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# MR. AULL'S GRAND EXPERIMENT

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MR. AULL'S GRAND EXPERIMENT

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
History

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by  
Paul Alexander Crunkleton  
May 2012

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Accepted by:  
Dr. Rod Andrew, Jr., Committee Chair  
Dr. Jerome V. Reel, Jr.  
Dr. H. Roger Grant

## ABSTRACT

Institutional histories, be they about colleges, public agencies, or corporations, are generally impersonal affairs. The story of the Clemson Experimental Forest and its history, however, is intensely *personal*. While manning his post as head of the department of agricultural economics and rural sociology, George Aull labored daily to ensure that the people of the Fant’s Grove community, the heart of the Clemson Project’s land, could achieve better lives, that the land—severely damaged by overfarming and droughts—could return to productivity, and that Clemson College could apply its research initiatives in agriculture, forestry, economics, and sociology to the people living around it. Aull contacted local business leaders, college administrators and faculty members, former advisors and instructors at the schools where he earned his Master’s and Ph. D. degrees (University of Virginia and the University of Wisconsin, respectively), politicians, and federal and state officials. Aull begged, borrowed, and wrote constantly. In the end, it was Aull’s willingness to work and endure the slings and arrows of personal attacks that made the Clemson College Community Conservation Project and, ultimately, the Clemson Experimental Forest a reality. It is through copies of the documents that passed between Aull and his contacts that I tell the story of the “CCCCP,” framed as a personal quest that Aull refused to let go, even after his return to the classroom full time and corresponding separation from the Land Use Project and its parent organization, the Resettlement Administration, in 1936. The first chapter, “Mr. Aull Answers His Calling,” relates the story of a young George Aull finishing his education, beginning his career at Clemson, and joining the Resettlement Administration. The second chapter, “Mr. Aull Goes to ‘War,’” picks up Aull’s career with the Resettlement Administration as it ended and he returned to the classroom, only to find his beloved project attacked by federal administrators. His “war,” then was the almost daily fight that Aull put up to secure the Clemson project’s long-term prospects and his college’s role

therein. The third chapter, “Mr. Aull and His Divided House,” provides the story of the Clemson project as its lease neared finalization and enemies from within the Clemson party sought to block its progression. The conclusion, “Mr. Aull Gets Disappointed” (hopefully) illustrates to the reader that George Aull was dedicated to public life and worked for the people of the Upstate, South Carolina, the South, and the United States as a whole, even in the face of resistance.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my grandparents. First, I dedicate it to the memory of three of my grandparents, Peyton Alexander Crunkleton, Paul Franklin Foster, and Billie Sue Knight Foster. The latter two I had the privilege of knowing and loving for 22 too-short years. They loved me so greatly and instilled in me so deeply a respect for learning and work that my education—and this thesis—would not have been possible. The former, my paternal grandfather, I never had the opportunity to know as his untimely death in 1970 predated my birth by 15 years. The effects he had on our family in his life and through his unfortunate passing, however, has taught us all that every day is an opportunity to spend our time working for those things and people we love.

Lastly, my maternal grandmother, Mary Edith Crunkleton, has been the rock upon which my family has rested for decades. Her strength and her perseverance have served as a constant inspiration to me throughout my school years and this process.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This has been something I have both dreaded and anticipated for a long time. I have anticipated it because writing the acknowledgments and dedication sections of my thesis meant that I was approaching the end of my hard work. I have dreaded it because I think it is probably impossible for me to express my gratitude for all the help, support, and love shown to me since I began my studies at Clemson in the summer of 2007.

Rather obviously, I feel the need to begin my acknowledgments by highlighting the support given to me by my entire family, but my parents, David and Kim Crunkleton, and brother, Joshua Michael-David Crunkleton, deserve so much gratitude I could fill another thesis in describing all that they have done for me. Their love and support have kept me going and pushed me along, especially during the difficult times that every graduate student faces. For all that they have done, I thank them here and readily admit that I could not have written the first word of this thesis without them.

I also would like to thank the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Rod Andrew, Dr. Roger Grant, and Dr. Jerome Reel, for believing in me and showing me patience the whole way (and for reading my very long sentences over and over again). I also must thank Dr. Reel and his dear, sweet wife, Edmeé, for opening their home to me and treating me like family while I have worked as his research assistant since 2009. They, along with Mr. Joseph J. Turner and W. Kelly Durham, have enabled me to continue my education at Clemson and started a love affair between this wonderful place and me. I owe them all my thanks. I also owe the staff of the Clemson University Libraries Special

Collections and University Archives divisions thanks for facilitating and helping along my research.

I also must thank my friends who have helped me along the way, especially with offering me encouragement and companionship. I have been at Clemson since 2007, and I have known so many fine people—both faculty and students in the Department of History, the Department of Mathematical Sciences, and the Policy Studies Program—during my time here, and they have made my studies and thesis work easier. For that, I thank them as well.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Mr. Aull Answers His Calling

“You people down there must be trying to overcome the spirit of the depression by establishing your own “new deal” without financial support from the [S.C.] legislature.”

--Wilson Parham Gee to George H. Aull, Letter, 9 August 1933]

In a 1975 reflection on the origins of the Clemson Land Use Project, or the Clemson College Community Conservation Project, Dr. George Hubert Aull traced its genesis to his time as a young cadet (1915-1919) at the Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina. He remembered that during his four years at the college, he “wandered freely” over the more than 1,500 acres in the vicinity of the campus, observing the differences in quality between the land owned and farmed by the college and the land owned by private citizens in the adjacent Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens Counties.<sup>1</sup>

This contrast was significant because all three counties formed the historic Pendleton District, a cradle of upcountry South Carolina European civilization.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the formation of the Pendleton District, the lands that George Aull referred to in his rumination on the Clemson Land Use Project made up the “Indian Lands” section of South Carolina, bordered by the Ninety-Six District after its formation in 1769. They were then incorporated by the State of South Carolina as Pendleton County on 7 March

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<sup>1</sup> George H. Aull, “The Clemson Land Use Project,” manuscript. July 1975 in Series 38 CU Biography Files, Clemson University Libraries, Special Collections.

<sup>2</sup> It would be a mistake to assume that “civilization” only came to the Indian lands after its incorporation by the Colony of South Carolina, and that is not the author’s intended message. I only intend to describe here how the Pendleton District influenced the development of political, economic, and social life in Upcountry South Carolina.

1789 and became a member county of the soon-to-be disbanded Washington District (it would disappear in 1800) on 19 February 1791. After the dissolution of the Washington District on 1 January 1800, Pendleton County was renamed as a District and would remain as such—with the addition of the remaining Indian Lands in modern Oconee County along the Chattooga River fleshing it out—until its abolishment on 20 December 1826, when it split into the Anderson and Pickens districts. Since the explosion of the demand for cotton after Eli Whitney’s invention of the cotton gin in 1793, this land was like most of the heavily agricultural parts of South Carolina: over farmed and taxed by supporting both subsistence farming and cash crops of upland cotton. It can be argued that by the late 1800s, Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg counties were more heavily invested in cotton—a crop that saps soil of nutrients and provides—than at any point prior in their history to capitalize on increasing demand and prices for the crop. By 1886 and 1887, however, demand for South Carolina cotton had fallen and was overmatched by continuous production in the state by farmers hopeful of a rebound in “King Cotton’s” prices. These farmers, rather than diversifying their plantings, unfortunately responded to the falling prices of cotton by increasing production, worsening the problem by expanding the supply of the fiber even further and doing more damage to their lands. Geographer Charles F. Kovacik, who specialized in historical geography and the geography of South Carolina, argues that upland cotton planters, the people who shaped the land that George Aull hiked across during his Clemson College cadet years, knew of various conservation practices, but that “few were practiced.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Charles F. Kovacik, “Cotton,” *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University

Novacik describes the typical way that these farmers approached land use after the Civil War as being based on a pattern of clear cutting forest land, planting cotton until the land gave out, leading to declining yields, and then abandoning that old land and clearing new acreage. Further, land was relatively cheap compared to the other primary form of capital investment in agriculture, labor, so it was not a major issue to farm the land into infertility, and simply acquire new fields for the nutrient-depleting plant. This pattern would have been especially prevalent in the Upper Piedmont and Midlands or Sandhills around Columbia, which were the “chief production areas” in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>4</sup>

These events coalesced into the flight of farmers into the cotton mills that opened up throughout the state as the 1880s gave way to the 1890s. Farmers began selling off lands left irreparably damaged (or so it seemed) for tax payments and took up steadier paying jobs in mills across the Piedmont.<sup>5</sup> The result was the deterioration of the red clay hills and once-fertile bottom lands in the tri-county area. By the time George Aull arrived at Clemson in 1915, the land was marked by signs of erosion like deep, scar-like gullies and had little vegetation on it besides scrubby growth, all of which became images indelibly imprinted onto the Newberrian’s mind.

Aull’s fascination with the land of Upcountry South Carolina would take a back seat to his immediate career priorities, namely that which concerns *all* newly graduated collegians: finding work. He first took his bachelor’s degree in agricultural chemistry to

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of South Carolina Press, 2006), 229.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 230.

<sup>5</sup>Eldred E. Prince, Jr., “Agriculture,” *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 8-10; Stephen Wallace Taylor, “Mill villages,” *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 633.

southern Georgia. There, he served as an instructor of agriculture at the First District Agricultural and Mechanical School (later known as Georgia Normal School, Georgia Teachers' College, Georgia Southern College, and eventually Georgia Southern University) in Statesboro, Georgia, during the 1919-1920 academic year.<sup>6</sup> He then moved back into his beloved Carolina by taking up a position as a teacher of agriculture, mathematics, and science at Marion High School in Marion during the 1920-1921 academic year.<sup>7</sup> This time teaching was significant for Aull in that it provided him with valuable experience that helped shape him into the fine instructor he was later to become at Clemson. This time spent teaching was also significant to Aull personally in that it was during his time in Marion that he met his wife, Cleo Dobson, whom he married in 1922.<sup>8</sup>

George Aull was always more than just a classroom instructor—his approach to academics, to education, and to problem solving always rested upon in-depth research and fact finding. But, undoubtedly, Aull was still a teacher and an educator and needed a place to combine these interests, the research and teaching of agriculture. He was finally able to indulge these interests, as well as his earlier preoccupation with the land of the Upcountry hills and fertile basins, at his *alma mater*, Clemson College. He returned to Clemson in 1921 to take up the position of Assistant Director of Research under his undergraduate mentor, Dr. Henry Walter Barre.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "George H. Aull," Series 38 CU Biography Files, CUL.SC.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid; Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project."

