

INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Alma Bennett, Editor

In this biography of Thomas Green Clemson, our twelve authors address multiple aspects of his life, a life—1807–1888—which not only frames the nineteenth century and many of its most complex issues, but also reveals Clemson’s own complexity, expertise, and vision. In effect, our goal, on Clemson’s behalf, has been to answer the kinds of questions raised by the 1897-1898 painting *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* by the French artist Paul Gauguin. Thus, in the first two chapters, Jerome Reel introduces us to Thomas Green Clemson’s ancestors and extended and immediate family and then examines the first thirty-one years of his life and education.

With this familial and intellectual context in place, each of the next nine chapters (3 through 11) addresses particular aspects or periods of Clemson’s adult life, work, and interests. Together, these chapters create a composite answer to professional and personal questions about what and who the multifaceted Clemson was. In chapter 3, for example, Ann Ratliff Russell, in focusing on the life of Clemson’s extraordinary wife, Anna Maria Calhoun Clemson, from their marriage in 1838 until her death in 1875, gives us crucial insights into their marriage, children, and family life; Thomas Clemson’s chronic depression; and the pivotal roles Anna played in his life and posthumous legacy.

The fourth chapter, transatlantically co-authored by James Cross and Sabine Godts-Péters, covers Clemson’s European years, beginning with his student years in Paris, which included his fighting in the July 1830 Revolution when Parisians overthrew King Charles X’s regime. Tracking Clemson’s return to Europe in 1844 as the United States chargé d’affaires in Belgium, the authors delineate Clemson’s diplomatic contributions during a critical stage of the Industrial Revolution and U.S. international relations. In “The Washington Years” (chapter 5), Alan Grubb explores Thomas Clemson’s professional frustrations and, more important, the evolution of his burgeoning agricultural interests, advocacies, and publications from 1851, when the Clemsons returned to the United States from Belgium, until 1861, when, in support of the Confederate cause, he resigned from his long-sought national position as superintendent of agricultural affairs.

Chalmers M. Butler’s chapter 6 provides a long-needed evaluation of Clemson’s education in Paris, his subsequent publications, and his work as a scientist and engineer. This analysis of Clemson’s work as a mining engineer, assayer, metallurgist, and geologist and his related publications leads to Butler’s final assessment of Clemson’s expertise in the context of fierce competitions for geological

survey directorships. In chapter 7, “The Scientist as Farmer,” John Kelly follows a different scientific trajectory by focusing on Clemson as an agriculturalist through his various attempts to farm in South Carolina and Maryland—attempts that reveal the challenges of nineteenth-century agriculture, especially in the South. While his farming efforts were not often successful, those experiences intensified Clemson’s determination to make science and technology available to American farmers through education.

Abel Bartley’s chapter 8 shifts our attention from the sciences to racial issues and the politics of the Reconstruction Era in South Carolina. Within that context, he closely examines the history of education in the state, which, in turn, creates important perspectives into Thomas Clemson’s advocacies of and decisions regarding a new college for the state.

In the next two chapters, artistic aspects of Clemson’s life and interests are introduced. For instance, William Hiott’s chapter 9, a *tour de force* exploration of the Thomas Green Clemson Art Collection, analyzes the collection, which ranges from Old Masters to Clemson’s own artwork; traces the paintings from Europe to Long Island to Maryland to Fort Hill and various locations on the Clemson campus; and then addresses the collection as a remarkable nineteenth-century achievement and twenty-first-century legacy. Andrew Levin’s chapter 10, on the other hand, explores music—an almost unknown aspect of Clemson’s artistic interests. The author first creates nineteenth-century European and New World contexts of classical, popular, and dance music in sites where either Thomas Clemson or Anna Calhoun or the Clemson and Calhoun families lived. After focusing on the importance of music in the Calhoun, Colhoun, and Clemson families, Levin introduces us to a Thomas Clemson who enjoyed all types of music, played popular songs and hymns on his violin, and composed a number of polkas and “a national air,” several of which have been performed during and since the bicentennial celebration.

