

# Register of the Holmes Collection

## Mss.0001

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### SUMMARY INFORMATION

**Repository**

Clemson University Libraries Special Collections

**Creator - Compiler**

Holmes, Alester G. (Alester Garden), 1876-1953

**Title**

**Holmes Collection**

**ID**

Mss.0001

**Date [inclusive]**

1789-1977

**Extent**

2.0 cubic feet

**Language**

English

**Introduction**

This collection consists mainly of material created and assembled by Professors Alester Garden Holmes and George Raymond Sherrill while they were writing *Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work*. It includes research notes, copies of correspondence related to Clemson and manuscript versions of the book. Holmes' correspondence documents various aspects of his career as a teacher at Clemson College and a historian in South Carolina. There is also material related to the restoration of John C. Calhoun's plantation, Fort Hill. The restoration project was a major concern of Mrs. Lila Speer Pennel Holmes.

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### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alester Garden Holmes was born in 1876 at Lime Stone Springs, near Limestone College, in Gaffney, South Carolina. Mr. Holmes was graduated from the Gaffney Seminary in 1893 and the Citadel in 1897. Over the years, Professor Holmes also attended summer schools at Clemson College and Winthrop College. In 1911, he did graduate work at the University of Chicago where he studied under Dr. W.E. Dodd. He then taught in the public schools of Beech Island, Belton and Pendleton. He spent a year-and-a-half at the University of the South and another year at North Carolina State College before coming to Clemson College as Instructor in History in 1906.

Professor Holmes had a distinguished career at Clemson, becoming Head of the History Department in 1924 and Professor of History in 1926. He was an active member of the faculty and was particularly involved in preserving the historical records of John C. Calhoun, Thomas G. Clemson, Clemson College, and history of the surrounding area. In 1933, he served as President of the South Carolina Historical Association, having earlier served as Vice-President. He was a member, and served for two years as Chairman, of the South Carolina Historical Commission. At Clemson, he served for many years as Chairman of the College Library Archives Committee. He also served on a committee to restore the Fort Hill plantation, on the board of the Old Stone Church Association, and was a founder of the Forum Club, a campus organization.

In 1903, Professor Holmes married Anne Ball Simpson, daughter of Richard W. Simpson, Thomas Clemson's friend and lawyer. Mr. Simpson was instrumental in carrying out Clemson's will for the establishment of Clemson College. He served as one of the first life members of the Board of Trustees of Clemson College. Others in Mrs. Holmes' family were also connected to Clemson College. Two of Mrs. Holmes' sisters married Clemson professors W.W. Klugh and Major Maner Martin. Another sister, Maria Louise, gave the Thomas Clemson Papers to Clemson College through Professor Holmes.

Professor and Mrs. Anne Holmes had two children. Their daughter died of pneumonia when she was four or five years old. Their son, Alester, Jr. became a professor at Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College. Anne Ball Simpson Holmes died in 1928.

In the summer of 1930, Professor Holmes re-married, to Mrs. Lila Speer Pennel. Together they shared historical interests and carried on historical research, especially that dealing with the restoration of Fort Hill. In 1937, Professors Sherrill and Holmes published *Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work*. Professor Holmes retired from Clemson College in 1948, but he maintained his interest in and support of historical preservation. He died March 17, 1953.

Lila Speer Pennel Holmes was born in 1891 in Abbeville

County, South Carolina. She first married Dr. Pennel, and lived in Belton, South Carolina. Dr. Pennel died in the influenza epidemic of 1918. They had two sons, but both pre-deceased Mrs. Holmes, one killed in a train accident, and the other dying of meningitis at Clemson. After her first husband's death, she served as housemother at a boys' camp in Banner Elk, North Carolina. She met Professor Holmes at Blue Ridge, another camp in North Carolina.

