....	162-f
Everybody Rides at H-SU .....	162-g
Cowboy Band 50th Anniversary .....	162-h
Veteran Teachers of the 1950's .....	221-a
Select Veterans .....	221-b
Veteran Deans.....	221-c
Some People Who Have Served H-SU Well .....	221-d
Three Loyal Coaches and a Great Athlete .....	221-e
Distinguished Alumni .....	221-f
All-School Sing and Singers Ho .....	221-g
Four Very Useful People.....	221-h
A Commencement Group .....	221-i
Some Wearers of Ten-Year Service Pins—And More.....	221-j



## PREFACE

This book is primarily the story of Simmons College, Simmons University, Hardin-Simmons University as I have watched it unfold for more than half a century. I have flattered myself with the presumption that since most of the readers will be my friends, they will have some interest in my own experiences. Hence, occasionally I follow my steps to distant places and deal with events in no way related to my Alma Mater.

Besides giving me an excuse to write about myself, these diversions furnish means for comparisons and contrasts which help to emphasize the Simmons story. The book is neither a history of the institution nor an autobiography, but I suspect that it is the nearest approach to either that I shall ever write.

A work of this sort can never be complete. Many things appropriate and important are sure to be left out. No doubt in the remaining years allotted to me I shall often regret that I did not refer to this or that incident, relate certain appropriate anecdotes, nor mention or express appreciation of the host of friends whom I seemed to neglect. To mention all of those whom I have claimed as friends would call for several books rather than just one.

Many of the people spoken of in this story are dead, but I rarely use the descriptive adjective *late*. I like to think of them as they were when I first knew them: young, vibrant, handsome, or beautiful. Indeed in my mind's eye they are as changeless as the fair lady etched in a piece of tapestry or the figure on a Grecian urn.

Titles are used sparingly and without consistency, in keeping with the mood I was in when I wrote the different chapters. Indeed titles do not add to the stature of men and women. We do not ordinarily write *Mr. Lincoln*, or *Mr. Washington*. In my book Jefferson Davis Sandefer or Prexy is a greater man than

*President Sandefer*, and in nomenclature Oscar Henry Cooper surpasses *Dr. Cooper*.

In most cases women are mentioned by the names they bore when they participated in the events described. Their names after marriage (where they are known) may be found in the index. The pictures, however, are not indexed.

In trying to name the friends who helped in the writing of this book I shall likely be guilty of inexcusable omissions. My college roommates and friends of the years, W. A. Mancill and T. N. Carswell, read a part of the manuscript and made some good suggestions. W. Truett Walton gave a great deal of aid, and also D. M. Wiggins. Virgil Bradley and Kenneth Hill circularized the book and furnished some basis for determining the number to print. Hattie Bell Martin helped to secure the present names of some women who have married. Eva Rudd, Ivan Flynn, Claudine and Ollie Lena Olsen, Mrs. L. Q. Campbell, Mrs. Owen Green, and Perry King supplied pictures.

I am greatly indebted to Wayland Yates for securing pictures and for general publicity. Some pictures have been reproduced from *Broncos*, which makes me indebted to scores of editors and their associates of other years.

Adding to my many obligations to her, Maude Emma King gave the manuscript a critical reading. I hasten to state that if I had followed her advice in all cases, the book might have evidenced better style. Suella Lacy did the jacket picture for the book, and I am greatly obliged to her. Mrs. Richardson and Rupert Richardson gave much time and effort to the book.

Except for a number of new pictures, occasional deletions, and some streamlining, the first seventeen chapters of the second edition are substantially reproductions from the first edition of *Famous Are Thy Halls*. Also, chapter XIX, "Our

Heritage," has been reproduced without change. By means of the chapter that has been added and a few passages where change was expedient I have sought to bring the story of the university down through the summer of 1975.

Since my place in the stream of university affairs has been relatively unimportant during the last eleven years I have been brief in dealing with my own experience.

Again I must acknowledge my indebtedness to at least a few of the numerous friends who have aided in bringing forth this second edition. Hattie Bell Martin, who knows more about H-SU people than any other person supplied the names of numerous students and ex-students. Mrs. W. C. (Dorothy) Maupin repeatedly drew on her official records and her retentive memory to aid in identifying people. Kenneth Hill helped in a dozen ways, as did W. T. Walton. W. O. (Bill) Beazley, Alvin Austin, Lee Hemphill, Clyde Childers and Marshall Walker read the manuscript and made suggestions. Joesph A. Powell supplied information at different times. Mrs. Billie Lacy was helpful. T. W. (Jack) Dean gave aid and encouragement, and Andy Patterson wrote the copy of the ending of the Anthem that appears on the last page.

Sherwyn McNair made arrangements for the publication of this edition, read the proof, and helped generally. Chere (Livingston) McNair also gave substantial aid through reading the proof. Again we are indebted to Suella Lacy for the picture on the jacket.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to President Elwin L. Skiles for making possible the publication of this edition. Finally there must be a word of appreciation of the generous aid that Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. (Bob) Steakley have given for a number of years to the study and publishing of history of Hardin-Simmons University.

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Rupert N. Richardson