The very first students of Clemson College, assembled on the grounds roughly where McCabe and Holmes halls are today, preparing to enter the school in their civilian clothes, ca. July 1893. Clemson University Photographs, CUL.SC.
CHAPTER V

First Graduation
1893–1897

The Blue Ridge Railroad came to a halt at Cherry’s Crossing by the old Pickens homestead. Whether coming from east or west, the trains had picked up boys as young as fourteen and young men in their twenties bound for the new “farmers’ college,” Clemson. They were deposited beside the tracks. No depot and no shelter awaited them. Four miles to the north on the line variously called the Danville and Richmond, the Airline, or the Southern, the new students got off in the comfort of a small depot, a two-story brick general store, and a small number of homes. The sign declared the town to be Calhoun.

These two rail lines would be very important to the growth and development of Clemson Agricultural College. The Blue Ridge line, which began at the Atlantic Ocean coastline, had terminal stations in Savannah, Georgia; Port Royal, Charleston, Georgetown, and Conway, South Carolina; and Wilmington, North Carolina. These roads converged at Columbia, the state’s capital, then fanned out to Chester, Carlisle, Clinton, and Greenwood. The heavily traveled Greenwood line continued west by northwest to Anderson, Pendleton, Cherry’s Crossing, and then to Seneca and Walhalla. The local lines fed the trunk (or main) line so that, except for the northwestern third of South Carolina, all were within an easy train ride of the college. The Southern line served the northwestern third of the state. It stretched conveniently (for people having business at the college) from New Orleans, Louisiana (a major port); through Birmingham, Alabama (a large industrial town), and Atlanta, Georgia (an emerging commercial center); and then stopped at Calhoun. Then the line moved on to two emerging South Carolina textile centers at Greenville and Spartanburg before crossing into North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, the nation’s capital. So the college, although isolated in the immediate region, was at a southeastern crossroads. For at least a century, student enrollment and alumni dispersion patterns followed these railroad lines. Nearly one hundred years later, when asked by a Philadelphia lawyer, “Where is Clemson?” a grinning Clemson undergraduate explained Clemson’s 120-mile separation from Atlanta, Charlotte, and Augusta and then concluded, “Clemson’s centrally isolated!”

At both Cherry’s Crossing and Calhoun, mule-drawn wagons with African American drivers waited to load the new students’ luggage to the new college. Steamer trunks, carpetbags, pillowcases, and makeshift clothes carriers filled the
wagons. Members of the faculty met the new cadets, quickly formed them into small units, and began to march them toward the college as the luggage wagons rumbled along with them. From Calhoun the march was a bit under a mile and a half, but the road formed little more than a dirt track, and it ran uphill. The road from Cherry’s Crossing was better defined, up and down, but it covered two miles.¹

Local young students-to-be arrived in wagons at the college from their farming homes scattered across the rolling Piedmont. Their family wagons were joined by those of the simply curious who drove over to see the college opening from July 3 to July 6, 1893. Like many of the other inquisitive and hopeful, John Adger McCrary and his father had ridden over to witness the activities. He recalled,

> On the way home my father asked me if I would like to go to school at Clemson, and I remember his reply very characteristic of him, which was always quick and to the point. When my answer to his question was “yes,” he said, “Get your clothes and things together and I’ll take you up on Monday morning,” and he did.²

J. T. Bowen had arrived on July 3, 1893, the very first day. He remembered,

> We were all up early the next morning for everyone seemed to be more or less excited.…

> A number of faculty that afternoon [July 4] proceeded to Cherry’s Crossing to meet the gang and pilot them over to the college. The members of this pilot-ing committee, as I remember them were Professors Furman, Moncrief, Morrison, Chris Welsh and William [sic] Welsh. A crowd was gathered at the south entrance to the main building when the head of the column came in sight led by the above mentioned members of the faculty.

> This line stretched from the Main Building south portal, above which was cast in terra cotta the word “Agriculture,” all the way to the wood-frame infirmary. Waiting beneath the terra cotta plaque was the commandant, Lt. T. Q. Donaldson Jr., who had been detailed from the Seventh Cavalry by the U.S. secretary of war to serve at the new land-grant college in Clemson. Bowen continued, “Finally Lt. Donaldson took charge and the boys were herded into the barracks and room assignments were undertaken. Trunks were trammeled along the halls practically all night and there was very little sleeping.”³

The new students ranged in age from their early twenties down to fourteen. While the trustees had set no maximum age, on March 4, 1891, they established the minimum age of fifteen, except if two brothers applied. Then, if one were fourteen and the other fifteen or older, both could be admitted. At the same time, Trustee James Orr’s curriculum committee recommended, “The government shall be military and each student shall be required to purchase a prescribed uniform of cadet grey.” In addition, for placement in the freshman class, the young man
needed to demonstrate, through a test, proficiency in arithmetic, geography, and history of the United States, and “a fair knowledge of grammar.” But just as the uniform guaranteed a sense of economic and social equality, the trustees did not intend to send inadequately prepared young men home to community shame. Therefore, they had directed that the faculty develop preparatory classes. Neither of these approaches was unusual. Other southern (and a few midwestern and mid-Atlantic) land-grant colleges had taken similar paths, indicating a genuine concern for personal feelings and family sensitivity.