Barre was born on 5 May 1881 in Lexington, South Carolina, and worked on his family's farm from an early age. In 1905, he obtained his bachelor's degree from Clemson in agriculture with an emphasis in botany<sup>10</sup> and began his advanced study of agriculture, specifically botany and bacteriology, at the University of Nebraska (where he would meet his future wife Florence Tillotson) shortly thereafter. Two years later, Barre had obtained a second bachelor's degree (this time specifically in botany from the Lincoln school) and completed all steps necessary to achieve a Master's of Science degree from Nebraska, except for his thesis. His lack of a master's degree did not stop Clemson College (which had developed a reputation, beginning with its first graduating class, of hiring from within its alumni's ranks) from hiring him to be an associate professor of botany and plant pathology in 1907. Though he remained, nominally, on the faculty of the College as an Associate Professor until 9 July 1912 and then as a full Professor from 10 July 1912 until 1934, Barre's time was largely spent at the South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station at Clemson College as a researcher in plant pathology and entomology, famously creating an anthracnose-resistant type of cotton seed in 1908 as a solution to a devastating cotton disease that cost South Carolina farmers approximately \$1.5 million that same year.<sup>11</sup> This research formed the core of his Master's degree work that finally resulted in his 1910 degree from the University of Nebraska and was followed by equally important work in breeding two new wilt-resistant varieties of cotton, Dixie and Dixie Triumph, his appointment to the South Carolina State

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<sup>10</sup> "George H. Aull," Series 38 CU Biography Files, CUL.SC.

<sup>11</sup> Mason W. King, "Experiment Station Pioneer," *Clemson World Online, Cemetery Chronicles* Vol. 59, No.2, Spring 2006; "Henry W. Barre," Series 28 Office of Public Relations Biographical Files, Clemson University Libraries, Special Collections.

Crop and Pest Commission in 1912 and his sponsorship of South Carolina's first comprehensive pest and disease control law. He also, importantly for this story, returned to Clemson's classrooms in 1911, where he would first encounter George Aull as a cadet some four years later. Barre was finally named Experiment Station Director in 1917 and launched a large-scale effort to combat the Mexican boll weevil, the latest threat to South Carolina's, indeed the South's, important cotton crop. His efforts earned a Federal appointment as Commissioner of the South for the War Emergency Board of Plant Pathologists, an effort to preempt any agricultural disaster that might create a national food shortage and exacerbate agricultural shortfalls created by the drains of World War I.<sup>12</sup>

Barre needed a well-qualified, bright assistant director to oversee these activities, and he remembered the brilliant young man who served as a part-time undergraduate employee in his office. The person that Barre wanted, as it turned out, was Aull.<sup>13</sup> What Barre and Clemson offered Aull was a chance potentially to combine his skills at teaching and research, while giving him leave time to finish his education. Aull jokingly remembered in 1975 that sabbaticals were unheard of at Clemson, but it is clear that the college was able to give him enough time to begin and finish all his graduate work while receiving steady pay for the time he was able to conduct research for Barre. Aull essentially kept a normal schedule during Clemson's academic year, but when it broke for summer sessions, as other universities did, he would leave for Charlottesville, a routine he repeated over the summers of 1926, 1927, and 1928. He was able to graduate

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project."

with a Master of Science degree in the Department of Rural Social Economics in 1928, completing his thesis “A Study of Marriage and Divorce in Country and City” in that year. He next entered the University of Wisconsin, then considered by many to be the finest school for agricultural economics in the country. Aull had taken official “leave without pay” status from Clemson College, with the assistance of a Rockefeller Fellowship Grant<sup>14</sup>, from the Social Science Research Council, helping to support him.<sup>15</sup> It was from the men in the University of Wisconsin’s department of applied economics and rural sociology, a department with a reputation of challenging instruction and research projects and a rich tradition of influencing agricultural and land use policy, that George Aull learned the rudiments of land management.<sup>16</sup> In June 1930, with a year of doctoral study under his belt, Aull returned to Clemson to resume his assistant directorship of the Experiment Station while banking both money and time (since the Rockefeller Fellowship ended in 1930) for a return to Madison and his studies. Aull would repeat this process several times until his eventual graduation from the University of Wisconsin in 1937, when service to the State of South Carolina, Clemson College, and his young family allowed. What Aull specifically worked on as Assistant Director of the Experiment Station, also known as the Assistant Director of Agricultural Research, was research into rural income and taxation in South Carolina, a subject on which he

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<sup>14</sup> Ironically, it was the testimony of his UVA mentor and Clemson alumnus, Wilson Gee, Class of 1909, that enabled Aull to receive this fellowship. The irony lies in the fact that Gee’s recommendation was in hopes of Gee’s pursuit of a PhD at Virginia. Aull was, instead, able to take this fellowship and go to Wisconsin.

<sup>15</sup> Aull, “The Clemson Land Use Project.”

<sup>16</sup> Richard S. Kirkendall, *Social Scientists and Farm Politics in the Age of Roosevelt*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966; Richard S. Kirkendall, *The New Deal Professors and the Politics of Agriculture*. PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin Department of History, 1958.

published several influential articles and papers in the early 1930s.<sup>17</sup> This research would also form the backbone of his Ph. D. dissertation at Wisconsin “Tax Delinquency in Relation to Land Utilization,” and earned him an invitation to participate in the deliberations of the South Carolina Council, a group formed in the fall of 1930 by leading South Carolinian industrialists, businessmen, and farmers to “make a thorough study of the economic situation now affecting agriculture, industry, and various activities of the people of the state, in January of 1931.”<sup>18</sup>

What caused this collapse? American farming experienced a sea change in the 1910s and 1920s, the decades of George Aull’s education, as high prices and wet weather ushered in an agricultural boom that collapsed in on itself, gutting agricultural markets and destroying arable-to-semi-arid lands and the lives of farmers throughout the country. Immediately following World War I, agricultural prices were artificially inflated in response to the collapse of international demand for American agricultural goods. This happened because Europe was ravaged by the costly war, particularly the nations that made up the Central Powers who were forced to pay catastrophically high surrender costs as set by the Treaty of Versailles that formally ended the war on 28 June 1919, closing export markets for American agricultural goods. Worldwide agricultural prices were also falling as the 1920s dawned, exacerbating international market problems for American farmers.<sup>19</sup> Farm prices did rebound to a degree by the mid-20s, but did not come close to

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<sup>17</sup> George H. Aull Papers, Clemson University Libraries, Special Collections, MSS 255 Box2, Folder 9.

<sup>18</sup> Aull Papers, CUL.SC. B2 F9 and 11.

<sup>19</sup> Carolyn Dimitri, Anne Effland, and Neilson Conklin, “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Transformation of U.S. Agriculture and Farm Policy,” *USDA Economic Research Service Economic Information Bulletin* 3 (June 2005); Willard W. Cochrane, *The Development of American Agriculture: A Historical Analysis*

approaching the levels of the “Golden Age of American Agriculture” (1909-1913). Willard Cochrane cites the fact that agricultural exports fell from a high of \$4.1 billion in 1919 to \$1.8 billion in 1922, a total loss of \$2.3 billion in the space of only three years. The +\$1.5 amount attached to agricultural exports continued mostly throughout the 1920s before plunging, as one would expect, with the coming of the Great Depression after 1929, bottoming out at \$662 million in 1932. As is the consensus with most historians of American agriculture and economists, Cochrane cites this sharp decline in farm product exports as the “principal cause” of the economic hardships experienced by American farmers immediately following World War I.<sup>20</sup>

The first solution to the economic problems of America’s farmers came at the close of the nineteenth century, farmer cooperatives. Approximately 10,000 farmers’ cooperatives organized throughout American between 1900 and 1920 and offered cooperative marketing strategies and gentle price fixing strategies eventually made legal under the Capper-Volstead Act of 1922. The aim of these groups was to boost sales through “orderly marketing,” but results were mixed. Many cooperatives failed and the ones that remained only offered marginal returns to their members. By early 1921, farmers’ cooperatives were simply not working as well as the farmers hoped, so various surviving agricultural groups sent representatives to Washington in April of that year for a ten day conference to discuss legislative strategy, in effect, to discuss lobbying. What emerged from this meeting, and a contemporaneous meeting of a group of bipartisan

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(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 100-101, 111; Prince, “Agriculture,” *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Cochrane, 111-118; Prince, “Agriculture,” *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, 10.

congressmen from agriculturally-centered states (known as the “Farm Bloc”), was a package of legislation including the Packers and Stockyards Act, the Futures Trading Act, the Emergency Agricultural Credits Act, and two amendments to the Farm Loan Act to help farmers borrow capital. Congress also issued a joint resolution establishing a Joint Commission of Agricultural Inquiry to assess the causes and potential remedies of the economic situation. What they produced was a list of recommendations to treat the symptoms of the agricultural collapse of the early 1920s, including federal authorization for stronger farmer cooperation, provision of credit for farmers, a reduction in railroad freight rates, better and more detailed research on agriculture through national and state institutions, improvement of farm infrastructure, and research on improving community life for ruralities. In January 1922, a national agricultural conference saw the emergence of a new platform for farmers to stand upon, that of “Equality for Agriculture,” or the “fair exchange value for all farm products with that of all other commodities” as a simple way to approach the pricing problem facing farmers. This became known as the Peek-Johnson plan, and, though it was defeated on the floor of the House of Representatives after its introduction to Congress in 1924, it set American agriculture on the road to comprehensive policy.<sup>21</sup>

The Peek-Johnson plan, Equality for Agriculture, amounted to little better than severe price fixing in the eyes of its opponents in the House and suffered from difficulties in implementation. It required a fair exchange value, or parity price, to be established (artificially), a protectionist tariff to keep out agricultural imports, a payment mechanism

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

to reimburse farmers for their products, and more. None of these obstacles stopped farmers, whose group happened to be sponsored by Senator Charles L. McNary of Oregon and Congressman Gilbert N. Haugen of Iowa, from attempting to push through similar legislation each year until it came within four votes of overturning President Calvin Coolidge's veto. The failed McNary-Haugen Farm Relief Act of 1929, which stipulated that the federal government would serve as a purchasing agency of domestic agricultural products at artificially inflated prices for sale abroad, was the closest that the Equality for Agriculture movement would come to success in national politics. A much tamer farm relief bill, The Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929, sought to alleviate the economic hardships of farmers by creating a Farm Board that mirrored the farmers' cooperatives of years past.<sup>22</sup> The Farm Board did, however, have the authority to make loans to price stabilization corporations in order to acquire surplus agricultural goods and hold them off the market, and though this did not prevent the further collapse of agricultural prices between 1929 and 1932. It did, however, in combination with the Grain Futures Act, lay the foundation for permanent price subsidies for farmers.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office in March 1933, he found himself guiding a nation still mired in the Great Depression. In addition, a long-standing drought was continuing in the South and Midwest, and the country was struggling with a shaky agricultural foundation. The basis for comprehensive agriculture statutes had been laid by this time, with the Packers and Stockyards Act (1921), the Grain Futures Act (1922), the Capper-Volstead Act (1922), and the Agricultural Marketing Act (1929), but nothing

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; Kimberly K. Porter, "Embracing the Pluralist Perspective: the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and the McNary-Haugen Movement." *Agricultural History* 2000 74(2): 381-392.

