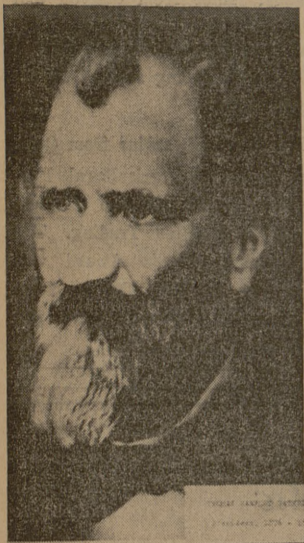
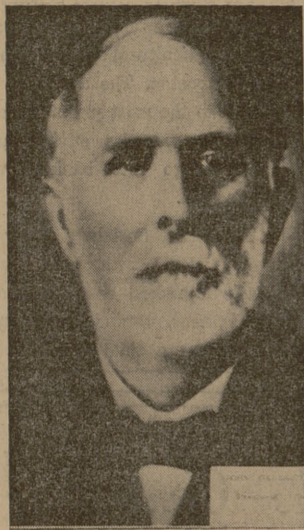


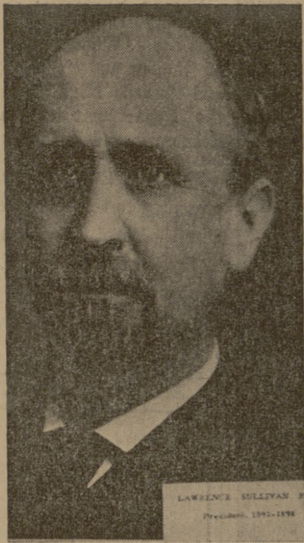
# A&M's First 13 Presidents From 1876 to 1959



