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CLEMSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

COPY

November 23, 1940

Mrs. J. H. Mitchell  
Clemson, S. C.

Dear Mrs. Mitchell:

You asked me about the beginning of the restoration of Fort Hill, the Calhoun Mansion.

Of course, as everyone knows, Mrs. P. H. Mell found the will of Thomas G. Clemson overlooked as far as keeping at least three rooms open to the public. With the approval of the Board of Trustees she replaced the furniture, made rearrangements and again opened three downstairs rooms and the study to the public. She did an excellent piece of work as far as it went and her resources allowed. But by 1920 the same situation had again arisen. Only one room was open to the public and virtually all of the furniture was crowded into this. A photograph of this room is in our files. A short time before Dr. W. M. Riggs death, he had decided to make a change. At his request, I wrote a report suggesting what should be done. He died before he could fully carry out his plans.

Now from the fairly complete original records or copies I could give you an accurate account of what took place between 1925 and 1937 in connection with the restoration. Either Mrs. Holmes or I have kept records. Mrs. Holmes and I resigned our connection with the Fort Hill restoration in 1937. Some day I shall write this story in full but not now. I judge that what you want is the period from 1928 until the end of your administration.

By action of the Board of Trustees, Fort Hill ceased to be occupied as a private residence in 1928. At this time Dr. E. W. Sikes appointed as a committee to control and restore Fort Hill Mrs. A. B. Bryan, Mr. J. C. Littlejohn and A. G. Holmes. I was named chairman but declined to serve and the committee chose Mr. Littlejohn as chairman. But I agreed to carry on the duties of chairman for Mr. Littlejohn with the understanding that I would consult him before any important decision was made. Thus we carried in until 1935 when I turned over to Mr. Littlejohn all the duties of the chairmanship.

Soon after the College Committee organized we invited the local chapters of the U.D.C. and of the D.A.R. to cooperate in the restoration. Our committee had the house cleaned, the furniture placed in the dining room, the drawing room, the hall, and the large downstairs bed room. We arranged to have the building open to the public. Only one item or addition was made to the furniture, furnishings or anything else from 1928 until the Spring of 1934. This was some cheap cotton curtains in two rooms. I had the material donated. Mrs. Bryan made them or had them made.

The local chapter of the U.D.C. accepted the invitation to aid in restoration but actually did nothing in carrying out actual restoration until 1934.

I have heard, and think it is possibly true, (tho I know of no record to this effect) that one or two committees may have been appointed by the John C. Calhoun Chapter to do something. I have heard that a committee asked the S.C. Division to take on Fort Hill as a project. Whether this is true or not I do not know. The Division did not accept it.

Fort Hill  
RESTORATION OF RESIDENCE

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But I do know that not one cent of money was collected by your chapter as a restoration fund and that no act of restoration was done until during your administration.

In the Spring of 1934 you came to our home and asked Mrs. Holmes to accept the chairmanship of the Calhoun Mansion Restoration Committee. After considering the offer for a few days she agreed to accept upon my urging her to do so. I was so disheartened by the slow, or no, progress that I was about to ask Dr. Sikes to relieve me of membership on his committee. Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Lemaster were also on your restoration committee, later Mrs. Klugh and Mrs. McCollum. Nothing had been done for six years.

With the aid of some business men and alumni of Greenville and elsewhere, and with the aid of the College, Mrs. Holmes had restored with period paper, new draperies, rugs brass andirons etc. the hall, the drawing room and the dining room. These rooms were first opened to the public at Commencement 1934. It was your administration that really began the restoration of Fort Hill.

The work of restoration led to a resolution by the Board of Trustees commending the work of Mrs. Holmes and her committee and a letter of thanks from Dr. Sikes. It was partly these by which the S.C. Division was interested in the project.

The S.C. Division U.D.C. held its annual convention in Columbia December 4, 5, 6, 1934. Mrs. Holmes was the chapter's delegate. By a display of photographs of the interior of Fort Hill before and after restoration, by showing that she had raised in eight months more than \$200 in money and materials (This was done partly by contributions placed in a box near the register, a box made by the late Mr. Joseph Hewer) - by all of this she enlisted the interest of the officers of the Division and was invited to address the convention. The convention voted to assume as one of its objectives, assisting the John C. Calhoun Chapter in the restoration of the "Fort Hill Mansion".

For the complete record, see pages 51, 74, and 127 of the Minutes of the 38th annual convention South Carolina Division United Daughters of the Confederacy.

This includes your official report telling what had been done at Fort Hill - the first that had been done.

I have read Mrs. Holmes reports to the chapter, the minutes of your chapter, and other records and find that the Fort Hill Restoration Committee had your hearty support as well as that of Miss Cornelia Graham who succeeded you as President of the local chapter.

You may make use of this material in any way you wish, provided you make public the entire contents.

With best wishes,

Yours very truly,

A. G. Holmes

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the original letter.

Muriel G. Rutledge

Muriel G. Rutledge

Corrections in Mr. Holmes's letter of Nov. 23, 1940

Page 1 - Par. 5 - The statement "from 1928 until the Spring of 1934" should read from 1928 until the Spring of 1933.

Page 1 - Par. 6 - "the year 1934" should read year 1933.

Page 2 - Par. 2 - "In the Spring of 1934" should read Spring 1933.

Page 2 - Par. 2 - The committees are not given in full and are not correct.

Mrs. J.H.Mitchell, Pres. of the Chapter appointed the following committees:-

1932-33 -- Mrs. D.W.Daniel  
Mrs. J.P.LaMaster  
Mrs. Mamie Crawford  
Mrs. Hoke Sloan

1933-34 Mrs. A.G.Holmes  
Mrs. Mamie Crawford  
Mrs. J.P.LaMaster

Information: Mrs. A.G.Holmes was a member of the John C. Chapter U.D.C. during the time she was chairman of the "Restoration Committee".

Reference: The above information is found in the Year Books of the John C. Chapter U.D.C. for 1932-33 and 1933-34

Signed Mrs. J. H. Mitchell Past Pres. U.D.C.

Notary

William B. Keller

Date

5 May 1955

My commission expires at the  
Pleasure of the Governor.