In 1933, Mrs. Lila Holmes became Chairman of the Fort Hill Committee and was active in soliciting material from Greenville merchants to restore the mansion. She also involved both the local United Daughters of the Confederacy and the South Carolina Division of the UDC in the restoration efforts and utilized the advice of members of the Clemson School of Architecture. Her efforts were aided by Clemson alumnus and amateur historian, David Kohn. Lila Holmes encouraged Birge and Company of Buffalo, New York to reproduce a wallpaper pattern similar to that found at Fort Hill. This "Calhoun" pattern was used in the restoration of the mansion's upstairs. Through her efforts, Miss Margaret Calhoun, great-great-granddaughter of John C. Calhoun, gave furniture and furnishings to restore Fort Hill. Lila Holmes also made a close study of the structural development of the house with her husband. During this research she discovered the original six foot fireplace and Dutch oven.

Another major undertaking during Mrs. Holmes' tenure as Chairman was the production of the historical dramatization, "The Pageant of Fort Hill", which was presented in the spring of 1936. Many local citizens acted in this outdoor drama which gave wide publicity to Fort Hill. That same year, Fort Hill became listed with the Smithsonian Institution as an American House Museum. In 1937, Mrs. Holmes resigned her connection with the Fort Hill Restoration. Restoration work has continued and today John C. Calhoun's mansion is much as it was in his lifetime.

After the death of her husband in 1953, Mrs. Holmes retired to the Presbyterian Retirement Home in Summerville, South Carolina, where she served as Postmistress. She died October 5, 1977 at the age of eighty-six years.

George Raymond Sherrill was born in 1892. In 1921, he received his A.B. degree from Wake Forest College, Wake Forest, North Carolina. In 1925, he obtained an M.A. degree from Columbia University, followed by a Ph.D. in 1928. From 1929 to 1935, Dr. Sherrill was an Associate Professor of Economics and Government at Clemson College. In 1936, he was promoted to Professor.

Professor Sherrill spent the summer of 1934 in Washington, D.C. gathering material about the life of Thomas G. Clemson. Much of the information concerning Mr. Clemson's public service and his diplomatic career was

uncovered by Dr. Sherrill in the course of his research.

In 1938, Dr. Sherrill left Clemson College to take a position with the University of South Carolina. At the University, he established the department of Political Science and served as Head of the Department of Political Science and, later, Director of the Bureau of Public Administration. Following his retirement at the University of South Carolina, he taught at Columbia College in Columbia, South Carolina.

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT

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The Holmes Collection contains correspondence which records Alester Holmes' professional activities and his relationship with Clemson College. There is correspondence with the historian Charles Wiltse, especially as it related to Wiltse's biography of John C. Calhoun and his interest in having the Library of Congress microfilm the Calhoun collection. In addition, there is correspondence with Robert L. Meriwether of the South Caroliniana Library and A.S. Salley of the Historical Commission of South Carolina. These letters give some attention to controversies over the World War Memorial Commission and other Historical Commission activities. There are also letters to Holmes from Sherrill, who agonized over leaving his Clemson position to take a much more lucrative one at the University of South Carolina.

Professor Holmes' correspondence gives information about the provenance of other manuscript collections held by Clemson University, such as the Thomas Clemson Papers, Floride Clemson's diary, Anna Maria Calhoun's journal and the Benjamin Tillman Papers.

There are articles, speeches and research notes prepared by Holmes for publication in newspapers and journals and for inclusion in radio talks. One section of material contains papers gathered by Professor and Lila Holmes and concerning the restoration of Fort Hill. There are photocopies of photographs of the building at various stages of restoration. Some correspondence deals with fundraising efforts, questions about the direction of the restoration project, and the involvement of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

The material related to the book *Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work* includes copies of letters, parts of letters and articles located at other manuscript repositories, including correspondence with James Buchanan, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun and Benjamin R. Tillman. There are copies of editorials, letters to the editor and news items pertaining to Thomas Clemson's activities, including his appointment to and duties in the United States

Foreign Service, his role in promoting the agricultural sciences and his bequest to found what has become Clemson University. The bulk of this part of the collection consists of several drafts of the book. One draft contains a stamped pagination. Of particular interest is an expanded bibliography of Clemson's publications.