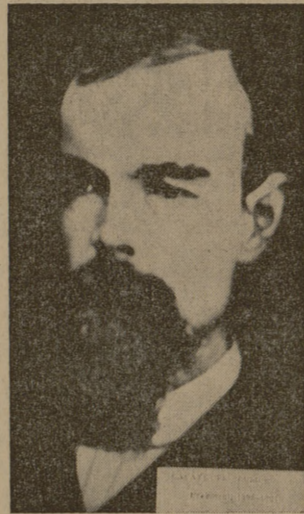
Thomas S. Gathright



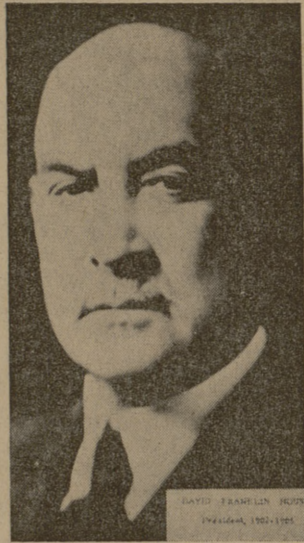
John G. James



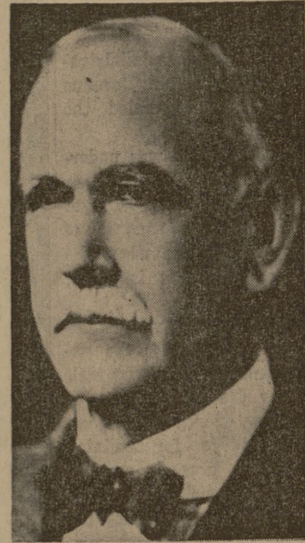
Lawrence S. Ross



L. L. Foster



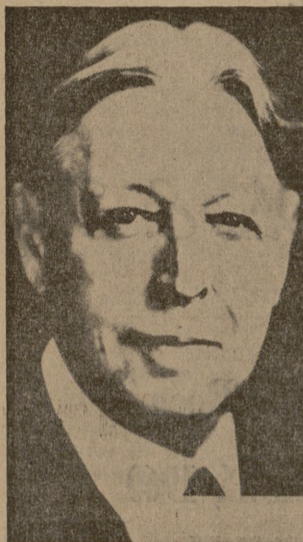
David F. Houston



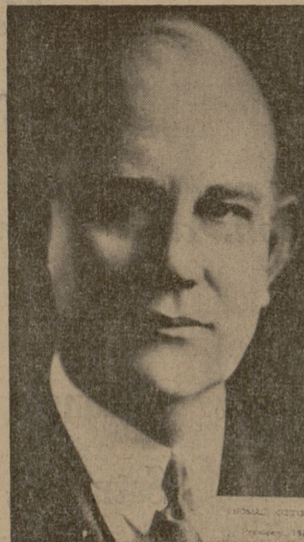
Henry H. Harrington



Robert T. Milner



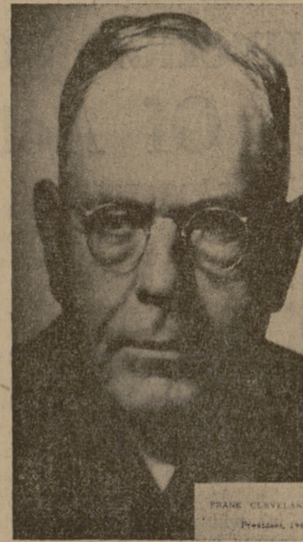
William B. Bizzell



Thomas O. Walton



Gibb Gilchrist



Frank C. Bolton



M. T. Harrington



David H. Morgan

Since A&M was founded in 1876, the college has had 24 administrations, while only 14 men have officially been named as president of the college, two of which have served two terms in the office. Through the stories of these men, one can see the history of A&M and its development from a small school situated on a bleak, barren section of land to the great educational center it is today.

## T. S. Gathright 1876-79

Thomas Gathright, the first administrator of A&M, came to serve in his appointed position in 1876 upon the recommendation of Jefferson Davis, who had been offered the position but declined it. At the time Gathright took charge of the college, the campus was a rather bleak section of prairie with no town near it. But aside from accommodation problems existing, Gathright had more widespread problems within his faculty and staff.

A man of rugged virtues, stern in discipline, exacting in standards, Gathright was sometimes lacking in tact. He held a hearty dislike for the military features of the land-grant college system, although he and his commandant laid the foundation for the renowned Aggie esprit de corps. In 1879, faculty-presidential relations were frayed, due to differences in philosophy of education, lack of equipment, increasing enrollment and the fact that the campus itself was nothing more than a wild, bleak piece of prairie land.

Gathright also found opposition in the citizens of the state, who were possibly expecting too much in too short a time, in the way of agricultural development. The staff of the college was not adequately prepared to carry on a curriculum in agriculture, and men of training in philosophy and theology were placed in the Department of Agriculture. An academic housecleaning was ordered by the board in 1879 and it was decided by the inspecting committee that it would be practically impossible to eliminate wholly the friction existing between the various members of the faculty, thus the solution lay in dismissing the entire faculty and staff, from the president down and to start over.

## J. G. James 1879-83

Col. John Garland James, superintendent of Texas Military Institute, Austin, Texas, was elected to succeed President Gathright in 1879.

His administration was marked by a reorganization of curricula to comply with the original aims of the college. He instituted new courses, especially in agriculture and the mechanical arts, that were better designed to give technical instruction. He and his faculty immediately set about utilizing the college farm for use in agriculture experimentation, and in his first report to the board, James emphasized the necessity of reorganizing the courses of study and placing the college curricula under a practical system.

James was not only an educator, scholar and teacher; he was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, serving in the Civil War, and instructing in several military schools in the South before taking charge of Texas Military Institute. He was also a business man, aiding in the establishment of new banks and businesses not limited simply to Texas. He was appointed by the Secretary of Navy to be a member of the board of visitors of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, being the first in Texas on that board.

James introduced effective military training at A&M, similar to that he had received at Virginia Military Institute. But even with the improvements, the year 1883 began another complete faculty reorganization, and the board called upon James R. Cole to assume the position of acting president.

## L. S. Ross 1891-98

Between 1883 and 1891, the office of "faculty chairman" was held by various men, including H. H. Dinwiddie and L. L. McInnis. Then, in June 1890, Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross was asked to occupy the president's seat at A&M. Ross, a distinguished Confederate soldier, Indian fighter, statesman and ruler of men, came to head the struggling college, with the confidence and support

of the citizens of Texas. Parents often sent their sons to Sul Ross, not to college, entrusting them in his care at A&M.

