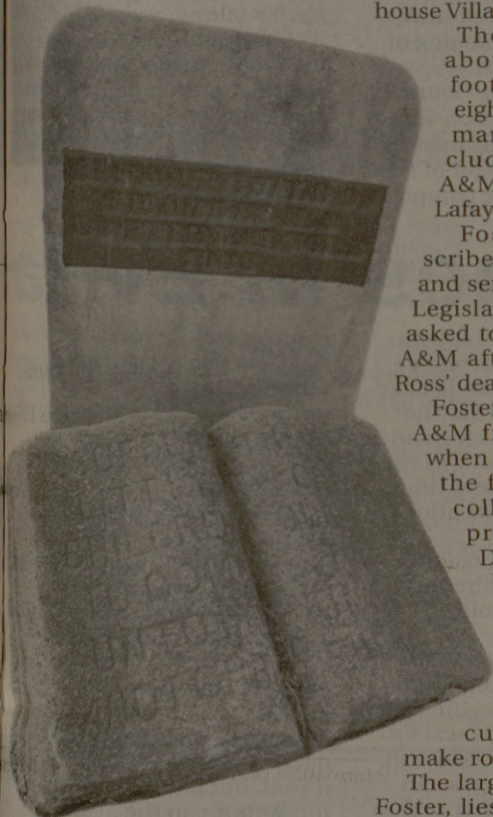


# Graveyard rests in peace

*After years of neglect, Texas A&M's historic cemetery still stands as a monument to the school's respect for tradition. As the eternal resting place for one of A&M's first presidents, the cemetery has had its share of unofficial caretakers who struggle to preserve its honor.*

By MELISSA PRICE  
 THE BATTALION

Littered with empty beer cans and crumpled-up Cheetos bags, it looks like the aftermath of a



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

typical party. But looks can be deceiving.

Hidden behind overgrown trees and bushes, the Texas A&M cemetery lies in peaceful silence on the corner of Marion Pugh and Luther streets, near Treehouse Village Apartments.

The cemetery, which is about half the size of a football field, is home to eight marked and two unmarked tombstones, including that of a former A&M college president, Lafayette Lumpkin Foster.

Foster, who was described as a self-made man and served on the Texas State Legislature for 17 years, was asked to serve as president of A&M after Lawrence Sullivan Ross' death in 1898.

Foster served as president of A&M from 1898 until 1901, when he became ill. He was the first to be buried in a college cemetery on the present site of Duncan Dining Hall in December 1901.

In 1939, the remains and tombstones of the five people buried there were moved to the current cemetery to make room for Duncan.

The largest gravestone, that of Foster, lies under a live oak tree on the west side of the cemetery and is surrounded by nine other

tombstones.

According to the Cushing Library Archives, among those buried in the nine other graves are: C.O. Watkins, a long-time employee of the College who died in 1940; Ruth Watkins, a daughter of C.O. Watkins, who died one day before her father; Joseph Allison Riggs, a College janitor; Allison Smoot, head milkman at the dairy barn during the Harrington Administration; and Charles H. and Lottie L. Alvord's infant child, who died in 1908.

According to Cushing Archives, a spokesman for Foster said in 1901 that "it is indeed fitting that his remains should repose in the soil he loved."

In 1955, a cemetery committee was formed to investigate the possibility of moving the graves again, to an unnamed cemetery in College Station. Although the committee reportedly tried to contact survivors of Foster and others buried in the cemetery for permission to move the remains, they were unsuccessful, and the remains were never moved.

In a letter written to G. Smith in 1955, D.B. Cofer, an A&M archivist, said he was disappointed in how the remains of L.L. Foster were being handled.

"It's a crime the way President Foster's remains have been treated," Cofer wrote. "Maybe with the help of Professor Leland's cemetery committee and alumni

working together, a suitable plot could be provided and cared for."