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## **ARRANGEMENT**

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The papers are arranged chronologically. Drafts of *Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work* are arranged by chapter.

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

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### **Publication Information**

Clemson University Libraries Special Collections 1983

### **Restrictions**

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection beyond those of Clemson University Libraries Special Collections and those dictated by U.S. Copyright Law.

### **Custodial History**

Alester Garden Holmes donated his papers to Clemson College Library in 1948.

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## **RELATED MATERIALS**

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### **Related Materials**

Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson's album/journal is in Mss 2, the Thomas Green Clemson Papers.

Florde Clemson's diary is Mss 111.

The Fort Hill Mansion registers are Mss 3.

### **Separated Materials**

Photographs related to the restoration of Fort Hill were photocopied and the originals have been filed in the

photograph collection in Special Collections.

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## CONTROLLED ACCESS HEADINGS

### Corporate Name(s)

- Clemson University. -- History

### Geographic Name(s)

- Fort Hill Plantation (S.C.)

### Personal Name(s)

- Clemson, Thomas Green, 1807-1888
- Holmes, Alester G. (Alester Garden), 1876-1953
- Holmes, Lila Speer Pennel, 1891-1977
- Sherrill, George R. , (George Raymond), 1892-
- Wiltse, Charles M. (Charles Maurice), 1907-1990

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## COLLECTION INVENTORY

|                         | <b>Box</b> | <b>FOLDER</b> |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Biographical, 1898-1910 | 1          | 1             |

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### Clippings and correspondence

|           | <b>Box</b> | <b>FOLDER</b> |
|-----------|------------|---------------|
| 1911-1929 | 1          | 2             |
| 1930-1935 | 1          | 3             |
| 1936-1937 | 1          | 4             |
| 1938-1939 | 1          | 5             |

|           |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1940-1944 | 1 | 6 |
| 1945-1950 | 1 | 7 |
| no date   | 1 | 8 |

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### Fort Hill Restoration

|  | <b>Box</b> | <b>FOLDER</b> |
|--|------------|---------------|
| "The Calhoun Summer Home,"<br>Scribner's Monthly, April 1881 | 1          | 9             |
| Clippings, 1936  | 1          | 10            |

### Correspondence

|   | <b>Box</b> | <b>FOLDER</b> |
|---|------------|---------------|
| 1922-1923                                 | 1          | 11            |
| January - May 1934                        | 1          | 12            |
| June - December 1934                      | 1          | 13            |
| January-May 1935                          | 1          | 14            |
| June-December 1935                        | 1          | 15            |
| January-February 1936                     | 2          | 1             |
| March-April 1936                          | 2          | 2             |
| The Pageant of Fort Hill May<br>5-6, 1935 | 2          | 3             |
| May-October 1936                          | 2          | 4             |
| November-December 1936                    | 2          | 5             |

|                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| January-March 1937           | 2 | 6 |
| April 1937; 1938             | 2 | 7 |
| Costs, miscellaneous no date | 2 | 8 |

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*Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work* research notes

|  | <b>Box</b> | <b>FOLDER</b> |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Barton, Katherine C. (Neilson)   | 2          | 11            |
| Churches   | 2          | 12            |
| Clemson, Calhoun.<br>Correspondence to his mother<br>(extracts), 1863-1864 | 2          | 13            |
| Clemson College Alumni<br>Association Publications<br>Committee            | 2          | 14            |
| Clemson College. Material<br>related to founding.                          | 2          | 15            |
| Calhoun, John Ewing. List of<br>his lands.                                 | 2          | 16            |
| Fort Hill Estate Plats   | 2          | 17            |
| Fragments no date  | 2          | 18            |
| Holmes' addresses, articles,<br>correspondence: 1926-1948                  | 3          | 1             |
| Paintings. The Clemson<br>Collection, no date                              | 3          | 2             |
| Prince, Mrs. Jane.<br>Recollections, July 15, 1935                         | 3          | 3             |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Simpson, Margaret Taliafero,<br>from her diary, December<br>1831 and 1832            | 3 | 4 |
| Trustees and presidents, 1888,<br>1890, no date                                      | 3 | 5 |
| Walker, Isaac, "Clemson<br>Family", no date  | 3 | 6 |
| War Records of Thomas Green<br>Clemson and John Calhoun<br>Clemson, 1863, 1864, 1934 | 3 | 7 |