The next morning after breakfast, the young cadets, not yet in uniform, assembled in the chapel for introduction of the faculty, those trustees present, and Edwin Boone Craighead, Clemson’s second president. Craighead had only just been selected president on June 21, 1893; however, he was traveling to Clemson barely sixty miles from Wofford College, where he held a professorship in classics. Born in Missouri in 1861, Craighead spent his early years helping his widowed mother manage the family’s small farm. In addition to the experience of farm work, he attended Central College, a small Methodist school in Missouri. His best subjects were English literature, Greek, and Latin. He pursued advanced studies at Vanderbilt and in Germany and France. His gift for languages paralleled, to some extent, that of Thomas Green Clemson’s. Craighead had taught at Emory and Henry College in Virginia and then at Wofford College, so that until he came to Clemson, all the U.S. institutions in which he studied or taught were affiliated with the Methodist denomination. But, unlike Strode, he had no experience in any management. The noncompatibility of his academic field of study, given that he had studied classics, and his lack of a managerial record would mar his administration.

The 442 students who comprised Clemson College’s first class sat for an entrance examination designed to test each student’s knowledge of algebra, literature, general science, and United States history. Copies of the entrance examinations survive in the university archives and show the test’s rigor. The determination of most of the trustees and most of the faculty to maintain high academic standards would be a point of contention between the college and some members of the state government and the general public throughout Clemson’s history. But Richard Wright Simpson, while planning and building the school, once declared,
“We are building in the forest a college, which one day will be the equal of any in the South, including Vanderbilt!”

Just the vision of electrification was heady enough. Bowen remembered,

The electrical lights were quite a novelty to most of the boys and there were several amusing incidents due to their unfamiliarity with electric lamps. I wonder if Johnny Simpson, now a prominent electric [sic] engineer, remembers the fact that he was sent with a basket to Prof. Tompkin’s office for a supply of incandescent lamp wicks?

**Cadet Life**

After the grading of the placement tests, 277 students were enrolled in the college, and 165 entered in the hastily cobbled together “fitting” school (referred to formally as the “preparatory class”) placed under the direction of William Shannon Morrison. No doubt Morrison’s extensive experience with creating school systems in several large Upstate towns aided him. Two other faculty assisted him. The fitting school raised another issue with the general public.

Cadet life was tightly organized. Reveille was sounded at 6:30 a.m., and the cadets had fifty minutes to clean their rooms, bathe (baths were required twice weekly), shave (a point of confusion among the younger cadets who had no reason to shave nor shaving gear), dress, and be in formation in time for their officers to march them to breakfast. The officers were selected from among the cadets who transferred from other colleges. Full roll call came at 8:10 a.m., with daily chapel at 8:15 a.m. It consisted of a morning prayer, Scripture reading, hymn, and announcements. The cadets attended classes from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Dinner, again by companies, was served family style at 1:00 p.m., with classes, laboratories, and practical work (forge, wood shop, or field work) followed by military drill. Retreat then followed a half hour for recreation. Supper, which was not as heavy a meal as dinner, followed. Usually at 6:30 p.m., the cadets were dismissed to their barracks rooms for study until 10:00 p.m. Taps sounded at 10:30 p.m., followed by “lights out.” The last was easily enforced by having the main switch turned off at the power station. Auxiliary lamps and lights (for that matter, any flame) were prohibited in the barracks.

Throughout the day, from breakfast until recreation, the cadet remained in his dress uniform. These were of 24-ounce West Point gray wool (both cut and color) with trim and cap. Brass buttons had “C.A.C.” embossed on them, although button designs and uniform cut and style changed over the years. At recreation, however, the young men could slip out of the woolen garments into their denim fatigues (the trustees’ minutes use the term “salem jeans,” which identified the weight).

For cadets in the regimental band, however, recreation time involved band and drill practice. The band students brought their instruments from home. The
The majority of the Class of 1896 in front of Hardin Hall. Visions Collection of Professor Alan Schaffner, CUL, SC.
trustees annually appropriated between $100 and $175 (2009 equivalent $2,448
to $4,284) for music for the band. A band (or at least a drum and bugle corps)
formed an essential communications group for any military unit, as did the color
guard. The band and the flags conveyed orders for unit or troop movement. It
was no surprise that USMA and the Norwich Academy, which Thomas Clemson
attended when young, both had bands. However, the teaching of music was not
part of the regular curriculum. The band operated as a separate company and was
among the early intramural and sports teams and other extracurricular activities.

