



Tillman Hall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TILLMAN HALL HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

On March 13, 1978, Clemson University awarded the firm of Westmoreland-McGarity-Pitts, Architects, the contract to renovate Tillman Hall. Because we are Clemson men ourselves, we recognize the honor as well as the responsibility involved. While students at Clemson, we met many classes in Tillman Hall, but we were so involved with grade point ratios that we neglected adequately to inform ourselves about the history of this historic, old building. Now, many years later, we have attempted to rectify this oversight by discovering the history of Tillman Hall. We believe that through the information we found as a result of our research, we now have a better perspective of the job of renovation of Tillman Hall.

It is, however, impossible to separate Tillman Hall, the very essence of Clemson University, from the school itself. Therefore, we thought it imperative to take a glance backward to the days when this great institution was only a vision wavering indistinctly in the future.

We thought that perhaps other Clemson graduates might find this information both interesting and informative. With this in mind, the firm has included, in this booklet, its findings about the beautiful, old building, Tillman Hall, the symbol of Clemson University and a brief synopsis of the history of the college itself.

Most of us who were born and raised in the South were informed, at an early age, of our illustrious southern heritage and about those men and women, possessed of steadfast strength, character, courage, and vision, who helped to transform a South, ravaged and depleted by war, into a prosperous, independent, and productive South.

The people of South Carolina can boast of many men and women of such stature, but we who were graduated from Clemson University owe a special debt of gratitude to two such men. One, Thomas Green Clemson (1807-1888) was a native Philadelphian who adopted South Carolina as his home and, as early as 1866, began advocating the establishment of an agricultural college in South Carolina. The other, Benjamin Ryan Tillman (1847-1918), or "Pitchfork Ben," as he is often called, was a native South Carolinian.

Ben Tillman, a native of Edgefield County, twice-elected governor of South Carolina, and United States Senator from South Carolina for twenty-four years, envisioned a new way of life for the post Civil War South and worked tirelessly to promote this dream.

Thomas Clemson, like Ben Tillman, distinguished himself in countless endeavors. He was an illustrious diplomat, an officer in the Confederate Army, a highly respected mining engineer, the first superintendent of agricultural affairs of the United States, and a chemistry enthusiast who turned his knowledge and talent toward instituting scientific farming methods in South Carolina.

The years after the war were desperate ones for South Carolina whose economic solvency was rooted in a floundering agrarian economy. In 1876 the era of Reconstruction and Carpet Bag Rule ended in South Carolina, and by 1888 the state began to show a limited degree of revitalization because of a few short years, after the war, when cotton prices soared once more. However, there were still no significant manufacturing interests in South Carolina, and agricultural pursuits were hampered by several factors: falling prices on the cotton market, high rates of interest charged to farmers, and ignorance of progressive farming techniques.

Aware of the intolerable situation which the farmers faced and fully aware also of the root of the problem, Ben Tillman determined to effect certain reforms. He believed that agricultural as well as mechanical education was the solution to South Carolina's waning agricultural productivity and lack of industry. South Carolinians were ignorant of new agricultural and mechanical methods and tech-

niques, so Ben Tillman set out to change the situation.

In August 1885, as a delegate from Edgefield County, Ben Tillman attended a joint meeting of the South Carolina State Agricultural Society and State Grange in Bennettsville, South Carolina, where he proposed a resolution to establish, at the University of South Carolina, a department devoted to instructing young men in the methods of scientific farming, as well as in the methods of industry. Although many people strongly advocated such a bill, it was rejected by the delegates, the state's most prominent farmers. Undaunted, Tillman continued his crusade in the state's newspapers. He had, however, revised his proposal to encompass a complete and separate college of engineering and agriculture, as opposed to creating a secondary department at the University, as he had originally proposed.

During this period there was considerable political unrest in the state. The small farmers and others believed that the state government was controlled by a political machine that supported a special-interest group and ignored the desires of the majority of the people. This political clique was referred to by Tillman and his supporters as "the ring."

At the State Democratic Convention, which met in July 1886, Tillman supported his friend, J. C. Sheppard, for the office of governor, not because Sheppard was disassociated with "the ring," but because he upheld the idea of the agricultural college while his opponent, John P. Richardson, opposed it. Richardson defeated Sheppard but only by a narrow margin which indicated to "the ring" and the legislature that the unrest among the "common people" was intense and growing. At that point an agricultural and a mechanical course were instituted into the program at the University of South Carolina. This, of course, was the original idea presented by Tillman at the joint meeting of the South Carolina State Agricultural Society and the State Grange in Bennettsville in August, 1885.