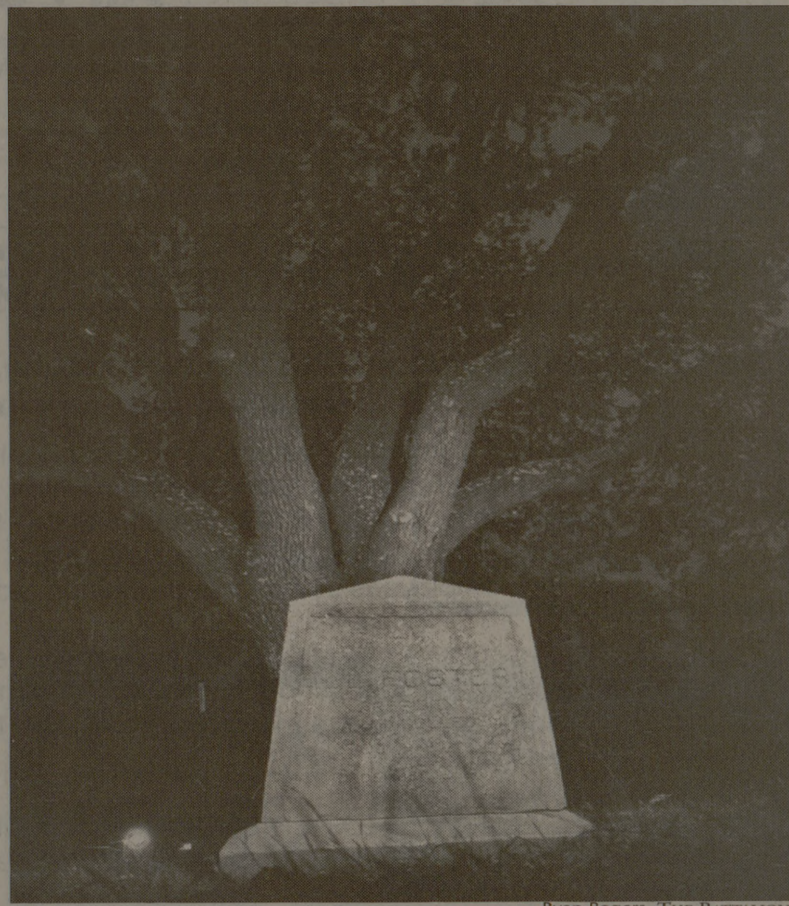
Don Simons, a former station manager of KAMU-TV, said he, along with other members of the Brazos Genealogical Society, have been mapping out cemeteries in the Brazos Valley since 1982. He said there was something unique about one of the people in the A&M cemetery.

"Ruth Watkins was the best friend of my wife's mother," Simons said. "We thought that was really interesting."

Simons said that in the early 1980s, the Genealogical Society decided it wanted to expand and do something for all of Brazos Valley. In 1984, the Society participated in the Big Event, and about 500 A&M students helped them clean up cemeteries in Bryan-College Station.

Although the east side of the A&M cemetery is filled with litter, the rest of the cemetery and gravestones are generally well-kept. Simons said the A&M Physical Plant started maintaining the cemetery at his request in 1987.

Since then, Simons and his wife have collected 21,700 names of people buried in Brazos Valley and entered them into a computer database. Although the listings have not been published, there are copies in both the Bryan and College Station public libraries, the Sterling C. Evans library and the Brazos Genealogical Society offices.



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

Lafayette Lumpkin Foster, a former president of A&M College, is buried under this tombstone in a University-owned graveyard.

Simons said the Genealogical Society has mapped 85 cemeteries in the Brazos Valley since 1982, but they are constantly looking for more. Simons said that anyone with information concerning the location of cemeteries in the Brazos Valley should contact the Brazos Genealogical Society or visit them on the internet at [www2.cynet.net/~bga/](http://www2.cynet.net/~bga/).

The Cushing Archives show the A&M cemetery went virtually unnoticed by the University until 1993, when the Texas A&M Board of Regents passed a bill to build a cemetery near Easterwood Airport. This bill would allow A&M to build a perpetual care cemetery for former students.

