

## St. Mary's student life through the Rattler

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### Abstract

The aim of this digital exhibit is to provide context of student life at St. Mary's. With the use of the Rattler archives as my primary source material, I found that what students care about hasn't changed much. How students express themselves and their pastimes have, but many of the same issues such as campus safety and social justice have remained the same across generations.

## Project Description

This project goes through the most of St. Mary's history in 20<sup>th</sup> century. It examines the trends of student life through the eyes of the Rattler and the importance of social history. All of my primary sources were from The Rattler archives. I scoured the published archives in the Portal to Texas History; however, I was limited to what was posted there.

Through each decade I examined about 5-10 newspapers and searched mainly for news about students. Outside news, unless it involved students, wasn't on my radar. After I picked the newspapers, I parsed the information that dealt with students. I searched for any club activities, events sponsored by students, news about any awards students received, opinion articles written by students. Those would provide more detail about what topics were important to them. I also randomly selected newspapers instead of choosing specific dates because I thought that it would decrease bias. If I chose specific dates of certain events like Oyster Bake, then I don't believe it would have been an accurate reflection of everyday student life.

There has been plenty of work on the history of St. Mary's, but there hasn't been any work on the progression of student life at St. Mary's. This project will provide us a glimpse into the lives of university students, what things were important to them, and the similarities and differences to contemporary student life. This project also gives us a small perspective of how outside issues such as World War II affected campus life and how students dealt with them.

The goals of my project are to provide the public with a better understanding of university life and to add to the story of St. Mary's history. A long-term goal was to make this an ongoing project; one that could have changes made to it 10 years later. I could also fill in the gaps of the missing decades when I get the chance. Initially, I wanted to go through every decade

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but due to the pandemic I didn't get a chance to go through the archives of newspapers from the 70s, 80s, and 90s. My public reach is mostly the St. Mary's community. Originally, I would have reached out to friends on campus and invited them to the symposium, used social media, and possibly created some flyers. Now, I've shared the site with my friends on the Rattler and could promote it on social media.

## Historical Context

St. Mary's has a long 168-year history. The school was established by the Brothers of the Society of Mary in 1852; it was originally called the St. Mary's Institute and educated elementary students. The original site of St. Mary's is located in present day downtown San Antonio. Eventually, the student population grew too large and had to expand. In 1893 the foundation and ceremony for St. Louis College was celebrated, and a year later the building was completed. From 1894 to 1922 St. Louis offered high school diplomas. In 1904 college courses were offered toward a Bachelor of Science; however, they didn't offer full four-year programs. In 1880, St. Mary's Institute changed its name St. Mary's College because of they now allowed higher grades to be taught. In 1908 the burial of former director Bro. Charles Francis became the first Marianist brother to be buried at the cemetery on campus, which has become a tradition. In 1921, all college courses moved to St. Louis College, and in 1927, the first class of St. Mary's graduated. In 1963, the campus officially became fully coeducational. Oyster Bake had been celebrated for many years prior as a gathering of students and alumni and in 1974 officially becomes part of Fiesta in 1974. The law school was incorporated in 1934 and in 1936 graduated programs were added. Much of St. Mary's history can be told through the Rattler and especially of its students. The Rattler is one of the oldest organizations on campus. It was first printed in

1919 and have recently celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In 1924, the student newspaper underwent a name change from the St. Louis College Bulletin to the Rattler.

### Best Public History Practices

All my practices dealt with digital history to help me create a better exhibit. I created a digital exhibit chronicling student life St. Mary's. In regard to design of the exhibit, I maintained different options. I had to decide between which website builder, WordPress or Omeka, to use and weighed the pros of cons of each. I chose to use Omeka, so I had to be flexible with my design options. The limitations of Omeka and my lack of proficiency with it led to a simpler but still effective design.

I created a gallery of about five to nine newspapers per decade and text to accompany the gallery. I tried to make the text accessible enough to the public where it doesn't use too much jargon, but is still informative. I tried to keep the text more like story rather than an essay. The article text isn't too wordy either; I want the audience to get an idea of how student life evolved over the decades and used some examples but did so sparingly. An article called "Heritage Meets Social Media: Designing a Virtual Museum Space for Young People," by Ashley Shaw and Don Krug argues that designing a virtual museum space like a social media site could be more engaging to young people. I didn't necessarily agree with their notion, but I did try to create a good balance between text and images.

When designing my exhibit, I had to define my audience. I made sure that the banner flowed in chronological order like a timeline. The home page provides examples of newspaper covers from each decade some short text about what is in the site and a summary of my own findings.