During Ross' term as president, numerous buildings were erected on the campus and the landscaping was improved. This was the beginning of a new era and time of growth for A&M. At the time when "Sully" became president, it was quite apparent that the institution needed a head who possessed the administrative qualifications, the broad experience, the strong political connections and strong character of Lawrence Sullivan Ross.

As the college grew, so did the acceptance of Ross and the people of Texas grow, and the college assumed its height of popular esteem and prestige up to that time. Inventoried for the first time in its history, the property of the college system in 1893 had reached the value of \$389,502.64.

## L. L. Foster 1898-01

In 1898, Lafayette L. Foster became president of the college, a man precise in his business habits and dogged in his devotion to duty. Foster paid particular attention to the physical needs of the college, and branch experimental stations were set up. In truth, he was a worthy successor of Gov. Ross in the power over the youth that came under his direction, for he had not only the unwavering loyalty of his students while he was their president, but also the deep respect of his fellow workers and associates.

Foster died an untimely death of pneumonia, and many resolutions were passed which hold adequate proof of the high regard in which he was held. His appreciation went far beyond the academic circles, for the local and state newspapers carried both editorials and news articles on his career and the great loss to the state that was brought about by his death.

Foster was an exponent for the practical education of the men attending A&M College in 1900. In addition to his own words of practical wisdom on education which became widespread during his

term of office, Foster was responsible for forming a new college catalogue, filled with illustrations of campus life and facilities, and soundly organized, through his efforts, industrial education took a step forward within the educational system of A&M.

## D. F. Houston 1902-05

David F. Houston served as president of the college from 1902-1905, coming to assume the position from a professorship at the University of Texas, where he taught in the Department of Political Science.

Houston was not a native Texan, coming from South Carolina, and being a graduate of Harvard. The educational outlook and academic policy of Houston were influenced considerably by his own scholarly training and studious habits. Immediately upon his assuming control of the college, many changes were made in the faculty, requirements for admission and in the courses of study.

To fill vacancies in this new teaching staff, the new administrator selected the strongest and most capable men available in their fields of technical training. He made it very plain to his co-workers and associates that the courses of studies to be followed at A&M should be comparable with those in like institutions and that their students should not be embarrassed when they proposed to do graduate work in other colleges or to transfer to other schools.

Some considered the educator stern and not-understanding in the problems of his students, but seldom were such opinions justified. Houston was president during a time when A&M was gaining in popularity because of the success of the graduates who had gone out into the fields of business and industry.

He strengthened the frame of men coming out of A&M by making the entrance requirements and degree requirements somewhat stiff, and in doing this, he aided very much in the development of a fast-growing industrial and technical school. In 1905, he resigned to become president of the University of Texas.

## H. H. Harrington 1905-08

Following Houston was H. H. Harrington, whose administration from 1905-1908 was noted for rapid and sound expansion of the college. The president had scientific training and a comprehensive concept of the workings of a college, and he instilled his knowledge to produce a better A&M. But disension arose between the student body, the faculty, and the president, because of the dismissal of several of the employees of the college. The student body prepared and signed a petition to have the executive dismissed. After the proposal was ignored by the board, a strike not to attend class was begun by the students, and Harrington resigned.

## R. T. Milner 1908-13

In 1908, Robert T. Milner, director ex-officio as Commissioner of Agriculture, distinguished citizen, man of affairs, long a newspaper publisher, assumed the presidency of the college after Harrington. Milner was familiar with the agricultural and industrial needs and conditions of the state and he set about to train men to fill positions to alleviate these needs. Otherwise eminently outstanding from the point of view of attendance and expanded activities, the Milner administration was marred by another student strike. In 1913, twenty-seven cadets were dismissed for hazing. The student body, thereupon, very promptly signed another petition to remove the president. Milner resigned, and Charles Puryear was made acting president in 1913.

## W. B. Bizzell 1914-25

William Bennett Bizzell was elected president in August, 1914, and made great advances in expanding the departments of the school. Under the authority of the president's office, he created the School of Veterinary Medicine, The Graduate School and the School of Arts and Sciences.

Bizzell had formerly served as president of the College of Industrial Arts, later to be known as TWU, and through the experience

he received in this position, he was able to make the college more efficient.