William Hiott’s chapter 11 studies the roles that Fort Hill, the home of John C. and Floride Calhoun, played in Thomas and Anna Calhoun Clemson’s lives. The site of their 1838 wedding, they lived there with her parents from 1839 to 1842. The Clemsons moved back to Fort Hill in 1872, a year after their two adult children died and three years before Anna’s death. A reclusive Clemson lived there until his death in 1888. Still, due to Thomas and Anna Clemson’s respective wills and shared vision, Fort Hill formed the nucleus of what would become Clemson College.

Following these pivotal eleven components of Clemson’s life and work and his death in 1888, the last two chapters of the biography address questions about his posthumous legacy. The first stage of the answer appears in Chapter 12 in which Clayton Steadman carefully examines the development and unique stipulations of Thomas Green Clemson’s Last Will and Testament that culminated, after heated opposition, in its legislative enactment in 1888 and its being signed into law and confirmed in 1889. In the final chapter, Verna Gardner Howell and Jerome Reel create, respectively, the biography’s final answer: a full review of Thomas Clem-

son's life and his remarkable, ongoing legacy that opened its doors in 1893 as the Clemson Agricultural College and continues as Clemson University.

About the Biography Project

The proposal for a new biography of Thomas Green Clemson, the first since 1937, emerged from a conversation between Allen Wood, a member of Clemson University's Board of Trustees, and Alan Grubb, an associate professor of history. As a result, in early 2006, Jerome Reel invited fifteen scholars and specialists to join the biography team, one of the many committees formed to plan the 2007 bicentennial celebration of Clemson's birth. Subsequently, the research for the biography's thirteen chapters carried the authors to archives in Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Georgia, and around South Carolina, and to countless hours in the Clemson University Libraries and on line. Then the writing, editing, and illustrations work began. This three-year effort has been our labor of love for Thomas Clemson and his "high seminary of learning." Ours, however, are not the only efforts. This biography has required the assistance of a large number of individuals and institutions, and we want to express our gratitude to them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thomas Green Clemson's multifaceted life, work, and interests mandated that we bring together a correspondingly wide range of scholarship and expertise for this biography. It is easy to recognize the expertise the twelve authors bring to their respective chapters. However, embedded in the chapters, the illustrations, and the book itself is a rather invisible host of other individuals and institutions which the authors, the managing producer, and I want to introduce and thank for their important assistance.

Taking an editor's prerogative, I begin the process by expressing my appreciation to the fourteen individuals who joined me on the bicentennial biography team in 2006. Let me start by singling out two invaluable contributors to the book project: Jerome Reel, University historian and professor emeritus of history, and Deborah Dunning, the Department of Creative Service's manager of editorial services. Reel's love for and knowledge of Clemson College/University and the Clemson family have informed every stage of our project, and Dunning's unwavering commitment to the book and her skills are reflected throughout the book. I also am deeply grateful to the chapters' authors—Abel Bartley, Chalmers Butler, James Cross, Sabine Godts-Péters, Alan Grubb, William Hiott, Verna Howell, John Kelly, Andrew Levin, Jerome Reel, Ann Russell, and Clayton Steadman—and to the Foreword's author Allen Wood. It has been an honor to work with these colleagues and to share the evolution of their work.

Now, we fifteen contributors to the biography want to acknowledge many other individuals and institutions. For the book's production, we first want to thank—and praise—Wayne Chapman, a professor of English and the exemplary executive director of the Clemson University Digital Press (CUDP), which is our book's publisher. Next, we thank Charis Chapman for bringing her extraordinary digital publication design skills to our book. We also continue to appreciate the fine work by the staff of our book's printer, the R. L. Bryan Company of Columbia, S.C.; the support and book sales of the Clemson Alumni Association and Randolph N. (Randy) Boatwright, its director of programs and services; and the promotional work of Jacob Barker, public information director of the Department of Marketing Services.

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Thomas Clemson would have been pleased, as we are, that Clemson University students have been involved in the biography's production. These include Clemson University Digital Press editorial assistants—M.A. in English students Jillian Lang (galley setting) and Bridget Jeffs (index) and B.A. in English student intern Jordan McKenzie—and other M.A. in English students: David Foltz (bibliography), Mari Ramler, Jessica Martin, and Jonathan Williams, as well as M.A. in history graduate, Andrew Land (U.S. census material).

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