FROM LEAD & ZINC TO
Blue & Gold
THE FOUNDING OF
Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College
VOLUME I: 1919-1943
This history is dedicated to all the Golden Norsemen Past, Present and Future.
As NEO approaches its centennial, it is with great pride that we recall almost 100 years of excellence in education.

When NEO A&M College first opened its doors in 1919 as the Miami School of Mines, Oklahoma had been a state for only 12 years. At that time, US Route 66 had yet to pave the way for progress across the nation, but in the northeast corner of the state a determined group of visionaries understood that the roots of tomorrow were growing in the rich earth of Oklahoma, and the hard-working spirits of the young men and women whose vision for greatness inspire us still today.

At NEO we recall that vision as part of our Norse Tradition. Our collective story begins in the mining fields of Oklahoma, but it extends to the boardrooms of industry, through the corridors of political office, into athletic halls of fame, and across the globe, where our graduates are recognized for outstanding achievements in art, music, literature, science, and athletics. Alumni everywhere are proud heirs to a legacy forged, tempered and refined into blue and gold greatness.

The priceless Blue & Gold story we share is a legacy that enriches not only our students, but everyone who shares the common bonds of the Golden Norsemen. For almost 100 years we have lived this inspiring legacy, and it is with great pride that I begin to share our story with you. It is my wish that each of us find our place in NEO’s history.

Jeffrey L. Hale
President, NEO A&M College
On March 17, 1919, the Miami School of Mines was created by the passing of Senate Bill 255 in the Oklahoma Legislature. The creation of the college was the brainchild of State Representative James S. Mabon who understood there would be a need for trained workers during the mining boom years to come.
Mabon for Legislation

The News-Herald takes pleasure in presenting a brief sketch of Hon. J. S. Mabon, republican candidate for representative to the next legislature from Ottawa county. Mr. Mabon has had legislative experience and has made good. He served in the lower house with distinction and with unusual efficiency for his people.

He was the author of the bill authorizing towns to grant municipals to the building of bridges, a measure of scope but local in application.

$5,000 for the School Extension work in the city, providing oppo

miners to get special training. He secured the examina
and zinc miners, in the mines requiring mine w

James S. Mabon

Republican Candidate for Senator

Six Years' Experience

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICES OF JAMES S. MABON

WHO AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DURING 1913-1917

WAS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS COLLEGE KNOWN THEN AS THE MIAMI SCHOOL OF MINES.
To gain support for the establishment of the school, citizens greeted visiting lawmakers with a parade. Children waved flags and people lined the streets as state officials were driven to inspect the mines.

In a news report in the Miami Record-Herald dated Feb 28, 1919, Senator Frank Carpenter spoke of the enormous contribution to the wealth of the state coming out of Miami, while other lawmakers expressed amazement at what they had learned during a visit to the mining field.

The lawmakers proclaimed their support with votes and a state appropriation of $125,000.
During these first years, the college was served by a series of Presidents, all of whom shared a desire to see the college thrive in the green country of northeast Oklahoma. Under their administrations, the college grew into a cornerstone of the community, an important part of Oklahoma’s higher education system and a valuable partner of both industry and economy.

Initially, the Miami School of Mines was housed on the fifth floor of the Miami Exchange Building, later called the Robinson Building, on Main Street in Miami. The very first student to enroll in the Miami School of Mines was Gadis Zilar, who joined 25 other students when class first convened September 13, 1919.
It was clear right from the start that the school Senator Mabon started would grow beyond the training of miners and engineers. Almost immediately students began to organize athletic teams, social clubs, academic societies, and civic organizations.

There was a groundswell of student and community support for all the expressions of the college experience.
After a generous donation from the citizens of Miami of more than 40 acres of land, fields on the edge of town were cleared and a new Administration Building, later re-named Shipley Hall, was constructed. Classes moved to the current campus for the first time in February of 1921, when 67 students were enrolled for the spring semester.
Mining and geological engineering courses were among the first offered. But English, history, mathematics, botany, home economics, Spanish, French, Latin, government, chemistry, sociology and design classes were also available.