Saturday morning was given to rigorous room inspection in which cadets
removed bedclothes and took them to the laundry, and rolled the mattresses to
the end of the iron bedstead. They cleaned and polished shoes and arranged them
beneath the beds. One of the three roommates had been designated the orderly
for the month. Ultimately, dust on the lintel of the door or on the top of the
wardrobe, or a cloudy shaving mirror, or a dirty pitcher, washbasin, or footbath
would be charged to him. Responsibility for the bed, springs, and all other mat-
ters fell to the assignee. In a ten-month term, each student in a three-person room
served as the orderly for three nonconsecutive months. Even the supervisor of the
barracks came from the older students. Students handled the laundry collection
and delivery and the cleaning of the bathrooms at the west end of each floor.
On the ground floor of the barracks was the mess hall, scoured daily by the kitchen staff. The kitchen at the west end remained clean, thanks to the African American kitchen staff. Procurement of food was the duty of P. H. E. Sloan, secretary-treasurer of the board, although Augustus Schilletter, a German immigrant and former baker, made the actual choices. Schilletter joined the staff in 1893 and held the position until 1919.16 Saturday after dinner at 1:00 p.m. was reserved for the meetings of the college’s two literary groups, the Calhoun and Palmetto societies. By the second year, the Columbian Society had also been formed. These served as opportunities for students to improve their writing skills through set essays critiqued by other students. Members also gave speeches and regularly practiced debate. Each club had its own room in the Main Building, and during the first three years, each acquired its own parliamentary guide, a gavel, and black gowns for the society’s officers. The officers changed each term, which allowed a large number of cadets to prepare for community leadership. Membership in the societies was by application and majority vote of older members. Students not in any of the literary societies convened at the same time each Saturday to write or declaim before faculty critics.17 The students were forbidden to establish any Greek letter or secret societies at Clemson such as existed at many of the other schools in the area.18 Later in the afternoon, the cadets had free time for recreation, which usually involved sports of one form or another.

Sunday mornings were for corporate worship in the Memorial Chapel. Visiting ministers from the available denominations preached (all came from the four main Protestant denominations). Cadets excused from this service had to remain quietly in their barracks rooms. The denominational surveys, printed in each year’s Record, indicated the vast majority of the students came from Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian families. Presbyterians distinguished Associate Reformed separately from the Presbyterians (U.S.). A few other denominations, including Lutherans, were noted among the students. The first Roman Catholic students received listing in 1895, and Jews, counted as Israelites, in 1896–1897.19 The cadets formed a student Christian association in the winter of 1894. Prof. T. P. Patterson, an English instructor, served as the faculty sponsor. Later in the year, F. S. Brockman, the state secretary of the Young Men’s Christian Association, met with the group, and it formed into the YMCA. Over the first sixty years of the history of the student body, the “Y” took second place only to the cadet corps in its importance to and impact on Clemson’s student body.20

**Athletics**

By the spring of 1896, pickup games of baseball had moved from occasional to intramural by companies. The competition was vigorous. The college formed
a team, and the players prevailed on R. T. V. Bowman to serve as coach. Bowman taught forge and foundry, a skill required of all the students. Originally from Charlottesville, Virginia, he had studied at the Miller School and had also taken course work at the University of Virginia. The Miller School, created by the will of Samuel Miller, opened in 1878 as a boarding school for orphan boys (it became coeducational in 1884). The school taught the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, followed by the classics, agriculture, metalwork, and woodwork. The Miller School fielded its first baseball team in 1882, winning its first interschool match over Fishburne Military School 55–0. Thomas Grayson Poats, another early Clemson faculty member who had been a member of the Miller team, served as Bowman’s aide.

That first Clemson baseball team had few more than ten or eleven players, and they played only two matches with Furman University, thirty-five miles away in Greenville. The first game was at Clemson and played on the relatively flat field to the northeast of the Main Building. The second was on the Furman campus. The Furman Purple Hurricanes won both games. (Natural phenomena were very popular team mascots at the end of the nineteenth century. Think of the Crimson Tide, the Green Wave, or the Golden Cyclones.) Clemson fielded no team in 1897. Bowman coached the 1898 season, which would be his last, to a two-win and four-loss season. “Physically unable to take any considerable part in athletic games he helped by his counsel and presence whenever practicable,” remembered then-President Henry Hartzog when he announced in chapel on Sunday, April 16, 1899, that Bowman had died two days earlier.
The 1896 session also saw the arrival of a young engineering instructor, Walter Merritt Riggs, who climbed down from a Southern Railroad northbound carriage at the Calhoun stop. “The depot,” he recalled later, “was about the size of a French box-car, unlighted and uninhabited, and there was no halo of light where might lie sleeping the college [I] had to serve.” He remembered that he walked the muddy red clay road for about a mile and a half uphill carrying his luggage to the college. “When I reached the campus,” he continued, “I felt beneath the forest primeval. There were many trees and much underbrush, and miles and miles of bad roads, but only a few buildings.”

Riggs came to Clemson from Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API) at Auburn. Born in Orangeburg on January 24, 1873, of a Connecticut father and South Carolina mother, Riggs worked with his father on Saturdays and during the summers in the family's lumber mill and paint shop. He proved himself adept at building miniature machines based on the real ones in his father's shop. Riggs finished high school and in 1890 entered API.

An active student at API (now Auburn), he became a member of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, was a champion orator, the captain and catcher for the baseball team, and left end on the football team. Although he had not joined any church, he was reared a Presbyterian and attended Fort Hill Presbyterian while at Clemson. He was a strong supporter of “muscular Christianity,” a popular all-denominational movement that emphasized physical fitness and competition. Riggs graduated from API in 1893 and immediately became a postgraduate assistant in English literature during 1893–1894. The next year he served as an instructor in physics. During the summer of 1894, Riggs studied electrical physics and mechanics at Cornell. He arrived at Clemson from Auburn in the winter of 1896 as an instructor in electrical engineering.

Given his great interest in student sports, Riggs might well have watched the Clemson-Furman baseball game the next April (also in 1896). In that spring, the students, Bowman, Riggs, and a few other faculty formed the Clemson Athletic Association and, through President Craighead, asked the trustees to designate some land for their use. The trustees took no action, except to direct the question to the president.