significant was in place to help farmers recover from the double body blows of potential market collapse and drought. Moreover, responsible land use was not a major focus of most legislated recovery efforts, as it was almost a secondary goal to economic growth. So the land, as it had in the 1880s in South Carolina, suffered. In a 25 November 1932 letter to Dr. B.H. Hibbard of the University of Wisconsin, Aull gave a brief summary of his research into tax delinquency, a natural consequence of the economic collapse of agriculture and estimated that, as of June 1931, around \$2 million of delinquent farm taxes were due the State of South Carolina at a rate of (on average) \$0.46 per acre owned and \$1.25 per \$100 of estimated produce value. He also described how farms with “small investments and of small size,” of which type the majority of the 150,000 farms—including “hobby farms”—were in South Carolina in 1930. Using income figures gained through his work with the Extension Service, Aull calculated that in 1930, and therefore logically throughout the early 1930s, taxes required 24% of farmers’ net income in the Palmetto State while requiring only 6% of the average of all people who filed returns in the state. It is not surprising, then, that farmers, less than one percent of whom made enough money to be “eligible” for taxation in 1930, were unable to pay the taxes on their land.<sup>23</sup>

This was the world into which the June 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act was born. This act sought to bring relief to farmers through the improvement of farmer income via “price enhancement” and farmers’ benefit payments by the government that were derived from special excise taxes on commodities. But not *every* farmer could

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<sup>23</sup> George H. Aull to B.H. Hibbard, Letter, 25 November 1932. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F9.

receive these benefit payments; only those who agreed to participate in a controlled production program—in order to eliminate excess supply of commodities created by “price chasing” and in order to allow land to recover—could receive these payments.<sup>24</sup> This act was to be repealed, declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in January of 1936, and replaced with temporary legislation that downplayed the goal of price stimulation through production control. Instead, the measure focused on more subtle land management objectives for individual farms that came with monetary rewards, paid by Treasury dollars appropriated by Congress. This, too, was eventually replaced by another piece of legislation, the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938. This act overtly sought to “protect agriculture against the price collapses” while “penalizing heavy production,” further by creating acreage allotments, marketing quotas, and commodity loans. The act also gave farmers a modicum of stability while keeping an eye on the future by limiting production and creating an additional soil conservation program.<sup>25</sup>

It was during Aull’s time at Wisconsin that all the strands of his life—education, research, and land conservation--came together and dovetailed with national agricultural trends. While working in Madison, Aull remembered hearing one of President Franklin’s “Fireside Chats,” outlining a broad program meant to rehabilitate abandoned or failing farm lands in America and bringing them back to at least marginal productivity and creating useable, attractive land in the process. Most likely the episode that Aull heard

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<sup>24</sup> Edwin G. Nourse, Joseph S. Davis, and John D. Black, *Three Years of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1937), 23.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, *The New Farm Act: A Short Summary of the Provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938*, General Information Series Publication No. G-83, February 1938.

was either Fireside Chat 2, “On Progress During the First Two Months,” (7 May 1933), Fireside Chat 3 , “On the National Recovery Administration,” (24 July 1933), or Fireside Chat 4, “On Economic Progress,”(22 October 1933), as all contained passages urging people to approve federal and state spending in farm and land improvements in the drought-ravaged and overfarmed portions of the country. This drought, of course, was part of the famous “Dust Bowl” that covered the Great Plains of the U.S. and Canada (especially the southern section of the plains), which was caused by highly extensive and intensive farming that took place on the American and Canadian prairie lands in the decades leading up to the 1930s. Fireside Chat 2 has, probably, the most influential message, given Aull’s memory, for it is the earliest chat that discusses the Civilian Conservation Corp in detail. It is here that Roosevelt describes how the Conservation Corps plays an integral role in both economic and land recovery:

First, we are giving opportunity of employment to one-quarter of a million of the unemployed, especially the young men who have dependents, to go into the forestry and flood prevention work. This is a big task because it means feeding, clothing and caring for nearly twice as many men as we have in the regular army itself. In creating this civilian conservation corps we are killing two birds with one stone. We are clearly enhancing the value of our natural resources and second, we are relieving an appreciable amount of actual distress. This great group of men have entered upon their work on a purely voluntary basis, no military training is involved and we are conserving not only our natural resources but our human resources.<sup>26</sup>

In Fireside Chat 3, President Roosevelt pointed up the need for government to provide aid to its farmers through regulation of both prices and agricultural output:

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<sup>26</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt Fireside Chat 2, “On Progress During the First Two Months.” Transcript. Available online through the University of Virginia’s Miller Center at <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3299>. Accessed on 25 July 2011.

First, the Farm Act [the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933]: It is based on the fact that the purchasing power of nearly half our population depends on adequate prices for farm products. We have been producing more of some crops than we consume or can sell in a depressed world market. The cure is not to produce so much. Without our help the farmers cannot get together and cut production, and the Farm Bill gives them a method of bringing their production down to a reasonable level and of obtaining reasonable prices for their crops.<sup>27</sup>

Fireside Chat 4 contained much of the same and a discussion on how the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), created by the 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act, was to be a pillar of the recovery effort:

Another pillar in the making is the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. I have been amazed by the extraordinary degree of cooperation given to the Government by the cotton farmers in the South, the wheat farmers of the West, the tobacco farmers of the Southeast, and I am confident that the corn-hog farmers of the Middle West will come through in the same magnificent fashion. The problem we seek to solve had been steadily getting worse for twenty years, but during the last six months we have made more rapid progress than any nation has ever made in a like period of time. It is true that in July farm commodity prices had been pushed up higher than they are today, but that push came in part from pure speculation by people who could not tell you the difference between wheat and rye, by people who had never seen cotton growing, by people who did not know that hogs were fed on corn -- people who have no real interest in the farmer and his problems.<sup>28</sup>

Both Fireside Chats 3 and 4 contained important reassurances. First, the money used by the federal government for public works projects were worthwhile. Second, the application of money to the recovery efforts like the Civilian Conservation Corp, and federal projects like the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, would produce an

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<sup>27</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt Fireside Chat 3, "On the National Recovery Administration." Transcript. Available online through the University of Virginia's Miller Center at <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3300>. Accessed on 25 July 2011

<sup>28</sup> Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Fireside Chat 4, "On Economic Progress," Transcript. Available online through the University of Virginia's Miller Center at <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3301>. Accessed on 25 July 2011.

economic rebirth for the nation built on responsible land use. The only documents indicating when Aull was in Madison during 1933 are a 23 January business letter sent to Mary E. Frayser of Winthrop and a 24 January letter to Wilson Gee at the University of Virginia indicating that he was leaving Clemson for four and a half months in Wisconsin.<sup>29</sup> That would roughly place him in Madison during the broadcast of Fireside Chat 2, but all are important as indicators of the new directives on agriculture and finance coming from Washington.

When Aull heard President Roosevelt discuss the need for state and county organizations to improve the situation of farm families by endorsing responsible land use practices and by reclaiming land abandoned after irresponsible farm practices sapped it, he thought of Fant's Grove. "My mind turned to some of the run-down, eroded and largely abandoned farming areas in my State and, particularly, in the 'Fant's Grove' Community South of Clemson," wrote Aull in 1975, remembering that the "distressing vision of conditions in our own 'back yard' coupled with the knowledge and appreciation I had gained through the study of Land Economics and the concrete proposals made by Franklin D. Roosevelt, provided all the incentive I required to begin immediately to formulate some practical projects."<sup>30</sup> Aull also remembered the rural zoning and Forest Crop Law, an incentive program begun in 1927 to encourage responsible, sustainable management of private woodlands in Wisconsin and the creation of forests on tax delinquent farmland.

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<sup>29</sup> George H. Aull to Mary E. Frayser, Letter, 23 January 1933; George Aull to Wilson Gee, Letter, 24 January 1933. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F10.

<sup>30</sup> George H. Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project," manuscript. July 1975.

Aull combined elements of the Wisconsin Forest Crop Law of 1927, which he undoubtedly studied in his courses on land economics under professors B.H. Hibbard and George S. Wehrwein, with knowledge of the provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 to get the “ball rolling” on his own land use project in South Carolina.<sup>31</sup> It is only logical that Aull would put his project into action at Clemson, where he had already served as Assistant Director of the Experiment Station for twelve years, and after 1 July 1933 as Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics.<sup>32</sup> It would be through this institution that he would be best suited to meet success—the Experiment Station would benefit greatly from having Aull’s research on the economic effects of land reclamation in the Piedmont and would serve as the local administrative body necessitated by emerging New Deal programs. Aull sought to pitch the idea with the argument that the AAA enabled the voluntary purchase of “misused” land to resuscitate it and bring it back into usability. There also, according to Aull, was the corollary benefit of relocating individuals “trapped” on misused lands by the giving of money to farmers to enable their move, something that would produce secondary ripple effects in the economy.

In recollection, Aull had the full support of “his Director,” Dr. Barre, and sent a letter on 3 August of 1933 to Dr. Lewis Cecil “L.C.” Gray, Principal Economist in Charge of the Division of Land Economics in the Department of Agriculture (and fellow

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<sup>31</sup> We know this particular Wisconsin policy was on his mind because he inquired about extant studies of the impact of the law on Wisconsin land in a 9 November 1934 letter to George Wehrwein. Wehrwein replied with a letter containing his best guess found in the preliminary work done by the graduate students at Wisconsin and a copy of the law itself.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Wisconsin alumnus and Professor of Land/Rural Economics at Madison)<sup>33</sup> to indicate his interest in and concern for the “Land Problems in South Carolina.”<sup>34</sup> “The Purpose of this letter,” Aull wrote to Gray, “is to indicate our interest in the work which your department [the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Land Use Division in the USDA] is doing and to say that we [Clemson] will be happy to continue and to enlarge upon our cooperative efforts with the appropriate Bureaus of the U.S.DA...I have an idea that such a project *would concern more than one department of this experiment station* and have been assured of *their cooperation* if desired.”<sup>35</sup> Already Aull had a vision of a multiple-use land reclamation project that took advantage of Clemson and the South Carolina Experiment Station’s proximity to put the land to a variety of uses, but he was simply unsure how to procure federal appropriations to help Clemson’s development, outside of simply writing a letter of interest. L.C. Gray responded immediately on 8 August 1933, thanking Aull for his interest and informing him that W. A. Hartman of the Department of Agriculture would be visiting Clemson College on his way to visit a site for a potential land use project in Georgia, where “conditions are somewhat similar to those in [South Carolina].”<sup>36</sup> Aull’s willingness to take advantage of emerging New Deal programs to facilitate economic and land recovery made waves quickly—Barre was thrilled, L.C. Gray was excited, and his mentor at Virginia, Wilson Gee, upon hearing about it from

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<sup>33</sup> Gray also wrote two excellent, concise articles on the history, purpose, and philosophy of national land policies. The author consulted both for background information on this section and highly recommends them both. See L.C. Gray, “The Field of Land Utilization,” *The Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (April 1925), 152-159 and L.C. Gray, “National Land Policies in Retrospect and Prospect,” *Journal of Farm Economics* Vol. 13, No. 2 (April 1931), 231-245.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> George H. Aull to L.C. Gray, Letter, 3 August 1933. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F10. Emphasis was Aull’s, underlined in his own copies of the letters.