# The Rattler

Vol. 96 Issue 5 10 Mary's University Student Newspaper 11.12.08

**KEEPING CONNECTED**

**ELECTIONS, AVATARS, AND RELATIONSHIPS LINK RATTLETS TOGETHER.**

**Art and Culture**  
Native American Heritage celebrated through art.  
Page 3

**The Road Ahead**  
Barack Obama faces several challenges.  
Page 8

**Prayer for Prevention**  
Students pray for an end to the death penalty.  
Page 13

Rattler Vol 96 Issue 5

Published November 12, 2008

Rattler Vol 94 Issue 8

Published February 21, 2007

**IS IRAQ UNSOLVABLE?**

**Intelligence expert discusses conflict in Iraq**

**Student Life to host Leadership Conference**

**Ceremony dedicates Bell Tower to community**

**Completion of tower creates a new center for campus activities**

**INSIDE**

**U.S. Confirms**

**The Press**

**CONCERN**

**The Rattler**

**Campus starts new emergency notification system**

**SGA candidate unclear about election results**

Rattler Vol 97 Issue 2

Published September 30, 2009

Rattler Vol 93 Issue 8

February 15, 2006

**The Rattler**

**Construction on Bell Tower begins**

**Alito's role in court unclear**

**SGA tours \$50,000 for study abroad**

**China focus of spring's Lin Speakers Series**

**INSIDE**

**50**



Rattler Vol 47 Issue 2  
Published October 11, 1963



Rattler Vol 46 Issue 7  
Published December 14, 1962



Rattler Vol 53 Issue 1  
Published October 2, 1968



Rattler Vol 50 Issue 8  
Published February 25, 1966



Rattler Vol 16 Issue 5  
Published November 22, 1934



Rattler Vol 20 Issue 14  
Published April 6, 1939



Rattler Vol 16 Issue 12  
Published March 21, 1935



Rattler Vol 11 Issue 11  
Published March 14, 1930



Rattler Vol 23 Issue 5  
Published November 14, 1941



Rattler Vol 30 Issue 10  
Published March 4, 1949

Rattler Vol 29 Issue 11  
Published February 20, 1948



Rattler Vol 30 Issue 4  
Published November 30, 1948





Rattler Vol 38 Issue 7  
Published March 9, 1956



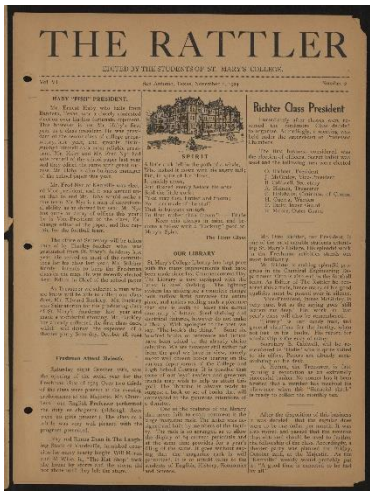
Rattler Vol 42 Issue 10  
Published December 4, 1959



Rattler Vol 33 Issue 11  
Published April 2, 1952



Rattler Vol 35 Issue 4  
Published November 20, 1953



Rattler Vol 6 Issue 2

Published November 1, 1924



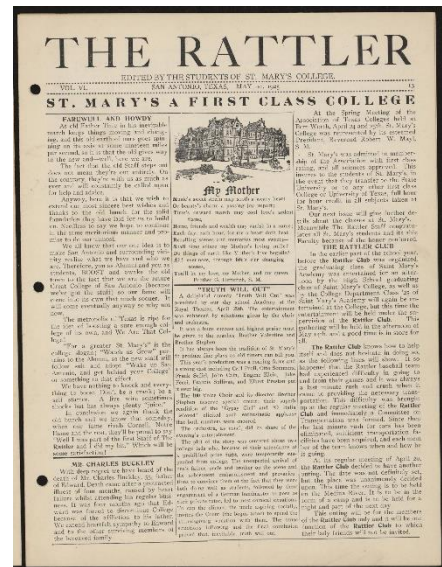
Rattler Vol 10 Issue 11

Published March 28, 1929



Rattler Vol 8 Issue 13

Published April 26, 1927



Rattler Vol 6 Issue 13

Published May 1, 1925

## Bibliography

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2020, <https://lib.stmarytx.edu/c.php?g=886467&p=6371721>

“History in a Timeline” St. Mary’s University, accessed May 11, 2020,

<https://www.stmarytx.edu/about/history-in-a-timeline/>

Handbook of Texas Online, Robert D. Wood, S.M., "St. Mary's University, San Antonio,"

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