The funds to establish this new program at the University were provided by a congressional act of 1862, the Morrill Act, which allotted to South Carolina 180,000 acres of public lands represented in "land script" and by the Hatch fund which provided funds for agricultural research, and so these new programs were instituted at the University. However, Tillman noted that even though a good basic beginning was made in teaching the mechanical arts, that little, if any, progress was being made in agricultural instruction. Of course,

Tillman considered such a perfunctory gesture as this annex inadequate and continued his advocacy for a separate agricultural college.

In the fall of 1886, Ben Tillman, through his newspaper articles and his reputation as a zealous advocate of an agricultural college, fell under the notice of Thomas Clemson. Because of their similar aspirations, in regard to the establishment of the proposed agricultural institution, Mr. Clemson invited Ben Tillman to visit him at Fort Hill. There, Clemson, Tillman, and several other men, who were sympathetic toward their cause, met and suggested to Thomas Clemson the possibility of immediately granting to the state the Fort Hill property so that he might spend his last years watching a cherished dream become a living reality. But he refused. Thomas Clemson did, however, at this meeting agree to revise his will, disposing of his property in a manner which would, at his death, provide for the establishment of an agricultural college on the Fort Hill estate. At this time, Thomas Clemson chose also to name seven trustees who would serve as lifetime members on the Board of Trustees of the College. The remaining six Board members were to be appointed or selected by the Legislature at such time as the state accepted the Clemson bequest. The original seven Board members were Colonel D. E. Norris, Colonel R. W. Simpson, Benjamin R. Tillman, M. L. Donaldson, John E. Wannamaker, J. E. Bradley, and Colonel R. E. Bowen.

D.K.

When in April 1888, Thomas Clemson died and the contents of his will became known, those who advocated the establishment of the new college again raised their voices—this time to an intensity which could not be ignored. There was ample property, a large plantation, and there were ample funds, approximately \$80,000, to set the proposed college on its feet. And this time its advocates were not to be denied. The fight, however, was long and hard. The governor, many legislators, and the supporters of the State University, The Citadel, and the denominational colleges still bitterly opposed the establishment of a new college on the premise that these previously established institutions might suffer a decline in enrollment. Another deterrent was the contestation of the Clemson will initiated by Gideon Lee on behalf of his daughter, Floride Isabella Lee, the granddaughter of Thomas Clemson and great-granddaughter of John C. Calhoun.

On December 6, 1888, a bill to accept the bequest of Thomas Clemson to establish an agricultural college on the Fort Hill property

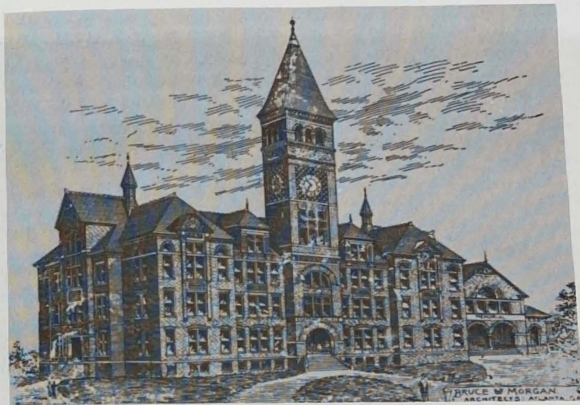
was introduced in the House of Representatives. In due course, the bill passed in the House and in the Senate, but Governor Richardson refused to sign the bill during the 1888 session of the General Assembly. Possibly, this strategy was designed to allow the courts more time to consider the law suit brought by Gideon Lee against the Clemson will.

On May 21, 1889, the Circuit Court decided in favor of R. W. Simpson, executor of the Clemson estate, in the case of Lee vs. Simpson. However, Lee was not satisfied with the decision and gave notice of an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States.

At the meeting of the General Assembly in November, 1889, Governor Richardson was forced to act on the Clemson Bequest Bill. On November 27, 1889, he signed the bill, and on December 6, 1889, the Clemson estate formally passed into the hands of the State of South Carolina.

On March 17, 1890, the Lee vs. Simpson case was submitted to the Supreme Court, and on April 7, 1890, the case was decided in favor of Simpson. Nevertheless, on December 18, 1889, in compliance with Thomas Clemson's will, the legislature met and selected the remaining six men who would complete the Board of Trustees of the Clemson Agricultural College. The funds for building and maintaining the college were appropriated. The legislature turned over to the trustees of Clemson College one-half of the land script fund of \$191,800 which had originally been allotted to the University of South Carolina. The trustees were allowed to use only the interest, the principle to remain intact. Clemson College was also entitled to \$15,000 a year from the Hatch fund, and another \$15,000 a year was granted to the college from the privilege tax on fertilizer. The state Treasury appropriated another \$15,000, and fifty convicts to labor on the grounds and buildings. The Board of Trustees was authorized to begin work and was given \$3,000 for necessary plans and specifications.