In the early autumn of 1896, the students formed a football team and asked Riggs to serve as the coach. He agreed. The question of the team's colors and mascot arose. The colors selected were red and blue, and the mascot was the Tiger. As the years progressed, many people said the Tiger mascot and the colors came with Riggs from Auburn. However, R. G. Hamilton, the captain of the first football team, remembered, “The mascot of the Tiger was first used by a student named Thompson, who claimed it was based on Princeton’s mascot.” Red and blue colors did not come from Auburn, whose colors were orange and blue.
Clemson’s football Tigers defeated Wofford and Furman before falling 12–6 at the State Fair to the South Carolina College Jaguars, who sported garnet and black. All three games were played away from Clemson, as would be the games of 1897. Clemson played its first home football game in 1898, when it defeated Bingham Military School from North Carolina. The game was played, as with baseball, on the large parade ground (first called Bowman Field after R. T. V. Bowman’s death in April 1899) near the Main Building. Besides baseball and football, it served until 1915 as the site of home track and field meets and some basketball games.\(^{28}\)

**New Trustees**

During the years 1893–1897, the legislature elected two new trustees to replace those scheduled either to be reelected or replaced. This presented Governor (and life trustee) Benjamin Ryan Tillman an opportunity to strengthen his position on the board. The continuing legislative trustees were J. E. Tindal, J. H. Hardin, D. T. Redfearn, and E. T. Stackhouse. The legislature elected new trustees W. H. Mauldin and J. R. Jeffries.

William Henry Mauldin, son of the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Franklin and Adeline Hamilton Mauldin, was born on January 15, 1839, near Anderson. He attended the Wesley Leverette private school at old Calhoun, near Belton, and
then the Williamston public schools. He married Lenora Connors of the Slabtown community, and the couple had two sons and three daughters. The family settled in the Hampton community in the new county carved out of the Orangeburg District. While serving in the S.C. Senate, he became a close colleague of B. R. Tillman. An active Baptist and a Mason, Mauldin was elected a legislative trustee on January 10, 1894, and served Clemson until his death on December 26, 1900.29

The legislature chose John Randolph Jeffries as its second new trustee. Born in the Elbethel community in Union County (now in Cherokee County), he was educated in public schools. He attended Furman University but did not graduate. He had served in the Confederate army and attained the rank of captain. After the Civil War, he married Mary Henrietta Allen of Cedar Springs on November 1, 1866. A large landholder and farmer, Jeffries involved himself in agricultural improvement and public education and affairs. He served as a lecturer for the Farmers’ Alliance and as a member of the S.C. House of Representatives, where he too had become a close friend of Tillman. Jeffries was elected trustee on the Clemson board on December 7, 1893. He served only two months; on his way home from the early February board meeting, he fell ill and died in a friend's home in Jonesville on February 10, 1894. He is buried in the Elbethel Baptist churchyard.30

With this legislative trustee election, Tillman strengthened his influence on the board somewhat, while practical farmers, whether in crops or in lumber, continued to have the most influence. Both new trustees were born in the Upstate. Even with Tillman’s increased influence, the genius of the makeup of the board allowed the college to grow steadily without the convulsive shifts in one or another direction.

But with the unexpected death of Jeffries, the legislature had another seat to fill. It selected W. H. Ellerbe, who had served as the S.C. comptroller in 1890 and who at the time of his selection as a legislative trustee was a member of the “Tillmanite” group. Born in Sellers (Marion County) on April 7, 1862, Ellerbe was educated by private tutors and then at the Pine Hill Academy. A Methodist, he attended Wofford College from 1880 to 1882 and then Vanderbilt, although bad health ended his enrollment there. After recovery, he married Henrietta Rogers on June 21, 1887, and they had one daughter and five sons. A merchant and farmer with an interest in horses, Ellerbe was elected governor in 1896 and again in 1898. He died on June 2, 1899.31

**College Issues**

In the summer of 1893, the trustees asked J. S. Newman to begin a search for a resident veterinary surgeon to serve at the experiment station, oversee its cattle
and other livestock, and supervise the college’s dairy herd that provided milk and butter for the mess halls. Because funds for these areas came from two different federal laws and from student fees, the finances had to be accounted for separately. Thus, the veterinary surgeon’s position would have a “split appointment.” Further, the veterinarian also taught in the second- and third-year agricultural curriculum.32

However, a number of trustees and others worried that the most prominent teaching part of the college was the Academic Department to the detriment, they feared, of the Agricultural Department and the Mechanical Department. In 1895, a trustees’ committee composed of R. W. Simpson, M. L. Donaldson, and E. T. Stackhouse formed to address this concern and propose remedies if needed. Obviously, if this turned out to be the case—inasmuch as the trustees established and changed the curricula at will, hired the faculty, and set the salaries of individual faculty—the fault could lie only with the trustees themselves. And, indeed, in self-fulfillment, the committee report found the concern warranted. It noted that the Agricultural Department had no “full professors,” the Mechanical Department had only one, but the Academic Department had three “full professors and two associates the latter paid $1500.00 each.” But in arriving at its conclusion, the committee overlooked the particular assignment of M. B. Hardin full time to the fertilizer laboratory (drawing his salary from fertilizer tag sales), even though he shared (unequally) teaching with R. N. Brackett, the associate professor with less experience but the only holder of the doctorate. The trustees considered chemistry an agricultural subject. The other “full” professors were in mathematics, English, and physics in the Academic Department, and mechanics in the Engineering Department. At that point, W. S. Morrison, who held the “full” professorship in history, received assignment as headmaster of the “fitting school.”