Most faculty members taught at least two or three subjects in addition to other duties.
The Administration Building housed offices, classrooms, and a library. Students eager to learn convened study hall on the floor outside the classrooms.

It was clear that something very special had taken root when the college was created.
The college’s first graduating class included three students: Zella Donohue of Miami, OK; Willet Warne of Picher, OK; and Loren Van DeGriff, also of Picher, OK. (Photo also includes students completing certification programs.)
Miami School of Mines
Miami, Oklahoma

This Certifies That Zella Donohue being of good moral character and having completed the Junior College Course as prescribed by the Board of Regents is hereby awarded this

Diploma

In Testimony Whereof, witness the signatures hereunto affixed.

Given at Miami, Oklahoma, this 30th day of May, 1922.

[Signatures]

Commencement took place on May 29th, 1922, at the Miami Christian Church and included a musical tribute by the Girls Chorus.
School of Mines

Commencement Program
Monday, May 29, 8:00 p.m.

Selections by Mr. Cravens' Orchestra
Organ Prelude by Kinder—Mrs. L. B. Pursley
Invocation—Rev. A. P. Cameron
Chorus, "A Maying."—School of Mines Girls Chorus
Violin Solo, "Le Deluge"—Mrs. Grimes, accompanied by Mrs. Pursley at the organ and Miss Helen Rice at the piano.
Commencement Address—Dean J. H. Felgar, College of Engineering, University of Okla.
Presentation of Class to Board of Regents—President W. O. Cralle
Presentation of Diplomas—Mr. R. J. Tuthill, secretary of the Board of Regents
Vocal Solo "To A Hilltop"—Mrs. R. F. Cannon.
Benediction

Class of Nineteen Hundred Twenty Two
Miami School of Mines
Commencement Exercises
on Monday evening, May the twenty-ninth
at half after eight o'clock

Three Graduates
in 1922 Class of School of Mines

Program of Exercises at New State Institution Now Practically Complete

The first graduation exercises for held Mon.
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local Lions
club and will attend the banquet giv
in the Methodist church in their

Oil Painting by Aretha Soule depicting the
first class of the Miami School of Mines
The outpouring of enthusiasm for college life, both academic and social, was unmistakable. In 1924, the college expanded its mission and the school's name was formally changed to Northeastern Oklahoma Junior College by the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural & Mechanical Colleges.
Each semester social mixers, parties and dances gave students the opportunity to get to know one another and make friends.

If it was surprising that a young lady was among the first graduates of the mining school, she was certainly not the last. Almost from the beginning, young women enrolled in courses and participated wholeheartedly in campus life.
Not to be outdone, the gentlemen started athletic teams, fraternities, and student social organizations to “perpetuate and maintain enthusiasm within the school and to assist and direct the lower classmen to their proper station.”
The first school annual was published in 1926 and named the “Jay-Seer”, a play on the initials for Junior College. Faculty, students, classes, sports, social functions and campus activities were all featured.
FOREWORD

Bearing in mind that a college annual is to throw light upon the activities and spirit of the institution from which it emanates, it was definitely decided at the first of the second semester this year, that this school should and would have an annual.

To derive a name for this publication the abbreviation of our junior college which is J.C., was modified to Jay-Seer. Not only was this found to vary the abbreviation but it created a new species of birds, now known as the Jay-Seer, around which the theme of this book is woven.

This is not intended as an apology but it is hoped that you will not be too harsh in your judgment of this first generation of its species. We also sincerely hope that this initial attempt will result in a bigger and better annual each succeeding year.

The mascot, a Jay-Seer Bird, and the school annual named its honor.
One Sweet Girl
("Smutty" recipes for us)

She left me--and agony reigns in my breast,
My heart is too heavy to laugh or to jest.
How I long to see her face again,
I found it last night when I cut up the pie.

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Phi Theta Kappa
established the first
Oklahoma chapter of the
honor society in 1926 at NEO
Junior College. There were
five charter members and 13
elected members.

There was also a Greek
system for a short while
at NEOJC, including Eta
Upsilon Gamma and Sigma
Iota Chi sororities and the Eta
Iota Tau and Phi Sigma Nu
fraternities.