The first order of business to which the Board attended was determining what buildings would be immediately necessary to the opening of the College. The Board decided to erect three dormitories, a chemical laboratory, one mechanical building, one experimental station, one mess hall, one hospital, various barns and stables, a creamery, and a main building, three stories high, with an attached chapel. The architectural firm of Bruce and Morgan, a prestigious Atlanta firm which designed Tillman Hall at Winthrop



Original architect's rendering.

College and the main building at Converse College in Spartanburg, was awarded the contract to design the college buildings.

During the board meeting on May 20, 1890, H. A. Strode was elected president of Clemson College, and Bruce and Morgan's first design was submitted to the Board of Trustees. The design was of the main building, or the agricultural building. It was not until 1943, Clemson's fiftieth year, that the main building was named Tillman Hall. The occasion of the renaming was the class reunion of Ben Tillman, Jr. Because this design did not meet the specifications of the Board of Trustees (the cost was too high), the architects were directed to redesign the building, limiting the cost to the original \$40,000 specified.

On October 2, 1890, Bruce and Morgan submitted the second series of drawings to the Board. These drawings were accepted and adopted by the Board of Trustees.

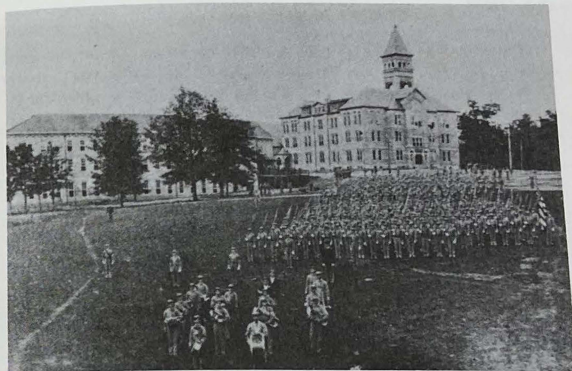
On December 1, 1890, President Strode was authorized to begin work on the main building. The state was to furnish convict labor. The natural resources, timber, stone, etc., available on and in the vicinity of the Fort Hill property were to be used in the construction of the college buildings; the Executive Committee was to supervise

the construction. The cornerstone of the main building was laid on July 28, 1891, during an appropriate and colorful ceremony.

A Mr. Poole of Newberry had contracted to supply to Clemson College eight million brick. However, in mid-September, 1891, when the first brick were delivered, the Board of Trustees found the brick inferior and rejected the lot. This action created a dilemma with the construction schedule, and the Board decided that the wisest course of action was to purchase the brickyard and produce their own brick.

During the years 1891 to 1893, the construction problems faced by the Board of Trustees were numerous and formidable. The most pressing, however, were runaway convict labor and a seemingly constant lack of funds. But finally, in 1893, the main building was completed. Clemson College opened its doors on July 7, 1893, with a fifteen member faculty and a student body of 446.

Tillman Hall stands three stories high. It is a large, red brick structure, 130 feet x 149 feet, with a clock tower. In the clock tower is a Seth-Thomas clock which was purchased for \$1,200. The ornamental granite foundation of the building is four feet high in a



Rear view of Tillman May 1894

range ashlar coursing. This means that the blocks of granite used in the foundation were cut in varying rectangular shapes and laid so that no precise pattern is established in the foundation. The building is trimmed in sandstone and terra cotta, a hard, semifired, water-proof ceramic clay used in building construction for ornamental purposes.

Today, architects agree that the style of this main building conformed to the trends of collegiate architecture of that period. It is, however, Romanesque in character, having rounded arches, heavy walls, and easily definable geometrical masses—rectangles, cubes, cylinders, and half-cylinders.

The main building contained twenty-four rooms, including the offices of the president, the commandant, and the treasurer, a library, reading room, literary society halls, physical laboratory, and recitation rooms for the academic department.

The Memorial Hall, or college chapel, adjoins the main building. It was used as an auditorium and for religious services. It had a seating capacity of 800, and in 1924, "Pop" Lee renovated the chapel to its present seating capacity.

It is interesting to note that the main building was completed in



Front elevation in 1894 before fire.

July, 1893, at a cost of \$83,000, not \$40,000, as had originally been specified.