The trustee committee then recommended that the chair of physics be transferred from the Academic Department, his “chair” canceled, and his salary reduced. His teaching assignment would be changed from physics to electrical or mechanical engineering. The committee also recommended that the board ask the professor of mathematics, H. A. Strode, to resign. The same report also proposed that E. L. Litton, foreman of the wood shop, resign because his “education [was] lamentably deficient.” Other instructors in the Mechanical Department—R. T. V. Bowman in forge and foundry, T. W. Wright in the machine shop, W. M. Yager in mechanical drawing, and Williams Welch in drawing—were told to spend their noninstructional time attending an advanced study school to improve their academic credentials.

The committee submitted its report on December 12, 1895, and by the following January 22, during the winter break, the board had taken action. Strode had submitted his resignation, and J. G. Clinkscales filled his professorship in
mathematics. The board set the president’s salary at $2,700, while Hardin, as professor of chemistry, received $2,500. Although the position was vacant at the time, the professor of agriculture’s salary would be $2,000.33

This reordering resulted from a number of factors not necessarily related to the committee “preamble” noted above. The trustees’ ire seems to have been focused on Strode and Christopher Welch. The Strode problem likely involved his growing lethargy and loss of interest in his work. The committee’s concluding comments urged the board to “retain only those professors who manifest by their acts a genuine love for their work and a hearty interest in all their pupils….“34

Nor was there any obvious reason for Welch’s dismissal, but given the remainder of the board’s decisions that day, his poor teaching may have been the cause. Welch resigned, replaced by Riggs.35

Even though the trustees had strong feelings about the direction the college should take, they were anxious to hear, in a systematic fashion, from the people. In their bylaws, they created a Board of Visitors, an independent body that would report to the trustees. The trustees selected the members of the board, composed of one citizen from each of South Carolina’s congressional districts. Each member served a two-year term. The board visited the campus to observe the “working condition” of the college and suggest improvements.36

Adversity

Of course, occasional unexpected troubles arose. The first for Clemson was the death of H. A. Powers, an orphan cadet from Georgetown who died of measles. Brackett arranged Power’s funeral, and the college paid for it, according to a decision by the board in January 1894.37

A second unexpected misfortune happened during the night of May 22, 1894. Fire began on the third floor of the Main Building. Fueled by the alcohol used as a preservative for zoological specimens, the fire spread rapidly through the building. Students, faculty, staff, and convicts fought the blaze. Firemen from several nearby communities joined them, but in spite of all, the interior of this classroom, museum, and library building was lost. Destroyed were almost all of John C. Calhoun’s books, particularly his annotated volumes on law. Fortunately, his personal papers had remained at the Calhoun office behind Fort Hill house. The trustees had hired his nephew, John F. Calhoun, to arrange the papers in chronological order. Mr. Clemson’s papers also were not there. Richard Wright Simpson, as Mr. Clemson’s executor, had not yet placed them at the college. However, the Main Building held Mr. Clemson’s entire library, and those books were lost.38

Within two days, eight trustees had gathered at Clemson. The Main Building was vastly underinsured (insured for $20,000, it cost nearly $50,000 to clean and rebuild). To rebuild would require the trustees to borrow $15,000 on their
Main Building aflame on May 22, 1894. Note the students, evacuated from the barracks that sat adjacent to Main, watching the terrifying spectacle with their worldly possessions gathered around them. Clemson University Photographs, CUL.SC.

The shell of Main Building after the fire. Clemson University Photographs, CUL.SC.
personal signatures. Simpson arrived on the morning of May 26, and he took charge of the board’s meeting (raising the number of trustees present to the nine required for monetary business). The four principal buildings, along with the farm buildings, twenty faculty homes (eight brick and twelve wood), servants’ quarters, barns, the infirmary, and the college-owned furnishings and equipment were insured for $97,550 (2009 equivalent $2,386,782). Mr. Clemson’s oil paintings were covered for $800 (2009 equivalent $19,584), and Fort Hill house for $1,000 (2009 equivalent $24,480). The Main Building would not be insured until rebuilt.

The board ordered the installation of hydrants, the purchase of more fire hoses, the organization of a volunteer fire brigade, and the installation of a sprinkler system. The firm of Bruce and Morgan had already sent a superintendent at Simpson’s request to oversee the rebuilding. And ads were placed in the Charleston News and Courier, the Columbia Record, and the Greenville News for bids for the rebuilding.39

Opportunity

But even in the midst of those difficulties, the opportunity to acquire land loomed large in the minds of some of the trustees. The general assembly was also interested, particularly in the land at Fort Hill that had come into the possession of Floride Isabella Lee, Mr. Clemson’s granddaughter. Partitioned to her upon the 1871 death of her mother, Floride Elizabeth Clemson Lee, the plot cut two triangles on the north side of Fort Hill with their apexes touching at the point where the trail from Calhoun reached the Greenville-Central-Seneca road. The Lees had offered the 288 acres for $12,000 (2009 equivalent $293,760), but on April 19, 1893, the trustees turned down the offer.40 They then made a counter-offer of $10,000, appropriated by the general assembly in 1894. Miss Lee and her advisors agreed to be paid in five annual installments as the general assembly proposed. 41 The resulting extra river frontage and the experience of the spring floods along the Seneca River persuaded the trustees to build a dike along the east bank of the river.42