Phi Theta Kappa

To all to whom these presents shall come
Greeting:

Be it known that a charter for the establishment of a chapter of
the Society of Phi Theta Kappa at Miami, Okla., to be
known as Mu Chapter, is hereby granted to the
following persons as charter members thereof, conveying to them
and to their duly elected associates and successors all the rights
and privileges appertaining to all duly constituted Phi Theta Kappa
societies.

To
Conrad C. Caldwell
Georgia A. Long
Helen Wilson
Sally E. Price
Troy O. Morgan
Charter Members

In Testimony Whereof, the signatures of the President and
Secretary of the Grand Council and the seal of said Society are
hereunto affixed. Done this 11th day of December 1926,
at Columbia, Mo.

Opal Montgomery
President

Opal Milligan
Secretary
School Reception.
The Miami School of Mines offered a unique and interesting St. Patrick's Day reception and entertainment for the benefit of its many friends Friday afternoon. The school building had been very effectively decorated appropriately to the occasion. Mrs. W. O. Cralle and Mrs. Nora Garth were the gracious hostesses to receive arriving guests. A thorough inspection of the different rooms and departments of the school occupied the first part of the afternoon. At 3.35 o'clock a tea was given.

Treasure Hunt
New members of Seven-Eleven entertained Friday night, November 14, with a treasure hunt. The group assembled at the home of Miss Alma Lee London and followed 16 clues which led them over a wide area of territory and back again to the starting point where the treasure was hidden. Neva Lee Neff and Bob Pinnell won. A delicious supper was served the guests.
RULES FOR FRESHMAN WEEK
OCTOBER 13-17

1. Freshman boys must part their hair in the middle and wear a bow tie all freshman week. Until 4 p.m.

2. Freshman girls will not be allowed to wear any make-up or ribbons, or combs in their hair during freshman week. Until 4 p.m.

3. All freshman boys are required to enter & exit the administration building at all times during freshman week through the front only through the front door.

4. All freshman girls are required to enter & exit the administration building at all times during freshman week through the back only through the back door.

5. All freshmen are required to wear freshman green caps and while on or off the college campus, with the exception of Sophomores.

6. All freshmen are required to get off the sidewalk & but remain standing by the side of the walk while the sophomore &

7. Freshmen are not permitted to use the front walk from the gate to the administration building at any time.

8. Freshmen are required to carry the books of a sophomore, or other reasonable or similar task when asked to do so by a sophomore.

9. Freshmen are required to care for the dishes of sophomores at the dining hall after each meal when requested to do so by a sophomore.

10. Whenever a sophomore passes a freshman or is in the presence of a freshman and says "Howdy," the freshman must kneel immediately reach up and touch the button on his freshman cap.

11. All freshmen are required to say "Howdy", preferably, they meet on the campus every time they meet them.

12. All freshmen must sing the alma mater when requested by a sophomore.

13. Mr. Elliott must wear a bow tie (green if possible) to all classes during freshman week.

14. Miss Arrington must wear a green cap during freshman week.

15. Both sponsors must address all sophomores as Sir and class and on the campus.

16. Sophomores must wear sophomore caps before they can freshmen to do any of the above.

EACH AND EVERY VIOLATION OF ANY OF THE ABOVE RULES WILL SUBJECT THE GUILTY FRESHMAN TO THE WELL KNOWN PENALTIES

FIRST ANNUAL RAT DAY
March 17, 1924

Lucille Hubbard, Queen

RESOLVED: "All men shall wear no other cap or hat but the regulation Freshman Cap at all times while in the city of Miami, Oklahoma, from the opening of school to Thanksgiving day, except on Sundays and while filling dates after six p.m."
In 1930, a gymnasium was built, quickly followed by girls and boys dormitories in 1935. Senator A.L. Commons led the charge requesting $75,000 from the federal government through the PWA for construction.
In 1935, the college named the new dormitories Commons Hall and Ka-Ne-You-Ah Hall, (the latter in honor of the senator’s mother-in-law, using her traditional Cherokee name) in appreciation of his efforts on behalf of the school.