He inaugurated reform of the college's accounting system and caused obligations to be settled promptly. During his administration, enrollment saw an increase from 888 students in 1913 to 2,363 in 1924. During World War I, with teaching facilities under the direction of the secretaries of war and navy, the college soon increased its hours of military science offered to cadets, and hastened the graduation of seniors in order that they might enter training camps as soon as possible.

## T. O. Walton 1925-43

Following Bizzell in 1925 was Thomas Otto Walton, a country-bred, farm-trained and highly informed individual on wise farm practice and in the science of agriculture. Walton was one of the first to realize the limitations of the college executive, and consequently, he placed more authority in the deans, directors and fiscal officers of the college.

At no other time before his administration had a more cordial state of mind existed between the faculty and student body. Also, settlement of the long standing controversy with the University of Texas over the "branch" problem was completed. Under his administration, numerous dormitories were built and other development within the college increased its facilities many times.

## Gibb Gilchrist 1944-48

Gibb Gilchrist followed Walton as president in 1943 and emphasis during his administration was placed on scholastic achievement and faculty improvement. The program designed for veterans was outstanding. Perhaps the biggest crisis in the history of the college began and ended during this period: the Revolution of 1947.

The college before this unpleasant incident had reached its zenith as to size, facilities, and enrollment. The unsavory situation included such inglorious highlights as cadet trials, public denunciations, mass meetings and state investigations. Newspapers through-

out the state carried a running account of the "College Station Trouble" back to the folks at home. A question of hazing soon became a question of the status of the Corps of Cadets.

## F. C. Bolton 1948-50

Frank C. Bolton became the 11th president of the college in 1948, and was one of the most popular ever to be inaugurated. His two-year term included such improvements physically as the construction of the Memorial Student Center, as well as strides in improving the school academically.

Besides being one of the smoothest and most efficient administrators of the college, Bolton was noted in many different departments, having served A&M for over 40 years before taking the presidency.

## M. T. Harrington 1950-53 1957-59

In 1950, M. T. Harrington was inaugurated as president of A&M. Born at Plano, Tex., in 1901, Harrington graduated from the Plano Public Schools, then entered A&M, graduating with a degree in chemistry in 1922. Five years later he completed a M.S. degree in chemistry at A&M. In the interval between these degrees he found employment as a chemist with the Texas Co., then with the Lone Star Gas Co. He began teaching, and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the universities of Michigan and Southern California and Iowa State College, where he received his Ph.D. degree in 1941.

Promotions became a habit with Harrington, entering A&M as a student, then working as an instructor, progressing to assistant professor, associate professor, professor, assistant to dean of college at Annex, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Acting Dean of the College and finally president of the college.

During Harrington's administration, the organization of the college was improved, with the head of each part of the System being asked to make a careful study of the internal organization of his unit, of the relation of his

organization with the System of offices, and of problems which had arisen in relations between his and other parts of the system. The building program which had been continuing at an even pace up until Harrington's administration was speeded up, and many new and modern buildings were added to the college.

As advancements were being made on the physical plant, so were they springing up in the laboratories, as new techniques of better methods of agriculture were being discovered every day, especially in the field of cotton growing during 1952.

## D. H. Morgan 1953-56

On September 1, 1953, David H. Morgan was inaugurated as 13th president of the college and Harrington was promoted to Chancellor of the college. Morgan came to A&M in 1952 from Colorado A&M, where he was dean of the college and dean of the Graduate School. Morgan received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California in 1933, majoring in math, and in 1938, he received his Ph.D. from the same university in education administration. He was at Colorado A&M for six and one-half years before coming to A&M, before in which he rose from head of the Department of Education and Psychology to the deanships he held after coming to A&M.

During Morgan's administration numerous advancements were made within the college, including the re-organization of the Corps of Cadets, organization of Student Personnel Services, Student Health Services Program and a Council of Military College Presidents to present the problems of these schools to the Department of National Defense. He was also instrumental in strengthening the curricula and raising scholastic standards, as well as raising the level of faculty salaries. More parking lots were created and general campus beautification took place.

In 1956, Morgan resigned as president of the college, and M. T. Harrington was once again returned to that position, which he has held up until the naming of James Earl Rudder as president.

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