The trustees now held municipal authority for the college that extended to approximately 1,100 acres (not including the jurisdiction of a five-mile radius from the Main Building tower). They appointed Joseph B. Watson as policeman for the college and J. N. Hook, the secretary of the agricultural experiment station, as trial justice.43

Resulting from the fire, a wood-frame hotel was built on the hill to the east of the Main Building. Classes met there until the reconstruction of Main. The other place used for classes (but only early in the day) was the schoolhouse that had been built on the campus for the children of the small community.44
At least one more challenge confronted the new college before Craighead’s presidency had run its course. Enrollment was quite erratic, in part because of the rigid military discipline, in part because of the difficulty of academic standards, and, by the second year, in part because of the culture of hazing that first appeared in the autumn of 1894. At the time, some of the college students presented a petition to the trustees asking that they replace Craighead as president. The students stated that he was frequently absent from the college and that when he was in his office he was too busy to visit with them. Craighead met with them, but the parties reached no resolution. Although the enrollment in late July 1894 began with 635 cadets, by August 3, 1894, 190 cadets and preparatory students had withdrawn.45

The student displeasure continued to fester so that by the winter of 1897, total enrollment had shrunk to only 330 students.46 George Tillman, the brother of life trustee and then-U.S. Senator Benjamin Tillman, launched a series of attacks. He argued that the school paid too much attention to English and not enough to agriculture and engineering, which seemed to echo the trustee committee’s statement of a year earlier. There was a difference, however. The former Simpson committee had worried that, given the acute shortage of revenue, the salary scale reflected an imbalance in the faculty ranks. George Tillman argued that too much of the teaching time focused on the “academic” subjects. His brother, the senator, replied that Clemson graduates needed preparation to lead the people of their communities and to contend in writing and speaking with the best in the state. George Tillman also claimed that the military studies and drilling distracted from agriculture and engineering. In that, he had a point. Even though military strategy and tactics was a third subject requirement of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, the idea that the college should operate as an all-male military college seems to have come from the trustees, from local culture, and from the other southern land-grant institutions.47

Agricultural Experimentation

George Tillman also made a valid point with his criticism that Clemson’s agriculture benefited the state only through its graduates because all the experimentation remained confined to the Fort Hill campus. The initial trustee decision to centralize agricultural experimentation made sense in 1890–1891, when all attention and all revenue were needed simply to get an experimental farm and the college founded and operating. The decision to make the college president the director of the agricultural experiment station worked only because Strode had a strong background in chemistry. That did not carry over to Craighead, whose
academic field and interests lay in languages and English. Further, Craighead and Newman clashed over a number of issues, especially over the management of the two farms (that is, the farm that helped supply food to the students and the experimental farm).

Newman had also ignored, in part, a board directive to build an extra reservoir for the college water supply. Instead, and without notifying the trustees or explaining his reasons (to provide water pressure enough to reach the top floor of the barracks for daily use and in case of fire), Newman built a standpipe. So irritated were the trustees that they asked him to resign on November 30, 1893.48 Newman responded but received no immediate rejoinder. When the board met in Clemson on January 10, 1894, Newman wrote and requested an audience. It was granted, and he spoke. The trustee minutes record nothing of his statement, but he resigned that day.

To move the experiment station work forward, the trustees established a Board of Control for the Experiment Station. D. K. Norris served as the chair and two other trustees, M. L. Donaldson and R. E. Bowen, as members. All three life members were from the region and could travel to the campus relatively quickly. Also the Fertilizer Control Board was part of the agricultural experiment station. Its membership included trustees J. E. Tindal, J. E. Wannamaker, and B. R. Tillman.49

By March 18, 1896, the Clemson board concluded that the experiment station needed to expand its outreach in the state. Rather than the occasional printed bulletins for distribution to farmers that had marked the first years, the trustees now directed the agriculture and horticulture departments to issue no fewer than six bulletins each year and to send no less than 30,000 copies of each to farmers.50 At the same time, the station, now awaiting a new vice director, planned a farmers’ institute in each of the state’s six congressional districts. The first institutes were held in Orangeburg, Darlington, Manning, Fairview, Walhalla, and Anderson. Professors William L. McGee of agriculture and Mark Hardin of chemistry attended along with President Craighead.51 Even though no member of the board (other than B. R. Tillman) chose to answer George Tillman’s charges, he had obviously goaded the board into activity.

While much of a positive nature happened at Clemson, signs of unrest still centered around the leadership of Craighead. The lines of communication among the students, the president of the college, and the board remained tightly intertwined. The disciplinary relationship between the college president and the students was the irritant. The board promoted the idea that individual students had the freedom to appeal the president’s decision to the full board. Of course, the board did not meet continuously, and the created “lag time” between its meetings allowed even minor problems to fester. Articles published in the Columbia State reporting unhappiness magnified each complaint.52 Six students replied to
the paper’s reports, noting that no student would admit to providing negative information to the *State*. One faculty member admitted to making “damaging statements.” The six students wrote the *State*, challenging the reporter to name his sources or “stand branded by faculty and students as a liar and a slanderer.” One of the six students, W. W. (Wee Willie) Klugh, eventually married one of Richard Wright Simpson’s daughters and joined the Clemson faculty, while a second, L. A. Sease, became a trustee (1901–1908). As expected, the reporter refused to name sources.53 This was, by no means, the last time the *State* and Clemson College would cross swords (or pens).

