

Parade History: Frosh Covered Downtown Area

By RICHARD DARILEK

Friday night, October 27, will add a new chapter to an established but progressive Rice tradition. The chapter will deal with an indomitable, everlasting school classic—the annual Slime Parade.

If the freshmen guidance directors have done their jobs well, each of their wards should have a rough—very rough—idea of what transpires in the way of fun and games that eventful evening.

MAYBE THE frosh are even a bit apprehensive? To provide the method in this madness and to

convince the modern freshman that his lot is considerably better than that of his predecessor, it would seem appropriate to review the history and origin of this time-honored custom.

The earliest written records relating to the first years of the slime parade is a somewhat mystic and foreboding article which appears in a 1925 edition of *The Thresher*.

The author, shrouding his work in an air of intrigue, described the prime function of the slime parade as “wholesale butchery for the morbidly curious,” the common weapons of the slaughter being leather belts, wooden paddles and the like.

A **LATER** chronicler describes the result as “a natural flush on the body of the victim” brought on in part by paint, in part by “vigorously applied strokes.”

In those days, the parade generally formed in downtown Houston, somewhere in the vicinity of the old Humble building, and snake-danced from the point of origin down Main Street and to the Rice Hotel where a monstrous pep rally of the whole student body was held.

There, Tony Martino, Rice gardener, delivered his famous foot-

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ball prophecies. An interested observer described the freshmen as being "daubed with red paint and decorated with corsets, pillows, lingerie and pajamas."

FOLLOWING the rally, the slimes were generally paraded through the larger shops and stores and across movie house stages during the feature, holding impromptu pep rallies all along the way.

Due to the severities of the hazing processes and a subsequent crackdown by the administration in the late '20's and '30's, the

slime parade was threatened with destruction but nevertheless, survived. In 1941 the war called a halt to all such activities.

Revived in the post-war period, the slime parade regained its former happy status until 1956. Due to the most unfortunate death of two Rice sophomores on the Campanile tower and the resulting crackdown on the initiation program, the parade looked doomed.

NOT TO BE outdone, however, the annual shamle remained in existence, though altered in scope. That is why freshmen no longer march downtown but now proceed to the Shamrock Hilton from the Rice campus.