

Celebrating Our History

The mission of Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service to improve the lives of Texans by addressing local needs has been ongoing in Hidalgo County for nearly 100 years. Yes, our agency is about to celebrate 100 years of providing educational programs for our community and leadership opportunities for our youth and volunteer groups. I would appreciate your assistance with this celebration.

Many of you have photos of farm field days, 4-H events, or time spent working on an educational program committee. Perhaps you have a photo of your grandparent participating in the 4-H Fashion Show. Our office is interested in collecting and copying these photos to assist us with this celebration. We are especially interested in material prior to 1990.

The land grant university system, unique to the United States, was established in 1862 with the passage of the Morrill Land-Grant College Act. By 1871, the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (later known as Texas A & M University) was organized and opened for students in 1876.

Federal involvement of agricultural research was established in 1887 allowing for support to solve local and critical problems confronting agriculture. After all, feeding a rapidly growing nation has never been without challenges. In 1903, Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, a special agent (educator) with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, established community demonstration plots on a farm near Terrell, Texas. This work was a great success and in 1904, Dr. Knapp appointed 33 special agents to help Texas communities solve their special agricultural needs.

The School of Agriculture at A & M supported these efforts with field agents (educators) and the Hidalgo County office opened in January 1914, a year before the Texas legislature made the Texas Agricultural Extension Service a reality. This agency would bring scientific information from the University and Experiment Stations to every farm and community. County agents, home demonstration agents, specialists, and trained volunteers would provide outreach to every community in Texas.

We would appreciate your help with our celebration by providing photos or your valuable time. Contact our office to donate items and/or information or to help with our celebration. Our Hidalgo County office is in Edinburg and our phone number is (956) 383-1026.