To investigate the rumors of unrest, the trustees appointed a committee composed of Tillman, Simpson, and Donaldson. Tillman said that the Mechanical Department had not yet evolved into what the trustees envisioned.54 He insisted that the problem lay not with the existing faculty. He pointed out that some of the difficulty resulted from the college not having a large enough teaching staff to cover all the subjects adequately.55 By September 9, the committee reported, “No facts had been found which would warrant the charges of misadministration and incompetence made by the *State* reporter.”56

The Columbia *Register* suggested a coverup and quoted from Gilbert and Sullivan,

> I am right, and you are right
> And all is right as right can be.

The *State* agreed.57 In the aftermath, a faculty member, Williams Welch, who admitted to anonymous public complaining, obeyed the board directive and resigned.58

Welch was not the only employment change in the spring of 1896. *The People’s Journal* reported on Thursday, May 21, that Peter Lindsay, a local person and not an employee of the college, shot W. D. James, foreman of the Clemson farms, on May 12. James died on the thirteenth, and Lindsay went to jail.59 J. P. Lewis filled James’s position.60

During the spring of 1897, Craighead submitted his resignation, given, he wrote, to accept an offer to serve as president of his alma mater.61 He also served later as president of Missouri State Normal College, Tulane University, and the University of Montana.

George Tillman had been named chairman of the Board of Visitors, which did not blunt his attacks on the college. Shortly before the graduation in December 1896, he visited the campus and wrote a series of articles for the *State*. It was, he thought, beyond the means of the state to have a first-class polytechnic institution. His criticism has had supporters throughout the history of the school.62
The First Class Finishes

Although C. C. Newman, who had transferred from Alabama Polytechnic Institute, finished his class work earlier, the first graduation, which was of the students who had transferred in 1893, was set for December 1896. Planning began on August 5, 1896, when a trustee committee composed of Tindal, Donaldson, and Ellerbe conferred with the faculty on the appropriate processes for awarding the degrees and the ceremony. They also heard from the candidates about the festivities. In addition to the ceremonies, the seniors wanted a banquet, reception, and dance, all to be held in the Main Building. The trustees approved everything except the dance. Not to be quickly turned aside, the seniors proposed a “hop” in some other location. The trustees relented.

The events began with a baccalaureate chapel service Sunday afternoon, December 13, 1896, with a sermon delivered by the chancellor of the University of Georgia, W. E. Boggs. All cadets, except the freshmen, attended as did the faculty, trustees, and guests. The guests were quartered in the barracks in space vacated by the freshmen, who had been sent home. Monday began with a military review and the awarding of honors. In the afternoon, athletic competitions preceded a glee club concert. Public speaking filled Tuesday morning. Wednesday, graduation was held in the chapel. Fourteen of the thirty-seven graduates addressed the audience on their senior theses, while the remaining twenty-three submitted their papers. They received their diplomas, signed by the professors, president, and trustees.

After the graduation ceremony, the graduates met and formed the Clemson Alumni Association. They elected T. H. Tuten of Hampton, who had graduated in engineering, as the president of the alumni and W. W. Klugh from Abbeville as secretary. Fortunately, Klugh was one of a number of seniors who remained at Clemson on the faculty, which aided in the survival of the alumni association minutes. Besides Klugh, Rudolph Lee (engineering) and L. A. Werts (agriculture) stayed at Clemson as tutors. C. M. Furman Jr., son of the English professor, served as Clemson’s librarian, while J. M. Blaine and J. T. Bowen remained as postgraduates. Ten other graduates became teachers, four farmers, three merchants, five engineers, two lawyers, one a chemist, and two enrolled in medical school.

After the graduation, the mess hall was made ready for the hop. Years later, Frank Breazeale, one of the graduates, remembered the day well:

On that memorable day...our class divided up—the sheep and the goats. The “ladies men,” or the “sheep” decided to throw a dance, while we goats, who did not have any girl friends, thought we would have a feed. The goats were in the majority. The faculty, many young people from Anderson, Greenville and Sen-
eca, and members of the lower classes, went to the dance, but we boys had only one guest at the banquet—good old Doctor Sloan.

He then remembered some who went to the dance: “Will Klugh went and took ‘Miss Simpson,’ she was R. W. Simpson’s daughter. He married her afterwards, and out-married himself when he got her.” Breazeale must have chuckled as he recalled,

Joe Wertz went, but he had to stag it. Joe was awfully bad about trying to put his arms around every girl who would let him. I don’t know what happened, but it was a little dark in the hall, and in about two minutes they reappeared, the girl looking very indignant, and Joe looking much the worst for wear.