<sup>36</sup> L.C. Gray to George H. Aull, Letter, 8 August 1933. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F10.

Aull, replied that “You people down there [Clemson] must be trying to overcome the spirit of the depression by establishing your own “new deal” without financial support from the [South Carolina] legislature.”<sup>37</sup>

A letter from the middle of August 1933 indicates that Hartman’s meeting with Aull was “profitable,” serving to “connect up for us a series of ideas which until then we had considered more or less separately,” namely the idea to rehabilitate overtaxed land, to relocate suffering families, and to implement a series of research projects.<sup>38</sup> His letter also asked for further input from Gray and any help from his department, particularly in the way of funding.

Gray’s response was hopeful, or at least carefully optimistic. In answer to Aull’s request that the United States Department of Agriculture cooperate with the Experiment Station, Gray sent a letter describing plans for implementing the AAA legislation. He added that, “It now seems probable that considerable funds will be made available” to assist with the development of land use projects, in accordance with an agreement between the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, and President Roosevelt that “funds should be made available to the Department of Agriculture to remove from cultivation an area of poor farm lands of equivalent productivity.”<sup>39</sup> These words from Gray, along with a document detailing the creation of Land Use Projects issued by the National Land-Use Planning Committee included with his letter, gave Aull the encouragement he needed to send off his proposal for the purchase of approximately

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<sup>37</sup> Wilson P. Gee to George H. Aull, Letter, 9 August 1933. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F10.

<sup>38</sup> George H. Aull to L.C. Gray, Letter, 19 August 1933. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F10.

<sup>39</sup> L.C. Gray to George H. Aull, Letter, 31 August 1933. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F10.

8,500 acres, nearly 100% of which was in tax delinquency, in the Fant's Grove community (near today's Clemson University Outdoor Laboratory in the Clemson Experimental Forest) and relocation of 75 "sub-marginal" families.<sup>40</sup> This proposal was to "make out of this area a repeatable demonstration of what can be done in the way of shifting population within narrow limits from sub-marginal to profitable land and of adjusting the social and economic institutions in the area to such a new shape."<sup>41</sup> In short, what Aull advocated was perhaps the first comprehensive community development project in the Clemson area. According to Aull, the plans for the to-be-purchased land were not firm at the start: "We contemplated a high degree of reforestation; some extensive pasture developments to be made available to farmers...measures to check erosion and stream pollution; large-scale recreational facilities, camping, fishing opportunities, nature trails, etc."<sup>42</sup>

It would have been a mistake, most likely, to have gone into the Clemson Land Use Project with a singular goal, a narrow aim. Its purpose, by Aull's reckoning, was to study the best way to rehabilitate desiccated land by trying all channels. Forestry, agriculture, recreation, and ecological experimentation all were potential developmental paths for the 8,500 acres that he had in his sights. Even historical tourism was on Aull's "radar," as his proposal included points about the restoration and preservation of historic homes like the Woodburn and Altamont sites. This buffet-style approach to the development of the Fant's Grove community would create, in addition to a variety of

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<sup>40</sup> George H. Aull, Fant's Grove Community Development Original Project Summary and Proposal. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F10.

<sup>41</sup> George H. Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project" manuscript, 1975.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

appealing uses for the land, one or more of which that could potentially receive further backing from the USDA, a wealth of employment for the region, placing this firmly within the tradition of other New Deal policies.<sup>43</sup> Of note is Aull's own estimation of costs in the proposal: \$600.00 for "preliminary investigations," \$137,500.00 for the purchase of land (based on the average value of \$15.00 per acre for land and buildings, a competitive pricing of the land after erosion, drought, and overfarming sapped it of utility), \$40,000 for the "rehabilitation" of families living on "poverty farms" (assuming 40 families, each of which receive \$1,000), \$20,000 to finance "economically competent families" (20 families at \$1,000 each), and any projects paid for by the U.S. Department of Interior or USDA (which he could not estimate).<sup>44</sup> This miniature cost analysis further indicates the impetus for the project—rehabilitation of land and families in the area through a cooperation between the federal government and Clemson College.

Aull's initial proposal did not meet with much success, however, or any success *at all* for that matter, as the federal government rejected his proposal for the purchase of the 8,500 acres in the Fant's Grove area. The reason for the rejection was simple: it was deemed "too modest" by the federal government. No amount of accompanying letters from South Carolina state and local officials, Clemson College personnel, or concerned and interested private citizens could save Aull's proposal from that flaw in the eyes of the federal government; put simply, 8,500 acres was too small a tract of land to concern the USDA.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> George H. Aull, Fant's Grove Community Development Revised Project Summary and Proposal. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Still, Aull began preliminary work on the site by endeavoring to obtain reliable surveys of the land to be bought, as per the advice of Gray, and to create a profile of the Fant's Grove community. In a letter to Asher Hobson, agricultural economist and advisor to Aull at Wisconsin, Aull wrote that "Early last fall we presented to the local C.W.A. [Civil Works Administration] administrator a proposal for a statewide Land Uses Survey which involved, among other things, a detail farm management and sociological study of farm families in eight different areas of the state." Aull's project, the Fant's Grove Community Project, was part of the state-wide project that necessitated the selection and training of twenty-two Clemson graduates for field and office work, which was specifically the analysis of 2,000+ financial and sociological records (surveys). By his best guess, this comprised the first attempt at creating a socioeconomic profile of communities and farm families in the state of South Carolina.<sup>46</sup>

Dr. Barre saw the utility of Aull's plan for the Experiment Station, for Clemson College, and for the community at large and encouraged the young professor to try again, with a larger scope in terms of land-to-be-purchased and future goals. Renamed the "Clemson College Community Conservation Project," Aull's new proposal requested the purchase of 35,000 acres adjacent to college property to the north and south and added to its goals game sanctuaries, fish hatcheries, botanical gardens, and wildlife education trails.

Because the funds that Aull applied for were made available through New Deal programs such as the AAA, the federal government required that a "responsible public

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<sup>46</sup> George H. Aull to Asher Hobson, Letter, 22 September 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

agency” agree to assume ownership and control of the project once the government withdrew. Enoch Walter Sikes, President of Clemson College since 1925, submitted a letter to the USDA stating that “Clemson College (with the assistance of such state and federal agencies as it may determine) will undertake to administer the plans which you have proposed for the project here insofar as the funds for this work may be provided either by appropriations or by receipts from the project itself.”<sup>47</sup>

By the time the Clemson College Community Conservation Project received federal approval, George Aull had accepted a job, for the term of one year’s leave of absence from service to the college, with the AAA, the administrative office created by the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, to serve as the State Project Manager. He assumed this position on 7 August 1934, the date the federal government officially accepted his proposal, and took control of the Clemson Land Use project immediately thereafter, as well as some responsibility over other similar projects in the State of South Carolina.<sup>48</sup> John C. Taylor, Representative from South Carolina’s Third Congressional District and Anderson County native, heartily endorsed Aull’s proposition when he heard about it, stating that it “embraces all the ideas the government seeks to take care of in its progress with respect to flood control, preservation of wild life, soil erosion, and reforestation. All this, together with the further fact that it is close enough to Clemson to afford perfect co-ordination with the College [Clemson], would make this a very select project.”<sup>49</sup> Little did Taylor know that this project would need much more than just his

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> George H. Aull to Henry W. Barre, Letter, 8 August 1934; Enoch W. Sikes, Clemson College President, to George Aull, Letter, 10 August 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11

<sup>49</sup> John C. Taylor to George H. Aull, Letter, 13 October 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

endorsement in the near future. Aull and his project also received glowing endorsements from area businessmen and farmers, Clemson officials and staff, and concerned citizens. Charles Daniel, President of the Anderson County Chamber of Commerce, future founder and President of Daniel International Corporation and future member of Clemson's Board of Trustees, endorsed the project on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, arguing that "the proposed utilization of submarginal lands in this area will be of high economic and social values to those living within the area."<sup>50</sup>

Aull's greatest ally, Dr. Henry Walter Barre, Director of the Experiment Station and, since 1932, Dean of the School of Agriculture at Clemson, claimed that "There are several reasons why this project appeals to us... There will be ample opportunity for re-settlement, part-time and subsistence farms, for recreational development, wild life protection, forestation, grazing, erosion control, flood control, power development, etc." The proximity of the project's land to the College offered several definite benefits in Barre's estimation, as it insured "close coordination with the research, teaching, and extension policies of the institution and of the state... these projects located at the institution will serve as demonstration to the people from all parts of the state when they come to the college. They will also serve as laboratories for the students pursuing various agricultural, social, and economic subjects."<sup>51</sup> In addition to outlining clearly the relationship between the project, as a seeding ground for academic and agricultural research, and Clemson College, Barre's letter addressed an issue that soon would dominate the discussion of the project: ownership. "If the time should come when the

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<sup>50</sup> Charles Daniel to George H. Aull, Letter, 1 November 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

<sup>51</sup> Henry W. Barre to George H. Aull, Letter, 3 November 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

project has developed to the point where it would seem desirable or advantageous for the institution [Clemson College/South Carolina Experiment Station] to assume responsibility for the actual management of some or all of the activities,” wrote Barre, “I see no reason why this should not be arranged.”<sup>52</sup> Clemson president Enoch W. Sikes, T.R. McCrary, as President and on behalf of the nearby Pendleton Farmers’ Society, R. E. Sims, Director of Rural Rehabilitation of the S.C. Emergency Relief Administration, and H.A. Smith, South Carolina State Forester, among others, also wrote sound endorsements for the project in the fall of 1934. Sikes’s and Smith’s letters are particularly interesting as they, too, addressed the issue of future ownership and administration of the project. While reminding Aull that Clemson suffered severe cuts in appropriations from state funding during the Great Depression, Sikes indicated that Clemson was “very much interested” in the development of a long time land program and was “anxious to cooperate in any way possible.” Moreover, he suggested that the college would, with the assistance of state and federal agencies, administer Aull’s proposal if funding could be arranged or if the project could be self-supporting via revenue generation.<sup>53</sup> Smith’s letter describes a land development project that he had proposed two years prior. But, quoting that proposal, he admitted that “The State Forest Commission does not pretend to be capable of handling the agricultural end of such a program, and should such a program (purchase of submarginal areas for forestry use) be favorably considered, since the President of Clemson College is automatically a member of my Board, and I feel certain my Board would be perfectly willing to have all

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Enoch W. Sikes to George H. Aull, Letter, 8 November 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

agricultural projects upon such areas handled entirely by Clemson College or by a committee set up by the College for that purpose.”<sup>54</sup> Smith went on, however, to tell Aull that, should Clemson College allow it and produce a written agreement, the State Forestry Commission would gladly accept administration of the land by a long term lease, so long as the revenues from any forest products and recreation as part of the project, revert to the State Forestry Commission.

