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Greensboro's John Wray and A&T State University go way back. In fact, to say that he was "born on the campus," is an understatement. He had been trying to tell me for quite some time that he knew a lot about A&T.

Armed with a decaying large brown envelope, crammed with mementoes, Wray walked into this reporter's office the other day and spent a delightful 50 minutes re-living some of the university's early days.

Wray, who lived with his family at 150 N. Dudley Street, just a few yards from where the entrance gate to the university used to be, especially remembered the A&T bull.

"Some boys and I were playing in the school's barn, when the bull acted like he would break loose," said Wray. "We were afraid and we stayed in the barn until the bull went to sleep." The bull and other farm animals were very prominent on the main part of the A&T campus. Wray talked about other pleasant memories.

"I went to school in President Dudley's house." His wife, who had been trained in England, operated a private school in their house. "She taught us English culture," he said. He recalled that the campus at that time consisted of only four buildings - North and South two men's dormitories, the mechanical building and Dudley Building. The latter building housed the cafeteria in the basement, the auditorium on the second floor, and classrooms. It was destroyed by fire in the late 1920's. And, oh yes, according

to Wray, "a branch (creek) ran through the campus, behind where the Harrison Auditorium is located now," said Wray. When he grew older, Wray was somewhat of a fixture around A&T as he decorated the gym for the sorority and fraternity dances on the campus, and the floats for the homecoming parades.

Wray who celebrated his 81st birthday last week, had even earlier ties to A&T. His father, the late Professor John D. Wray had graduated from the university in 1910, the year John Jr. was born. His maternal grandfather, the Rev. Richard Harris, graduated from Shaw University in 1891, the same year A&T was chartered.

The elder Wray at one time managed the A&T farm when it was located where P. Lorillard is now situated. While John Jr. was a baby, the father went to work for the late Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute. He became a successful researcher on hybrid corn, then worked in Kentucky before returning to Greensboro to serve as supervisor of the state's black farm agents. "He was the first black to serve in that position," said John Jr. The elder Wray recruited thousands of young black boys and girls to Agricultural Extension Clubs. He also did admirable work with the adult farmers of the state.

According to an article in the defunct Rural Messenger under Wray's guidance during World War I, the number of black youngsters in the agricultural clubs increased from 1,400 to 14,000. They raised a lot of fruits and vegetables for the war effort. Some years later, Professor Wray left Greensboro to accept a position at Florida A&M University. While there, he became ill and returned to Greensboro where he died in 1937 at the age of 52.

John Wray, Jr. graduated from Greensboro's Washington Street School in 1928. He attended A&T at various times, beginning in 1941 and majoring in art and architecture.

He also operated several night clubs in the city, including the defunct Artists Guild on Lindsay Street. He also managed for awhile the Carlotta Supper Club on East Market Street and was employed by another club on McConnell Road. For a time, he worked for an interior decorator and as he said, "I got a chance to travel all over the Eastern part of the United States." In more recent years, Wray managed a club off Huffine Mill Road for the Afro Guild Inc. and known as the Forest Lake Country Club. He is now retired. Wray said he is extremely excited about the A&T Centennial currently being celebrated.

"A&T should be given a lot of emphasis," he said, "because it's important for black people to see how far we have come.

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