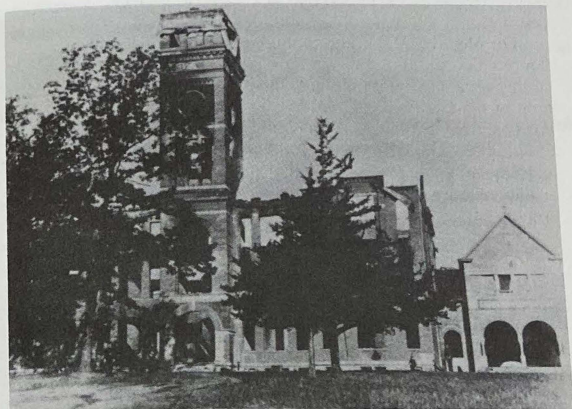
On May 22, 1894, during the night, fire broke out on the third floor of the main building. Because of the alcohol contained in many of the laboratory specimen jars, the fire spread rapidly. Only the efforts of the Cadet Corps, well-trained in fire fighting, saved the main building from complete destruction.

In 1894, a construction firm was hired to rebuild the main building at a cost of \$23,393. Bruce and Morgan, the original architects, were appointed by the Board of Trustees to handle the project, and this time they were to supervise the construction.

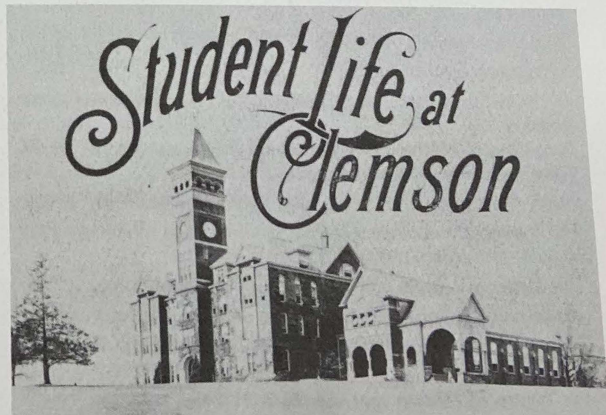
Over the last few decades significant changes altered the face of Clemson College. Clemson became Clemson University; rat season became only a memory. But Tillman Hall remains virtually unchanged. It has now stood for eighty-two years on the hill, surveying the comings and goings of students and activities on Bowman Field. Attempts to replace the building have failed because of the great love the Board of Trustees and the Clemson graduates have for Tillman Hall. It still stands, a monument to our revered statesman



Tillman Hall burning May 22, 1894.



Front elevation of Tillman after the fire.



View of rebuilt Tillman Hall before Chapel Addition of 1924.

John C. Calhoun, to its founders, Thomas Clemson and Ben Tillman, and to the many thousands of students Clemson has served so well.



Items of interest placed in the Cornerstone on July 28, 1891:

Mr. Clemson's diploma as graduate of the Royal School of Mines at Paris;

Sketch of the life of John C. Calhoun, by Mr. Clemson;

Phrenological chart of Mr. Clemson, by Fowler;

Sketch of the life of Mr. Clemson, by Col. R. W. Simpson;

The record of the entire proceedings in the case of Isabella Lee vs. R. W. Simpson, executor;

A copy of *The Charleston World* of October 7, 1890, containing a full account of Clemson College;

Three copies of the *Pendleton Messenger*, 1817-1819 and 1823;

Charleston budget of July 26;

The Charleston News and Courier of July 1 and July 23;

The State of July 27;

Semi-weekly *Greenville News* of July 24;

Daily *Greenville News* of July 26;

Anderson People's Advocate of July 27;

Charleston Sun of July 25;

A paper containing the following names of Clemson College officials:

Photographs of the trustees, including one of Colonel B. W. Edwards, of Darlington, deceased;

\$4 in Continental money donated by J. B. Watson of Seneca;

The names of the officers of The Grand Lodge of Ancient Free Masons of South Carolina;

The names of officers and members of Pendleton Lodge, A.F.M.;

The names of Ancient Free Masons at work on the building;

The names of officers and members of Barnett Lodge, A.F.M., of Piercetown;

The names of officers and members of Seneca Lodge;

Some gold, silver, and copper coins of the United States;

A history of Pendleton by D. U. Sloan;

Several specimens of Confederate money;

A synoptical history of Clemson College;

A copy of the *Cotton Plant* containing a history of the Pendleton Agricultural Society;

A copy of *Enterprise Alliance Monitor* containing President J. Willaim Stokes's Address before the State Farmers' Alliance at Spartanburg last night;

Some Ten cent pieces, cigars, flowers and trinkets donated by spectators.

TRUSTEES

R. W. Simpson, *chairman*, Pendleton

D. K. Norris, Hickory Plat

R. E. Bowen, Briggs

J. E. Bradley, Hunters

M. L. Donaldson, Tindall, Columbia

E. T. Stackhouse, Little Rock

Alan Johnstone, Newberry

J. H. Hardin, Chester

D. T. Refearn, Mt. Croghan

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

R. W. Simpson

R. E. Bowen

J. L. Orr

D. K. Norris, *secretary and treasurer*

Alan Johnstone

P. H. E. Sloan