In a few moments, Breazeale remembered the banquet:

Lawrence Sease and I were on the committee to get the refreshments. We went to Greenville for a tub of oysters, and we bought Worcestershire sauce, pickles, and jams and other things at Sloan’s store. Shorty (Schilletter) furnished the vegetables and coffee, and we bought a jug of wine from somewhere. Doctor Sloan sat at the head of the table and we pulled Schilletter in by the apron strings.66

Although the school year had one more term, the college was a success—at least for Tillman, Norris, and Simpson, and probably for the faculty, parents, and other trustees. But they planned no graduation for 1897. While the school year was a success, the experimental calendar, which ran the school year from late February to early December, was not. Clemson would move to the traditional calendar, starting the year in late summer with vacations in June, July, and August. For this transition to succeed, however, the college held its next graduation February 6–9, 1898.67

Notes

1. CUL.SC.CUA. S 3 b 1 f 8.
2. CUL.SC.MSS 68 f 69.
4. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 37–39. On the sectional differences among the land-grant colleges, see Andrew, Long Gray Lines.
5. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 93.
7. CUL.SC.MSS 96.
9. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 93.
11. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 82.
12. Ibid., 80.
13. Ibid., 164.
15. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 83; and CUL.SC.MSS 304 Cassette 3, Dr. Barnwell Rhett Turnipseed to J. C. Littlejohn.
16. CUL.SC.MSS 68 f 23.
17. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 101.
18. Ibid., 93.
20. CUL.SC.MSS 68 f 189; and Anderson *Daily Mail*, April 24, 1944.
21. Http://www.millerschool.org. This material was located and prepared by Paul Alexander Crunkleton, my graduate research assistant, 2009–2010.
22. Webster P. Sullivan Jr., Clemson 1965, furnished me photographs online of the Miller School baseball team, in which his ancestor, Bowman, and Poats are clearly identified.
23. Bourret, *Clemson Baseball 2009*, 176. The word “campus” is Latin for “field.” Its attachment to college or university land is an American early nineteenth century development at the College of New Jersey, now Princeton.
24. CUL.SC.CUA. S 25 ff 9 and 15.
25. Ibid., S 17 f 370.
27. Anderson *Independent*, March 6, 1934. The account credited Maj. William T. Brock, who died that year, with the mascot and association. Entering in 1894, he played football on the teams and was quarterback in 1897. Capt. Hamilton concurred and noted that the mascot was borrowed from Princeton, noting Princeton’s national football prominence, having finished 11–0 in 1893, 8–2 in 1894, and 10–1–1 in 1895. Princeton also had five of the consensus All-Americans in 1893, two in 1894, and two in 1895. However, southern schools found the Tiger a popular mascot. The University of the South, Missouri, and Louisiana State University were and are the Tigers. LSU may have the oldest claim, traced to the Louisiana regiments who, in the Mexican War (1849–1850), fought in striped Zouave uniforms earning them the name Bengal Tigers. Alabama Polytechnic Institute (Auburn), now frequently called the Tigers, was usually called War Eagles after one faculty member’s pet eagle. The school still maintains an eagle, and Auburn’s school song begins, 
   War eagle fly down the field,
   Ever to conquer, never to yield.
   However, Auburn’s earliest “official” printed reference to the Tiger is a cheer in the 1898 edition of *Glomorata*, 119,
   Tiger ‘rah! Tiger ‘rah!
   ‘Rah! ‘Rah! rah, Heisman!
29. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 ss 1 f “Mauldin.”
30. Ibid., f “Jeffries.”
31. Ibid., f “Ellerbe.”
32. Ibid., v 1, 84; 90–91.
33. Ibid., 154–158.
34. Ibid., 156.
36. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 111.
37. Ibid., 103; and Craighead, “President’s Report,” November 1, 1893, in *Clemson Trustees’ Report to the General Assembly*, 1893, 13.
38. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 102. Besides the loss of Mr. Clemson’s books, which represented a collection of the library of a nineteenth century American gentry man, were the law books of John C. Calhoun. Fortunately, the papers were not there.
39. Ibid., 119–121.
40. Ibid., 87.
41. Ibid., 103, 116.
42. Ibid., 117.
43. Ibid., 136. Incorporation of the government of Clemson Agricultural College would be completed January 22, 1895.
44. Ibid., 120. On the school, see ibid., 95.
45. Columbia State, August 4, 1894.
46. Record, 1896–1897.
47. Andrew, Long Gray Lines, 40. Andrew has dated the establishment of the military regimen at each of the southern land-grant colleges. See also McCandless, The Past in the Present. On 82, McCandless noted that, as early as 1871, the act establishing the Arkansas Industrial University was to be opened to all qualified youth “without regard to race, sex, or sect.” At the school’s opening in January 1872, one woman was among the seven students who matriculated there. Alabama Polytechnic opened to women in 1892. And the University of Tennessee opened to women in 1893. Although not a land-grant foundation, South Carolina College (now USC) admitted thirteen women in 1895. (See McCandless, 86–88.) The George Tillman citations are from the Columbia State, August 21, 22, and 23, 1896.
49. Record, 1894–1895, 9.
50. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 162.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., S 37 f “Faculty 1890–1908.”
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., S 30 v 1, 168.
55. Ibid., 166.
56. Ibid., 159.
57. Columbia State, September 21, 1896.
58. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 151.
60. Ibid., July 6, 1896.
61. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30.
62. Columbia State, January 7, 1897.
63. CUL.SC.CUA. S 30 v 1, 166, 168.
64. Record, 1897–1898, 92.
65. Ibid, 87.
66. CUL.SC.MSS 68 f 69.