Aull refused. Instead, among Aull’s first actions was to inquire of Representative Taylor as to the best federal agency to partner on the Land Use Project with and, according to his own memory, to set up an administrative staff of twenty to prepare to receive the first assignment of Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers. This would place the events chronologically in the late winter/early spring 1935, as Roosevelt signed the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act (ERA) on 8 April, creating the WPA. Some claim the WPA to be the largest and most ambitious of New Deal agencies, employing millions of unskilled and/or unemployed laborers in public works projects.<sup>55</sup>

Aull’s details on the work done early in the Fant’s Grove community highlight the difficulties faced by many rural development agents during the New Deal era. The task of convincing people to put up their land for sale was not, according to Aull, terribly difficult. The problems emerged in the actual process of the purchase, as few accurate land surveys for the community existed.<sup>56</sup> This meant that information on who owned

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<sup>54</sup> H.A. Smith to George H. Aull, Letter, 10 November 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

<sup>55</sup> Eric Arnesen, ed. *Encyclopedia of U.S. Labor and Working-Class History*, Vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2007), 1540. This seems to be validated by the fact that at least 1,500 people were classified as W.P.A. workers for the Clemson project by the fall of 1935, Aull, “Clemson Land Use Project,” manuscript, 1975.

<sup>56</sup> They did not exist because most old surveys were based on visual landmarks like rocks, trees, creeks, hills, etc. Of course, these things change.

which pieces of land and what the boundaries were was difficult to ascertain. But Aull and his staff persevered, for resettlement of poor farm families was crucial, for which land surveying and purchasing were integral steps. By winter 1934, Aull was making inquiries about specific government agencies that could help bear the cost burden of resettlement, as evidenced by the “paper trail” between his desk and that of Representative John C. Taylor. Taylor advised Aull to inquire with the Division of Subsistence Homesteads and the Rural Rehabilitation Cooperation which specialized in constructing “colonies” for resettled families. Taylor also wrote of his hopes, as an individual not as a politician, for the intrusting of resettlement to the Department of Agriculture who would finance the purchase of new lands and home construction for individual farmers on a case-by-case basis instead of the planned community approach that was *de rigueur*. This, perhaps, would be a major influence on Aull’s vision for the project. Though he never cites that letter specifically, his ideas about the resettlement of families stranded on the Fant’s Grove land took a form similar to those put forth by Taylor, who was by now a partner to Aull in the Land Use project.<sup>57</sup>

By 1935 George Aull was beginning to get a sense for how the policy game worked, and by late 1935, he was, after an unfortunate turn of events, more informed on it than he would probably have liked. He was beginning, by mid-January of that year, to understand that the support of his Congressional Representative, John C. Taylor, was critical to the success of this project. As he understood it, “publicity concerning these

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<sup>57</sup> John C. Taylor to George H. Aull, Letter, 1 December 1934. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F11.

projects is expected to originate in Washington.”<sup>58</sup> Aull was also clearly upset that his progress in acquiring the Fant’s Grove land was slowed greatly by inadequate record keeping, with respect to land holdings, in the tri-county area. “You may learn from the Land Policy Section,” he wrote to Taylor, “that as yet *we have not recommended any land for purchase*. This is due to the fact that we have been required to get an enormous amount of detail on each tract recommended. We are in position, however, to recommend the immediate purchase of a large acreage at a very early date.”<sup>59</sup> Within a week of receiving Aull’s letter, Taylor had discussed the project with members of the Land Policy Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration who delivered a report similar to Aull’s. Taylor was pleased to reinforce Aull’s hope that the project was moving forward, even if at a slow pace, by relaying word that a Mr. Clayton within the AAA informed Taylor that the purchase of 35,000 acres of land in the Fant’s Grove community were to be purchased in the near future.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the 135 tracts of land, amounting to 21,000 acres, that Aull’s team had already inspected and surveyed were on the verge of being purchased by late January. This, as Aull himself noted on his copy of the letter that he kept for his own records, was overly optimistic. The 21,000 acres shrunk to 9,000 by 6 February, as inadequate land appraisal staff slowed down the process even more.<sup>61</sup> Then, the Clemson College Community Conservation Project took a turn for the bizarre. In a 16 February letter from the Cosmos Club in Washington D.C., Henry Walter Barre informed Aull that he had recently had a meeting with Aull’s direct superior, Hartman, at a lunch at

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<sup>58</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 19 January 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. Emphasis mine.

<sup>60</sup> John C. Taylor to George H. Aull, Letter, 21 January 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid; George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 6 February 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

the Department of Agriculture. What was unusual about this meeting was that Hartman “started in low rating” Aull and said “so many things about [Aull] that are not true,” forcing Barre to take issue with Hartman. Also, Hartman apparently said he was “going to Clemson soon to have things out” with Aull, giving Barre even more reason to write Aull immediately.<sup>62</sup> Hartman’s list of grievances began the slow pace at which the Clemson project was moving, and for this, he blamed Aull. This was beyond Aull’s control, as he could not very well fabricate the surveys of the Fant’s Grove land. Virtually every plot of land required new, formal surveys before the government would consider purchasing. Aull, who was also troubled by the lack of progress of the project, had already asked his superiors in the AAA to hire another land surveyor to help speed things along, but his request was denied.<sup>63</sup> Hartman also complained that Aull did not follow the instructions given to him and therefore caused “much unnecessary delay” and exhibited “poor organizing ability.”<sup>64</sup> Barre, however, could not believe what Hartman had said. “The things he criticized you for [organization, ability to take instruction, ability to work with others, and even basic mapping skills] were the things you have always done so well...” Barre wrote to his former protégé. Hartman also described Aull as being “academic and impractical,” a complaint that was simply unfair, as the Clemson Community Conservation Project was so strongly linked to the college, the Experiment Station, and Aull’s position as the Assistant Director of Research.<sup>65</sup> It was only *natural* that the project took on traits of its guiding hand, that it moved deliberately and carefully

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<sup>62</sup> Henry W. Barre to George H. Aull, Letter, 16 February 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

<sup>63</sup> Aull to Taylor, Letter, 19 January 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

<sup>64</sup> Barre to George Aull, Letter, 16 February 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

and was concerned as much with learning as with “success” by the government’s estimation.

Aull, as one might expect, was stunned. Actually, the word Aull himself used was “flabbergasted.” Hartman’s attacks were completely unprecedented, as “nothing unpleasant has ever come up...before.”<sup>66</sup> Aull admitted that he, most likely, did spark Hartman’s explosion to Barre with a telegram that he sent on 11 February reading “Urgent that you [Hartman] and I [Aull] confer at once for the purpose of renewing our original understanding of my duties and responsibilities as State Project Manager for South Carolina.” The reason for this telegram, according to Aull, was that the regional director for the Land Use Section, Hartman, had “for some months prior” assuming more control over other state projects and begun working more closely with other on-site project managers. Aull, meanwhile, was required to do nothing more than the work of those other local project managers, which he was for the Clemson Community Conservation Project. But one must bear in mind that Aull was actually the state coordinator for all South Carolina Land Use projects.<sup>67</sup> Hartman, in effect, was cutting Aull out of the “loop.” But, importantly, Aull was doing the work of a State Director, helping set up all of South Carolina’s projects, while the charges for his labor (and presumably his team’s labor) went against the Clemson project at the insistence of Hartman.<sup>68</sup> The issue that set off Hartman was that after the Regional Office of the Land Use Section began to assume many of Aull’s duties as South Carolina project manager in

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

December 1934, Aull pointed out the promises made to him regarding his position as state project manager, even though he gracefully accepted his informal demotion.

Hartman, Aull believed, was out of touch with the local needs of each project in his regional office, citing “problems” with Georgia projects and his observation that Hartman “has been accustomed to drop a slug into a machine and to expect a standardized product to be delivered at the hole in the bottom.”<sup>69</sup>

The land to-be-purchased still sat at 30,000 acres in April 1935, but the federal government was batting around the possibility of purchasing even more, reaching into the Blue Ridge Mountain sections of Oconee and Pickens Counties.<sup>70</sup> The problem is that all this talk of purchasing land produced little-to-no resettlement for families in the Fant’s Grove community. “We have encountered so many difficulties and received such harsh criticism as a result of changes in policy regarding resettlement that in self defense I have been reviewing some of the instructions under which we were operating,” Aull wrote to his superior Hartman in November. He reviewed letters and directives from the Emergency Relief Administration and the Land Use Section of the AAA to establish the policies and procedures of each regarding resettlement. Citing a memorandum from 10 January 1935, Aull understood that project managers had the authority for “making certain definite promises to the owners and occupants of submarginal land,” and that those promises were broken continually because of restrictions on their actions.<sup>71</sup> He believed that these restrictions had emerged from the assumption of the Rural

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 17 April 1935; “The Final Plan” for The Clemson College Community Conservation Project. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

<sup>71</sup> George H. Aull to William A. Hartman, 13 November 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

Rehabilitation Corporations' duties by the Resettlement Administration, but he pointed out to Hartman that the same memo from January declared that "Rural Rehabilitation Corporations should immediately acquire land suitable for resettlement so that the delay between the purchase of submarginal land and removal to the resettlement area may be shortened as much as possible."<sup>72</sup> The problem, as far as Aull was concerned, was that no resettlement had occurred to that point, defying the Resettlement directives on the books. Moreover, the 5,000 acres of land purchased by Aull's agents Clinkscales and O'Dell for resettlement purposes were not being turned over to families needing new land. Even worse, by Aull's calculations, he was certain that the Clemson Community Conservation Project would have to require candidates for resettlement to pay more for land than previously estimated.<sup>73</sup>

A stronger-worded letter from Aull to Hartman followed on 23 November. Tired of delays and continuous talk about the AAA's purchase of more and more land without benefitting the removed families, Aull wrote that he "felt along and still feel that the main objective[s] of the land utilization program, in so far as the Resettlement Administration is concerned are: To afford relief to stranded families...To demonstrate corrective measures for conditions growing out of maladjusted land use," and to "give employment to labor in the vicinity of the various projects."<sup>74</sup> None of this was happening in Fant's Grove. "The acquisition of land is necessary, but only incidental to the major objectives," Aull wrote in the same letter, "The preservation of natural resources by reforestation,

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> George H. Aull to William A. Hartman, Letter, 23 November 1935. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F12.

flood and erosion control, etc. is highly desirable and almost inevitable but *not necessarily a prime objective of the land utilization division of the Resettlement Administration.*<sup>75</sup> He did admit that, without Hartman and the Resettlement Administration, the status of the Clemson Community Conservation Project could be even stickier, as the Administration's attachment did at least give the project credibility with the federal government. But, clearly, a difference in objectives and goals existed between Aull's camp and the federal agencies administering the project.