## Articles and correspondence: Copies and extracts

|  | <b>Box</b> | <b>FOLDER</b> |
|--|------------|---------------|
| 1826                                       | 3          | 7             |
| 1831-1839                                  | 3          | 9             |
| From Anna Maria Calhoun's<br>journal, 1838 | 3          | 10            |
| 1843-1849                                  | 3          | 11            |
| 1850-1856                                  | 3          | 12            |
| 1857-1859                                  | 3          | 13            |
| 1860-1871                                  | 3          | 14            |
| 1885-1886                                  | 3          | 15            |
| 1887-1888                                  | 3          | 16            |
| 1889-1893                                  | 3          | 17            |

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*Thomas Green Clemson: His Life and Work* manuscript  
drafts

|  | <b>Box</b> | <b>FOLDER</b> |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Preface, stamped pagination<br>1-3   | 4          | 1             |
| Preface  | 4          | 2             |
| Introduction, stamped<br>pagination 4-6  | 4          | 3             |
| Introduction   | 4          | 4             |
| Chapter I, "Ancestry and<br>Youth," stamped pagination 7-<br>18                    | 4          | 5             |
| Chapter I, drafts  | 4          | 6             |
| Chapter II, "Active<br>Prominence", stamped<br>pagination 19-36                    | 4          | 7             |
| Chapter II, drafts   | 4          | 8             |
| Chapter III, "Continued Effort<br>Toward a Goal", stamped<br>pagination 38-56      | 4          | 9             |
| Chapter III, drafts  | 4          | 10            |
| Chapter IV, "Activity in Mining<br>Engineering", stamped<br>pagination 57-78       | 4          | 11            |
| Chapter IV, drafts   | 4          | 12            |
| Chapter V, "Career as a<br>Diplomat", stamped pagination<br>79-101                 | 4          | 13            |
| Chapter V, drafts  | 4          | 14            |
| Chapter VI, "Interest in<br>Scientific Agriculture",<br>stamped pagination 102-138 | 4          | 15            |
|  | 4          | 16            |

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| Chapter VI, drafts  |   |    |
| Chapter VII, "Advocacy of Agricultural Education", stamped pagination 139-185 | 4 | 17 |
| Chapter VII, drafts   | 4 | 18 |
| Chapter VIII, "Fulfillment of Dream", stamped pagination 186-218              | 4 | 19 |
| Chapter VIII, drafts  | 4 | 20 |
| Appendix, stamped pagination 219-233  | 4 | 21 |
| Appendix, drafts  | 4 | 22 |
| Bibliography, stamped pagination 234-236                                      | 4 | 23 |
| Bibliography, drafts  | 4 | 24 |
| "The Clemson Bequest"   | 4 | 25 |
| "The History of the Clemson Fortune"  | 4 | 26 |
| "E.I." (Educational Institution or Establishing Institution?)                 | 4 | 27 |
| "Fort Hill and Some Associations"   | 4 | 28 |
| "The Founding of Clemson College"   | 4 | 29 |
| "Personality"   | 4 | 30 |
| "Promoter of Scientific Education"  | 4 | 31 |
| Miscellaneous drafts and paginations  | 4 | 32 |

Miscellaneous drafts and  
paginations

4

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## Oversize Materials

**OVERSIZE\_FOLDER**

Wallpaper and tapestry samples

1

Poster, "The Pageant of Fort Hill on  
Football Stadium at Clemson College,  
May 5 & 6 [1936], 8:00 p.m." May 5 &  
6, 1936

2

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