The Board suggested a study be conducted by the Association of Former Students or the A&M University Development Foundation to determine the interest for an "Aggie Field of Honor," a cemetery built primarily for Aggies. There is no record of whether such a study has been conducted.

Simons said that keeping records of who has died and where they are buried is both important and interesting to him and his wife.

"We're deeply involved in it, though we know of no one buried in Brazos County," Simons said. "We're all interested in genealogy and protecting the records of the past."

# Home Sweet Home for the Holidays

*Spending time with family over the break brings time for reflection*

Although the Christmas season brings the enjoyable traditions of trimming the tree, spending time with family and unwrapping presents, it is not necessarily the most pleasant time of year at my house.

Columnist



April Towery  
 Sophomore journalism major

I moved home the week before Christmas, greeted by my sister. What used to be my room is now hers. I unpacked my belongings and quickly filled the space she offered me: half a bookshelf and a cardboard box. Then she lectured me about how we need to get along this year for Mom and Dad's sake. I really thought she was going to

start singing "We Are the World" or something like that. My mother was almost too excited about my return home. She spent days cleaning the house while listening to the Michael Bolton Christmas album, and scheduled evenings for "enforced family time."

Enforced family time is my parents' idea of the four of us spending time together whether we want to or not. Such time usually includes having to clean off the kitchen table for a family dinner, then going to a movie only one of us wants to see.

This does not have to be a bad thing, but it usually leaves

someone unhappy, much like mealtime at my house. Agreeing on dinner dishes is also difficult because my parents and sister are health food junkies, whereas my four basic food groups are chocolate, fried foods, pizza and Twinkies. The money I have spent on junk food probably bought Little Debbie a new beach house.

Family desserts are a real treat. Instead of the traditional fruitcake, my father has a thing for buying week-old pies. You know, the kind with the bright orange stickers that read, "Oops, we baked too many."

I understand the logic behind buying a pie because it's half-price, but these pies don't make sense. They always have weird combinations like mince

rhubarb walnut. My father is convinced that it doesn't matter what you eat as long as it is hidden under ice cream.

On Christmas Eve, we loaded up for the trip to Grandma's house. The trip should be three hours long, but my father insists on stopping at every Sonic and Dairy Queen along the way. The ride also seems a little longer because my mother reads out loud, my father counts roadkills and my sister sings.

When my sister and I were younger and would argue throughout the duration of the car trip, my dad would get mad and throw our Barbies out the window. On this trip he threatened to throw us out the window. And there were times that it didn't seem like such a bad idea.

The fun began when we arrived at the home of my grandparents. My grandmother actually put a cloth napkin on her head and called it her "do-rag." My great aunt told me I'd gained weight, then made a feeble attempt to try to convince me that was a compliment.

But the highlight of the evening was when everyone gathered around the tree to unwrap presents.

Before gift-giving, we have a family tradition of reading the Christmas story from the Bible, then singing Christmas carols. This year, our version of "Joy to the World" somehow became "Jeremiah Was a Bullfrog."

Opening presents was interesting, to say the least. The first present I opened was a gift-

wrapped box of Lucky Charms from my grandmother. My 21-year-old sister received this sleeper thing that zips up the front and has built-in feet. My 20-year-old cousin passed out cash to his aunts and uncles. It appeared to be a nice thought, but unfortunately, he was just paying off an installment of the money he owed the fools who co-signed for his CD player and various other electronic necessities.

In spite of an eventful holiday season at home, I found myself wishing I had spent more time with my family. My grandmother tells me that I should spend my college years growing closer to my family members, but it's just so hard to take advice from someone with a napkin on her head.