In the meantime, the first check for the land purchased for the Clemson Land Use project arrived on 17 October 1935. It was made payable to Preston Brooks Gailey, Sr., for \$2,218.50.<sup>76</sup> This was followed by another small victory for Aull when John C. Taylor was notified in January 1936 that people who were living on the land purchased by the federal government were approved for employment on Land Utilization developments as part of the Clemson Community Conservation Project, a product of Taylor's constant lobbying and hectoring of the Resettlement Administration and Agricultural Adjustment Administration.<sup>77</sup> By March, over 1,300 men were employed as Works Progress Administration laborers for the Clemson project and were breaking ground on a wayside park near the Ravenel homeplace.<sup>78</sup> By mid-March, however, the emotional highs of the first payment to a Fant's Grove family and the opening of project

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project," 1975.

<sup>77</sup> John C. Taylor to George H. Aull, Letter, 15 January 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

<sup>78</sup> George H. Aull to Ralph Buffington, Letter, 7 March 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13. In a later letter, Aull reveals that almost half of these people were "on the chopping block," as Hartman ordered Aull to discharge 600 workers due to a snag in funding. Luckily, Representative Taylor and Senator James F. Byrnes interceded and found similar relief employment for them, enabling them to continue on with the Clemson project.

employment to families in the process of being resettled were gone. “A number of individuals who have a contract to sell their land to the Federal Government have appealed to this office for some assistance in speeding up payment,” Aull wrote to Representative Taylor on 18 March. He describes the usual course of action taken by his office for these families—appealing to the Regional Attorney for the Resettlement Administration, whose office was in Montgomery, Alabama. The answer was almost always the same for these hard luck families: the Attorney’s office had approved the titles of these families’ lands and that the Resettlement Administration’s “General Accounting Office” had been contacted to issue checks for the land.<sup>79</sup> Only nine out of the approximately 100 families on the land being purchased (amounting to 930 acres out of 25,000), had received checks for their land by this point, a dismaying fact for both Aull and Taylor. When the latter returned to Washington D.C. from personal business the following week, he sought out a meeting, or at least a discussion, with Dr. Max J. Wasserman, Finance Director of the Resettlement Administration. By Taylor’s best guess, this was a move that skipped “over the heads of all the district and other officers” to go directly to the man responsible for issuing checks.<sup>80</sup> Wasserman told Taylor that the Resettlement Administration was having difficulties with the titles for the land, for they (the government) “always does anything the longest and hardest way and they are particularly fussy about titles to land which they are buying or which they contemplate buying.” Apparently, the surveying work done since autumn 1934 had produced titles that were “not in very good shape,” and that the Attorney’s office was busy attempting to

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<sup>79</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 18 March 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

<sup>80</sup> John C. Taylor to George H. Aull, Letter, 25 March 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

“get some of them straightened out,” with at least one attorney on retainer with the office making the trip to Clemson to attempt to clear up the surveys directly.<sup>81</sup> This was, however, a necessary part of the process before the Resettlement Administration could, as promised by Wasserman to Taylor, push the project forward and issue more checks. Still, no families had actually been resettled, including the nine who had received payment for their land, despite the fact that two crop years had passed since the project was first proposed for the Fant’s Grove community.

Work progressed on the 25,000 acres under contract throughout the spring and summer of 1936. By 27 May, \$200,000 had been spent on a variety of forestry, erosion control, public works, and recreational developments. Thousands of acres had been replanted with loblolly and slash pine and walnut, creating a large forest on college property and thousands of acres subjected to thinning, the process of reducing a set percentage of trees to make the land healthier and more productive.<sup>82</sup> The W.P.A. workers on the project also constructed a network of hiking trails, fire lanes, roads and bridges in the 29,000 acres (the final tally of land purchased for the project) to access the pavilions and picnic shelters and two fire towers scattered throughout for recreation purposes.<sup>83</sup> The Project also had aquatic projects, most of which are unfortunately not visible today: in addition to the small dam on Six Mile Creek that created the 150-acre Lake Issaqueena, six one-acre fish rearing ponds were constructed, now hidden by the

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid; Letter from Office of the Administrator, Resettlement Administration, to John C. Taylor, 15 April 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

<sup>82</sup> Aull, “The Clemson Land Use Project,” 1975.

<sup>83</sup> Aull, “The Clemson Land Use Project,” 1975; George H. Aull to Enoch W. Sikes, Letter, 27 May 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

waters of Lake Hartwell.<sup>84</sup> In addition to the failure of the Resettlement Administration to meet what Aull deemed “their end of the bargain,” a new problem affected the Clemson Land Use Project—who would administer this project after the federal government abdicated its ownership of the land, as per the original intent of the project? Obviously, Aull wanted Clemson to assume ownership, and he expressed as much in a letter to the president of the college on 27 May 1936: “My own connection with this project has been maintained not only because I believe in the project itself, but because I am vitally concerned in seeing that someone with the *interest of the college at heart had charge of these developments.*”<sup>85</sup> His hope was that by 1 July 1936, a local institution, at best, Clemson College or at worst, the State Forestry Commission, would assume control over the project by virtue of a long-term lease with the federal government. What Aull truly feared was that at the termination of his leave of absence granted by the Board of Trustees of the college the Resettlement Administration would appoint “an outsider” who would steer the project along lines “not entirely in harmony with the best interest of the college.” As such, Aull asked that the college Board of Trustees extend his leave of absence at least into the summer of 1936, enabling him to stay on with the Resettlement Administration through its transferral of the project to a new local administrator. With Aull still being employed as State Project Manager, the decision would likely not pass without his input, perhaps guaranteeing that his alma mater would receive the due benefits from ownership. By the time that summer came in 1936, resettlement on the

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> George H. Aull to Enoch W. Sikes, Letter, 27 May 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13. Italics for emphasis are mine.

5,000-6,000 acres set aside by the Resettlement Administration still had not occurred. In fact, land prices had continued to increase, something Aull had noted in the past, going up between 20 and 30%. This meant that the families who were getting checks for their land at “1934 prices” (the year the purchase was arranged) faced paying “1936 prices.”<sup>86</sup> Even worse, as Aull described to his new Regional Director R.W. Hudgens, during the past eighteen to twenty-four month period “these lands have been tied up under option,” and, consequently, “the best farmers in our project area have not been able to make independent arrangements on the land of their choice.”<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> George H. Aull to Ralph W. Hudgens, Letter, 25 July 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Mr. Aull Goes to “War”

“Dr. Hartman...made the statement to a representative of a commercial concern that he was going to ‘close that damn Clemson project.’”

--George H. Aull to Henry W. Barre, Letter, 8 September 1936

George Aull’s position as project manager for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was not permanent; it was a post he held during a year’s leave from service to Clemson. His tenure as project manager, already extended once by the College, ended on 31 August 1936, as he had to return to his duties as Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics by 1 September for the upcoming academic year.<sup>88</sup> Thus ended his *official* connection to the Clemson Land Use Project, but not his interest in it nor his association with it. Surely Aull breathed a sigh of relief as this project, while incredibly worthwhile and important to him, had become something of a burden. By this point, working so hard for his project had to have drained Aull. He struggled through constant complications of the acquisition of the Fant’s Grove Land, and he had to deal with the inability of the Resettlement Administration to issue timely payments for that land in amounts commensurate to the *present* value of the land (the payments were based on 1934 land prices). Aull also had a constant stream of letters and calls to his office from

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<sup>88</sup>Aull, “The Clemson Land Use Project,” manuscript; George H. Aull to Henry W. Barre, Letter, 8 September 1936; George H. Aull to C.V. Stribling, Letter, 8 September 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

concerned or wronged citizens and had a constant outgoing stream of calls and letters leaving his office going to his Congressional Representative John C. Taylor. Let us not forget Aull's difficult relationship with his former supervisor, W.A. Hartman, who complained about Aull publicly to his former director at the Experiment Station, Henry W. Barre. Hartman, who Aull characterized as "mentally unbalanced" due to his many "prejudices," reportedly commented that he wished to break the "cooperation between the project and Clemson College" and that he intended, as late as February 1936, to "close that damn Clemson project."<sup>89</sup>

Because Aull so strongly believed in this project and the benefits it would have for the tri-county area, he refused to allow the inefficient Resettlement Administration destroy the "cooperation" between Clemson and the project or steer it away from the intent originally outlined in the proposal. Among the first people he contacted in this mission was Senator James F. Byrnes. A mover and shaker in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal administration who had backed the New Yorker's social agenda since his inauguration in 1933, Byrnes was keenly interested in the development of his poverty-stricken nation and state. As such, he was quick to lend aid to Aull and the 600 W.P.A. employees that were going to be dismissed by the Resettlement Administration due to budgetary constraints early in 1936. He was also, as evidenced by his endorsement of Aull for his position with the Land Policy section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in 1934, a supporter of Aull and believer in his abilities. It only seems logical then for Aull to have contacted the Senator in October of 1936 to speed up the

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<sup>89</sup> George H. Aull to Henry W. Barre, Letter, 8 September 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

Resettlement Administration's response time for relocating families and to help preserve the connection with Clemson. Aull's own description of the progress, or lack thereof, of the Resettlement Administration was no holds barred in language and argumentation:

The administrative officers seemed to be more concerned in the purchase of a lot of cheap land rather than in setting up a demonstration in the proper utilization of Land and in the re-adjustment of stranded population. As yet, practically nothing has been done to indicate that the Administration is any way interested in the re-location of some 125 families who have been certified as being in need of assistance in moving from submarginal land taken over by the Federal Government.<sup>90</sup>

Aull also wrote Byrnes hoping that the latter could use his political capital to have his Assistant Project Manager W. T. Linton, a fellow Clemson graduate, selected as his successor. The reason was clear: Aull hoped that, in addition to the fact that he felt Linton was a qualified and capable administrator, by appointing him the connection between the state project and Clemson College could be maintained. Aull claimed that when he asked the President Sikes and the Board of Trustees for leave, he did so with the understanding and expectation that the conservation project would be made a "definite part of the College and the South Carolina Experiment Station." He was certain that his superior, W.A. Hartman, would appoint a successor who would accept the position with the caveat that he (or she) would have the "avowed attention [intention]" of breaking up the relationship between the College and the project, which promised to be an asset to the college "in the way of laboratory and demonstration facilities, particularly along lines of

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<sup>90</sup> George H. Aull to James F. Byrnes, Letter, 9 October 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13. Underlined text was the author's and not my own.

forestry, engineering, recreation, grazing, and in general the economic utilization of land.”<sup>91</sup> This is almost exactly what happened.