The campus had now grown to encompass 3 buildings, more than 100 students and 20 faculty.
With Europe embroiled in war, another school was established in Miami, OK. The British Flying Training School was formed so British servicemen could participate in aeronautical training exercises far from enemy action and foul weather. The blue skies of Miami, Oklahoma became home to the #3 B.F.T.S., where more than 2000 Royal Air Force cadets earned their wings.
Peter McCallum, from Aldershot, Hampshire in Britain, was one of the young men who trained at the #3. In letters home to his mother, Peter wrote about his training, his appreciation for American food, the "American rugby games" he and his mates watched at the local college, and the always-friendly people of Miami, OK.
Mr. Peter McCallum
No.3 B.F.T.S.
Spartan School
Miami, Oklahoma

27th September, 1941.

Dear Mum and all,

At last I have heard from you – three letters have been forwarded from Gitmo. I was very pleased to hear from you at last and very glad to know that you are all fit and well. Thank you Linds and dad for your letters – that you are all fit and well! I expect you forgot to put the name of dad was missing when I opened the letter – I expect you forgot to put it in.

I had several letters from Kay at the same time – all forwarded from Gitmo. Kay says that she had a very good time with you all.

I am still feeling fine and having a good time. There is plenty of hard work to do and sleeping is my principle pastime after work is over. The hard work to do and sleeping is my principle pastime after work is over. The hard work to do and sleeping is my principle pastime after work is over. The hard work to do and sleeping is my principle pastime after work is over.

I hope to be home by the end of the year. I am looking forward to being home and seeing you all.

Eight of our fellows have been washed out now – all because they couldn’t catch on to flying. I am very thankful I wasn’t one of them. I have already got over 100 hours flying time in and more time is flying along. I have already got over 100 hours flying time in and more time is flying along. I have already got over 100 hours flying time in and more time is flying along. I have already got over 100 hours flying time in and more time is flying along.

Up to now three of our boys have come out – the letter are just funneling. Up to now three of our boys have come out – the letter are just funneling.

My American friends whom I told you about are doing well and we are all at school. They asked me to find two more fellows to fill up the car when we go out and so I took two of my pals with me.

They take us all over the place and treat us to everything. I am getting on fine with my riding and I am going to start jumping tomorrow.

Another course arrived here on Wednesday – the fourth and last for this school. This makes nearly two hundred fellows here now.

I am enclosing one or two snaps – the writing on the back will explain them.

The American rugby football season opened on Thursday and we were invited to the opening game down here between the local college team and another team from Kansas. The game isn’t a bit like our rugby and we found it very amusing to the disgust of the Americans.

We shall be getting a weeks leave at the end of Primary in five weeks time. My two pals and myself are saving up to fly (by air line) for a week out here and also much cheaper.

Well, off to lunch now and an energy for now and I hope I get some more letters soon. Remember me to everyone,

Love to all,
Peter.

Although postal service was difficult, Peter’s letters were steady until October of 1941, when they abruptly stopped.

According to his sister, Peter had fallen in love with an American girl who lived on a large farm near Miami, OK, and become engaged to her prior to the fatal crash that ended his young life. He is buried today in the GAR Cemetery, Miami, OK, with 14 of his fellow servicemen who died training to serve their country, so very far from home.
By the time the college had reached its 20th anniversary in 1939, it was already a cornerstone of the community. In just two decades NEO had progressed from a small school of mining to an important part of Oklahoma's higher education system.
By the authority of the Board of Regents for the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges, the college once again expanded its mission, and in 1943 the name of the college was changed to Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College.
As war raged in Europe, a new day dawned at NEO as Bruce G. Carter accepted the position of the college’s 10th President, in March of 1943. Dr. Carter had big plans for both campus and curriculum, including the acquisition of a 200-acre college farm for a new academic program in agriculture.
Over the next 25 years the college would grow into an educational institution the mining school students might not have recognized but would have been proud to call home. Those students mission to find their future and fortunes in the mines of Northeast Oklahoma was about to strike blue and gold.