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Course #304 • TPR Office  
 313 Dominik Drive

Test 1	Sat. Feb. 1	9:00-4:30pm
Class 1	Sun. Feb. 2	6:00-8:30pm
Class 2	Thur. Feb. 6	6:00-8:30pm
Class 3	Sun. Feb. 9	6:00-8:30pm
Class 4	Thur. Feb. 13	6:00-8:30pm
Class 5	Sun. Feb. 16	6:00-8:30pm
Class 6	Thur. Feb. 20	6:00-8:30pm
Test 2	Sat. Feb. 22	9:00-4:30pm
Class 7	Sun. Feb. 23	6:00-8:30pm
Class 8	Thur. Feb. 27	6:00-8:30pm
Class 9	Sun. Mar. 2	6:00-8:30pm
Class 10	Thur. Mar. 6	6:00-8:30pm
Class 11	Thur. Mar. 20	6:00-8:30pm
Test 3	Sat. Mar. 22	9:00-4:30pm
Class 12	Sun. Mar. 23	6:00-8:30pm
Class 13	Thur. Mar. 27	6:00-8:30pm
Class 14	Thur. Apr. 3	6:00-8:30pm
Test 4	Sat. Apr. 5	9:00-4:30pm
Class 15	Sun. Apr. 6	6:00-8:30pm
Class 16	Thur. Apr. 10	6:00-8:30pm
Class 17	Sun. Apr. 13	6:00-8:30pm
Class 18	Thur. Apr. 17	6:00-8:30pm

Course #314 • TPR Office  
 313 Dominik Drive

Test 1	Sat. Jan. 18	9:00-4:30pm
Class 1	Tue. Jan. 21	6:00-8:30pm
Class 2	Sat. Jan. 25	1:00-3:30pm
Class 3	Tue. Jan. 28	6:00-8:30pm
Class 4	Sat. Feb. 1	1:00-3:30pm
Class 5	Tue. Feb. 4	1:00-3:30pm
Class 6	Sat. Feb. 8	1:00-3:30pm
Class 7	Tue. Feb. 11	6:00-8:30pm
Class 8	Sat. Feb. 15	1:00-3:30pm
Class 9	Tue. Feb. 18	6:00-8:30pm
Test 2	Sat. Feb. 22	9:00-4:30pm
Class 10	Tue. Feb. 25	6:00-8:30pm
Class 11	Sat. Mar. 1	1:00-3:30pm
Class 12	Tue. Mar. 4	6:00-8:30pm
Class 13	Tue. Mar. 18	6:00-8:30pm
Test 3	Sat. Mar. 22	9:00-4:30pm
Class 14	Tue. Mar. 25	6:00-8:30pm
Class 15	Tue. Apr. 1	6:00-8:30pm
Test 4	Sat. Apr. 5	9:00-4:30pm
Class 16	Tue. Apr. 8	6:00-8:30pm
Class 17	Sat. Apr. 12	1:00-3:30pm
Class 18	Tue. Apr. 15	6:00-8:30pm

Course #324 • TPR Office  
 313 Dominik Drive

Test 1	Sat. Feb. 1	9:00-4:30pm
Class 1	Mon. Feb. 3	6:00-8:30pm
Class 2	Wed. Feb. 5	6:00-8:30pm
Class 3	Mon. Feb. 10	6:00-8:30pm
Class 4	Wed. Feb. 12	6:00-8:30pm
Class 5	Mon. Feb. 17	6:00-8:30pm
Class 6	Wed. Feb. 19	6:00-8:30pm
Test 2	Sat. Feb. 22	9:00-4:30pm
Class 7	Mon. Feb. 24	6:00-8:30pm
Class 8	Wed. Feb. 26	6:00-8:30pm
Class 9	Mon. Mar. 3	6:00-8:30pm
Class 10	Wed. Mar. 5	6:00-8:30pm
Class 11	Mon. Mar. 17	6:00-8:30pm
Class 12	Wed. Mar. 19	6:00-8:30pm
Test 3	Sat. Mar. 22	9:00-4:30pm
Class 13	Mon. Mar. 24	6:00-8:30pm
Class 14	Wed. Mar. 26	6:00-8:30pm
Class 15	Mon. Mar. 31	6:00-8:30pm
Class 16	Wed. Apr. 2	6:00-8:30pm
Test 4	Sat. Apr. 5	9:00-4:30pm
Class 17	Mon. Apr. 7	6:00-8:30pm
Class 18	Wed. Apr. 9	6:00-8:30pm

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