With Aull returned to the classroom, Hartman installed an outsider, Charles Nuite, as manager, who, in Aull’s words “was not a professional but a politician... not a Clemson man and not even friendly to the Institution.” Suddenly, being robbed of its administration of the reclaimed land became a possibility for Clemson College.<sup>92</sup> Aull also feared that that the Resettlement Administration would abandon the resettlement of the Fant’s Grove families as his own voice was the only one still pushing that issue. This fear prompted him to write William W. Alexander, an assistant administrator in the Resettlement Administration, and remind him that Clemson entered into the contract to administer the reclaimed land of Fant’s Grove on the condition that resettlement occurred. The reputation of Clemson and Aull, who counted himself a resident of that community, was at stake. Moreover, in his opinion, the Resettlement Administration was, by replacing him with a “politician,” trying to divest itself of the responsibility of resettling Fant’s Grove community families, a commitment they made by agreeing to his 1935 project proposal. What most upset Aull, and what convinced him that the Administration was actually trying to wriggle out of its commitment was that it had pledged around \$3 million to the development of a resettlement village at Ashwood in Lee County, ten miles to the south of Bishopville, despite claims that “shortages of money” would prevent the resettlement of Fant’s Grove residents.<sup>93</sup> Aull included a copy

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> George H. Aull to William W. Alexander, Letter, 17 October 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

of the pointed letter he sent to W.W. Alexander from 17 October with a letter to Senator James F. Byrnes, a man that Aull still hoped would still be supportive. Ultimately though, this seems to be the last time that Aull seriously pushed the resettlement issue. With all the delays in the resettlement process he had witnessed, the lack of property actually paid for by the government and the unconquerable apathy toward resettlement on the part of the college, Aull decided to fight that battle no longer.<sup>94</sup>

The day after Aull mailed that letter to Byrnes, Clemson College administrators met in the President's Office of Clemson College to discuss the Clemson Resettlement Project and whether or not the college wanted to assume control of the project anymore. Aull was flabbergasted. During that meeting on 5 November, and later during the monthly meeting of the Clemson College Board of Trustees, a debate erupted between two camps: that of Aull and his supporters and the party of college president Enoch W. Sikes and his close ally James C. Littlejohn, the college business manager. Sikes and Littlejohn worried over the cost of administering the project should the federal government or state government not supply any financial support as was originally arranged in 1935. Aull's party soundly convinced them that the project was in their best future interest, most likely by way of one of Aull's expertly put together cost-benefit analyses, and the college, through Sikes, contacted W.E. Montgomery of the Resettlement Administration to indicate its tentative interest in the project as of 6 November.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Robert T. Sorrells, *The Clemson Experimental Forest: Its First Fifty Years*, (1984), 14.

<sup>95</sup> George H. Aull to W.E. Montgomery, Letter, 27 November 1936. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13

The Board of Trustees followed suit, echoing Sikes's statement of support with their own statement that "the College is willing and desires to assume the responsibility for the administration of the Clemson College Resettlement Area under appropriate agreement with the Federal government."<sup>96</sup> The 1936 Board of Trustees that issued that statement counted among its membership several men who would logically be sympathetic to Aull's project. First, the board had among its life trustees Paul Sanders, a native of Beach Hill Plantation in Colleton County, a businessman with interests in saw-milling and rural real estate, and a record of government service with the State Farm Labor Advisory Committee and the State Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

The board also benefitted, as did the Clemson Project for that matter, from having Robert Muldrow Cooper in its ranks. Cooper, who hailed from Wisacky in Lee County, had already served South Carolina as an advocate of agriculture in the State House of Representatives for eleven years (1923-1934). He was also a staunch supporter of Clemson, even though he himself was a graduate of the University of South Carolina (Class of 1909), and all of its interests. Thomas Benton Young was, like Cooper, an agriculturalist, but his angle was that of a scientist. Young worked at the USDA from his graduation from Clemson College in 1903 until 1920, when he joined the South Carolina Extension Service, where he would remain until 1925. Joseph B. Douthit, who had only served on the board for eight months by the time it issued its statement in November, had studied soil conservation at Clemson (his degree was in the general agriculture track, but his interest was in the fields of soil conservation and agronomy) and was a supervisor of

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<sup>96</sup> Abstract from the 25 November 1936 meeting of the Clemson College Board of Trustees. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2 F13.

the Upper Savannah Soil Conservation District. Beyond these particular men, most of Clemson's trustees were alumni, making their dedication to Clemson and its reputation ironclad: William D. Barnett, Ben Tillman Leppard, William C. Graham, Frank E. Cope, Samuel H. Sherard, Young, and Douthit all were products of Clemson. Even those men who did not share alumni status with these seven, Robert M. Cooper, Edgar A. Brown, Christie Benet, Joseph E. Sitrine, Sanders, and William W. Bradley, himself part of a "Clemson family," were intensely dedicated to Clemson's interests, and they, therefore, had no reservations in endorsing Aull's project.<sup>97</sup>

To complicate matters, the Resettlement Administration folded into the Department of Agriculture on 1 January 1937 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 7530. Essentially, what Aull had charged the Resettlement Administration with earlier—poor management, land grabbing, and inefficient use of resources—became the consensus opinion about the Resettlement Administration's operations. Its mastermind and only director, Columbia University economics professor Rexford G. Tugwell, resigned in 1936 due to Congressional criticism and charges of mismanagement. Hoping to breathe new life into the program, President Roosevelt put the Resettlement Administration under the direction of the Department of Agriculture, where it stayed until September 1937 when, again faced with charges of poor management, the Resettlement Administration was tentatively transferred to the Farm Security Administration.<sup>98</sup> Effectively created with the 22 July 1937 passage of the

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<sup>97</sup> Jerome V. Reel, Jr., *The High Seminary: A History of the Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina*, Vol. 1 (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2011), 267-271, 285.

<sup>98</sup> Records of the Farmers Home Administration, Section 96.1: Administrative History. Available online at <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/096.html>. Last accessed 10 January 2012.

Bankhead-Jones Tenant Farming Act, this created a credit program to assist farmers with the purchasing of land. This act officially created by the Farm Security Act passed on 1 September 1937, the Farm Security Administration's mission was, like the Resettlement Administration before it, to buy out small farms rendered nonviable economically and transplanting their residents to planned communities. However, on 1 September 1937, with the passage of the U.S. Secretary's Memorandum No. 733, the land utilization program under began its year-long move instead to the Bureau of Agriculture Economics while the Farm Security Administration oversaw program administration from September 1937 to July 1938.<sup>99</sup> In October 1938 the situation would become murkier and more confusing as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace, instituted a major reorganization of the USDA's land management programs, shifting its own Water Facilities, Land Utilization, and Farm Forestry programs to the Soil Conservation Service. On 27 April 1935, in response to the "wastage of soil and moisture resources on farm, grazing, and forest lands" which was a "menace to the national welfare," Congress passed Public Law 74-46, creating the Soil Conservation Service, the culmination of land and water conservationism that had been a major focus of New Deal programs since President Roosevelt's election in 1932.<sup>100</sup> In three short years (1935 to 1938), then, the federal chain of administration with regards to the Clemson project would change hands no less than four times.

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<sup>99</sup> H.H. Wooten, Economic Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, "The Land Utilization Program from 1934 to 1964: Origin, Development, and Present Status," *Agriculture Economic Report No. 85*. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B5 F13A.

<sup>100</sup> National Resources Conservation Service, "75 Years Helping People Help the Land: A Brief History of NRCS." Available online at [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/about/history/?&cid=nrcs143\\_021392](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/about/history/?&cid=nrcs143_021392). Last accessed on 10 January 2012.

At some point in January 1937—it is unclear exactly when—the administrators within the newly aligned Resettlement Administration took an active role in undermining the progress of the Clemson College Community Conservation Project. In a letter to Representative John C. Taylor dated 31 January 1937, Aull cites an incident that occurred earlier in the month when a team sent by the Resettlement Administration crossed a private citizen’s property to gain access to a dam built on Todd’s Creek in the Land Use Area. The team’s mission was simple: dynamite the dam. The Resettlement Administration cited improper construction techniques—an unlikely possibility given that Clemson engineering faculty oversaw the dam’s erection—but this was only after a man chased the team off his property with a shotgun and after Aull demanded an explanation. In any case, the orders were secret, as the Resettlement Administration did not notify anyone associated with the Clemson Community Conservation Project about possible issues with the dam or about their decision to blow it to pieces.<sup>101</sup>

This incident may have proved to be the last straw for Aull. He drew upon his negative experiences working for the Resettlement Administration to write a paper entitled “Problems of Resettlement in Relation to the Various Governmental Units,” a paper he presented at the 4 February 1937 meeting of the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers in Nashville, Tennessee. In his study, which Aull also purposely sent to L.C. Gray of the land management division of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, he outlined four broad problems that complicated the operations of the Resettlement Administration. First, the rehabilitation of land should not have been part of

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<sup>101</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 31 January 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

the Resettlement Administration because much of its authority in this area was because of its assimilation of land policy branches of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The essentials of rural land rehabilitation must be “preserved and perpetuated,” and should be made part of regular state government programs, a move that was occurring at the time as the Resettlement Administration was transferring its land rehabilitation authority to the USDA and its network of post-secondary educational institutions, Extension Services, and Experiment Stations. The second and third problems with the Resettlement Administration, according to Aull, resulted from ill-conceived ideas of resettlement (both rural and suburban) as a policy, from interdepartmental squabbling and bickering, and from wasteful financial appropriations or pork barrel-like projects. The last problem with the Resettlement Administration resulted from the government’s purchasing and holding of massive amounts of land before developing rehabilitation projects, in effect a problem of putting the cart in front of the oxen resulting from the actions of “power-drunk, herd riding officials” and “over-zealous and under-trained subordinates.”<sup>102</sup> Within a week of this presentation, a letter from R. W. Hudgens, Regional Director of the Resettlement Administration, reached Aull indicating that the First Deficiency Appropriations Bill for 1937, passed during the January 1937 session of the Seventy-Fifth Congress, enabled sufficient funds to be pumped into the resettlement program at Clemson under the category of “subsistence homesteads.”<sup>103</sup> Now, however,

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<sup>102</sup> George H. Aull, “The Problems of Resettlement in Relation to the Various Governmental Units,” presented before the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers on 4 February 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>103</sup> For a brief history and explanation of subsistence homesteads, see <http://newdeal.feri.org/survey/34011.htm> or William E. Zeuch, “The Subsistence Homestead Program from the Viewpoint of an Economist,” *Journal of Farm Economics* Vol. 17, No. 4 (Nov. 1935), 710-719.

issues arose over whether or not the land for resettlement—the land that would become known as the Saluda Gardens in the vicinity of Old Stone Church, particularly the old Pettigrew Place—was useable as some of the farm management officials sent by the Resettlement Administration found it to be unsuitable.<sup>104</sup>

Aull's continuous harping on the shortcomings of the Resettlement Administration to its officials, local politicians, and before the general public and his colleagues did not derail the Resettlement Administration's plan to torpedo the Clemson Land Use Project. In February of 1937, Representative Taylor's office was notified by Aull of the Resettlement Administration's plan to dynamite the dam constructed on Todd's Creek. It called the Congressman's office on the morning of the eleventh, citing poor construction of the dam and Aull's breach of Administration protocol by beginning the dam without his supervisor's permission as reasons for its demolition. The Assistant Administrator pledged that the demolition was only because the dam was poorly constructed and that the Resettlement Administration was happy with the possibility of hydrologic projects on the Clemson land. He added that other dams would be built by with the Administration's permission that could more suitably replace the Todd's Creek impoundment.<sup>105</sup> Its plans were ultimately blocked by Aull's ability to muster support from Taylor who had personally recommended to the Resettlement Administration the man in charge of the dam's construction, engineering project supervisor W.T. Linton. In the course of the fight over the Todd's Creek dam, Linton was dismissed by the

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<sup>104</sup> Ralph W. Hudgens to George H. Aull, Letter, 10 February 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>105</sup> Z.W. Meeks, Secretary to John C. Taylor, forwarded to George H. Aull, letter and telegram, 11 February 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

Resettlement Administration on grounds of inefficiency and improper building practices, charges which were unfounded and challenged by Aull and Linton's staff.<sup>106</sup> Perhaps this was a "consolation firing" for the Resettlement Administration who were unable to get rid of Aull and his singular influence over the direction of the Clemson project, an influence that continued to shape and expand the project beyond boundaries comfortable to the Administration, despite the fact that he had returned to teaching and been replaced on the Land Use team.

