

C.V. Buildings - Tillman

Tiger
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Main Building Cornerstone Was Laid 48 Years Ago Midst Speeches, Picnics, And Rain



It rained that day, but folks who backed Tillman and his ideals came up to Clemson from all over the state—to see the cornerstone laying of the Clemson college administration building.

That cornerstone was laid 48 years ago July 28, 1891. And the college doors were opened two years later.

In the picture above, Clemson's registrar, Gus E. Metz, (left) is looking on while Tom E. Stanley, assistant to the college business manager, points out the inscription on the stone.

The cornerstone ceremony was some occasion.

There were speeches and picnic lunches and plenty of rejoicing. And practically every one there was a Tillmanite.

The crowds came early. Some had traveled all night, and they came in carts, two wheel buggies, on horse and mule back, and in carriages.

B. F. Robertson, state chemist, one of those there, said the crowd was the largest that had gathered in South Carolina up to that time.

He said that only once before had people in South Carolina come in a mass that could compare with the cornerstone laying visitors. That was when the Blue Ridge train came to Pendleton in 1853.

Some 15,000 people were at the cornerstone laying.

The morning was fair, and about 10 a. m. the rain started and kept on. But the people stayed and they ate and listened to speeches.

Ben Tillman told of the virtues that Clemson Agricultural and Mechanical college would have, and Major George B. L. Buist, a state senator from Charleston, spoke, and L. L. Polk from North Carolina was a speaker.

The Masons laid the cornerstone. In a report of that gathering, Charles Ingleby, grand secretary of South Carolina Masons, said, in part . . . "A special Communication of the Grand Lodge of A. F. M. of the state of South Carolina was held at Fort Hill, Anderson county, on July 28, A. L. 5891, in the mechanical hall of the Clemson agricultural and mechanical college, at 11 o'clock a. m."

Grand Master Laurie T. Izlar, laid the stone.

The original building was burned and was rebuilt in 1894.

(Staff Photo by Hufford)