Even as the Clemson Land Use Project endured its second change in leadership (the first being from Aull to Charles Nuite in 1936 and the second being from Nuite to C.W. Rentz, Jr.), Aull still exerted much control over the project by the winter and spring of 1936-1937. His tenacity and his candor helped him to capture allies in the administration of Clemson, in local business and agriculture, and in positions of governmental authority. Moreover, the Clemson Land Use staff had always been like its manager Aull in mindset and goals; their dedication was to the Land Use Project in Clemson, not the Resettlement Administration's agenda. Even after Aull's resignation, this staff, under men like W.T. Linton who remained as the project's engineering supervisor, worked to improve the land of the Fant's Grove area and its residents, even if that meant not asking for the Resettlement Administration's permission to do so. The Todd's Creek dam incident was a prime example of this. The Assistant Regional Director, W.A. Hartman, used this incident to start a process of repopulating the Land

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<sup>106</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 23 February 1937; George H. Aull to Ralph W. Hudgens, Letter, 3 March 1937; John C. Taylor to George H. Aull, Letter, 4 March 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

Use staff with people unsympathetic to Aull and Clemson, beginning with the firing of W.T. Linton in February 1937. The process only continued with the firing of an accountant and the hiring of two men, C.A. McIntosh and Sidney Edmundson, whom Aull counted among Hartman's cronies and effectively described as spies.<sup>107</sup> In a conversation with Aull, the new Project Manager, C.W. Rentz, hinted at the extent to which Hartman sought to interfere with the Clemson project and exert his own authority over it by making any future administrators agree with his policy and personal choices. In Aull's words, related in a letter to Representative Taylor, Rentz was hired as a puppet of Hartman's. Aull challenged that if Rentz did not agree with the Assistant Regional Director, "he would lose his job just like Mr. Linton had lost his and that he had a family to support and could not afford to take issue with Dr. Hartman."<sup>108</sup> Aull also makes mention in a 17 March 1937 letter of attempts by Hartman to blackmail Aull into falling in line with the bureaucratic directives of the Resettlement Administration shortly before his own resignation to return to the college's employment.<sup>109</sup> Though this happened approximately a year before the Linton incident, it is more evidence of Hartman's sincere attempts to derail the Land Use Project by controlling its personnel, a tactic he perfected by the spring of 1937.

Hartman also tried a more "straightforward" approach to ending the Clemson Land Use Project—taking it away from Clemson. By early summer of 1937 Hartman had published a prospectus, "Future Use and Administration of Land Use Adjustment

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<sup>107</sup> George H. Aull to Raymond A. Pearson, Letter, 10 March 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>108</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 11 March 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>109</sup> George H. Aull to Raymond A. Pearson, Letter, 17 March 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

Projects,” in which he argued for the placement of the program, and all other land use projects in South Carolina, under the jurisdiction of a “Federal Business Corporation.” What Hartman had in mind was, unsurprisingly, an arm of the Resettlement Administration itself. The problem in Aull’s eyes was multi-fold. First, the majority of the projects in the state were experiments in wild land management and therefore not fit to be managed by an “educational and social service” organization such as the Resettlement Administration. Second, because Hartman’s plan would be looking at two very different kinds of lands to be managed—uninhabited wild and inhabited, marginally productive agriculture lands—the Resettlement Administration would attempt to create broad plans to manage them both in a unified fashion. This would ultimately lead to failure. Projects like the Clemson one were designed as experiments that needed special attention. Third, this would remove Clemson from the administrative equation, breaking promises made by the Resettlement Administration to have the project run by the college after the initial phase. This would mean that the Clemson project, along with the others in South Carolina, would be managed from the Administration’s federal offices in Washington, D.C. or regional offices in Montgomery, Alabama, instead of by the on-the-ground project manager C.W. Rentz.

George Aull saw this as the potential end of the resettlement aspect of the Clemson Project due to its unpopularity with federal bureaucrats in the Resettlement Administration. Lastly, the trustees, officials, faculty, and staff of Clemson College and its Experiment Station and Extension Service, of course, who still wanted to control the project, had made capital commitments to do so, and valued the project as an educational

and social experiment. Taking the project away from them would be almost a cruel joke and, ultimately, undermine it in the long run.<sup>110</sup> D.W. Watkins, the director of the Clemson Cooperative Extension Service in the 1930s and 1940s, pointed out in a letter to Ralph Hudgens dated June 28, 1937, the college was unable to pay for the continuing administration of the program should the Resettlement Administration turn it over to Clemson eventually. Watkins was hopeful that Hudgens and the Resettlement Administration would see the benefits that Clemson's control of the project represented as the school's proximity to the area and stable of expert faculty and staff would help the project more than either a distant federal or even state business corporation could.<sup>111</sup> The school's lack of money, however, represented a challenge. If Clemson was going to make a case that it should control the future of the Clemson Land Use Project, it would still depend on federal dollars to do this. The project needed federal funds to pay for operating and maintenance costs as it could not use its own limited budget to do so.

As historian Jerome V. Reel reminds readers in his official history of Clemson University, South Carolina began to feel seriously the effects of the Great Depression by 1931. To respond, Clemson's administration, led by President Sikes, cut "nonprofessional" costs that were not related directly to instruction. The chief source of revenue for the college at the time was the fertilizer tag "tax" levied on all fertilizer tested by Clemson, the school officially charged with that duty. As the droughts and Depression

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<sup>110</sup> George H. Aull to D.W. Watkins, Letter, 14 June 1937; D.W. Watkins to Ralph W. Hudgens, Letter, 18 June 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>111</sup> D.W. Watkins to Ralph W. Hudgens, Letter, 28 June 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

continued to wreak havoc on the state, less and less fertilizer was used, ending in significantly reduced revenue for the college.<sup>112</sup>

In order to recoup the money lost to declining fertilizer tag sales, President Sikes instituted a plan to increase capital holdings for the college. This led to the creation of the Clemson College Foundation, a pool of private grants upon which the college could draw, and, second, IPTAY, Clemson's storied athletics scholarship program. Sikes and his building manager, James C. Littlejohn, also took advantage of state and federal funds, in the form of both loans and grants, and private donors and foundations to carry out building projects on campus. They saved any state educational funding, fertilizer revenues, and tuition streams for educational expenses. Next, Sikes put a cap on student tuition to help families cope with the hard times but increased total enrollment to maximize the tuition revenue pool his school could access. Finally, Sikes instituted a sweeping cut on all faculty and staff salaries, with his own receiving the largest cut. With all of these emergency measures instituted to save money and simply "keep the doors open," the likelihood of the college paying for the acquisition of the land use project without state or federal assistance was virtually nonexistent.<sup>113</sup>

Ralph W. Hudgens, Regional Director of the Resettlement Administration, seemed convinced by Watkins's arguments concerning the land lease's educational benefit. To be fair, however, Watkins was essentially making the same claims that Aull used while trying to convince the Resettlement Administration that Clemson College should be the owner of the project once the federal lease ends. Hudgens seemed

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<sup>112</sup> Reel, 246-254, 272.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

convinced because he wrote Clemson's Director of Extension saying that he and the Resettlement Administration always intended for land use projects to be an "educational" approach to the problems of land tenancy and overuse because farmers cannot be "credited" out of tenancy but must be "educated out [of it]."<sup>114</sup> Since education was at the core of the Resettlement Administration's mission, it was only logical, according to Hudgens on 25 June, to turn its local project over to the school. He stated that he and the Resettlement Administration would be "glad to turn over the Clemson project to the Clemson College today."<sup>115</sup> The Resettlement Administration was all too aware, however, of the college's financial limitations and was therefore reticent to turn over any part of its South Carolina projects to a group that had not the funds for their continuing development and management. What Hudgens proposed then was the arrangement of a financing structure that could subsidize all the projects in each state before the Resettlement Administration divided them up to the organizations that would assume management. Did Aull misunderstand this arrangement to be an attempt by Hudgens to ensure that the federal government retained ownership of the Clemson property in perpetuity? Did he assume that having a federal business corporation control the Clemson project in 1937, along with all the other projects in the state, meant that the federal government would want to control it every year after that?

To be frank, even if Aull did make these assumptions and Hudgens's plan that he described to Watkins proved to be reality, Aull was probably only being cautious and reasonable. He had already tangled with Hudgens's subordinate, Hartman, multiple times

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<sup>114</sup> Ralph W. Hudgens to D.W. Watkins, Letter, 25 June 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

who, in Aull's quotation of Hartman's own words, had been antagonistic to "that damn Clemson project" for two years. Furthermore, it would indeed be extraordinary for the federal government to subsidize the Clemson project and simply hand it over to the college while still being expected to cover administrative and operational costs. This was exactly what Hudgens indicated was the plan "all along."<sup>116</sup> Lastly, the Resettlement Administration had acquired a large swath of land (now approximately 27,000 acres)<sup>117</sup> over the past two years and had been incredibly picky about how that land was used. When Aull and his team acted without the consultation of the Resettlement Administration, conflict emerged, being personified by the attempt to blow up the Todd's Creek dam. Aull's team had also envisioned a 5,000 to 6,000-acre site for the resettling of farmers that was to become a community near Old Stone Church that, as of 1937, had not materialized because the Resettlement Administration delayed the process at every opportunity. In other words, exactly how much should George Aull have trusted the Resettlement Administration? After all, its chief agent, Hartman, published his paper on the utility that federal business corporations could have for land use projects. In truth, Aull probably could not trust the Resettlement Administration that much.

In fact, George Aull still did not trust Hartman or the Resettlement Administration, even after Watkins shared Hudgens's letter with him. Hudgens used Watkins as his point of contact in Clemson as Aull was no longer officially connected to the project and was only assistant director of the Experiment Station.<sup>118</sup> It was only

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>118</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 28 July 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

natural that one of Aull's Clemson co-workers, who was working on the project (who Aull never named for fear of causing him problems in the Resettlement Administration), and Watkins showed the correspondence with Hudgens. The men had collected their letters over the months of June and July in 1937, and when they showed them to Aull, he was still not convinced that the Resettlement Administration had the best of intentions for the Clemson project or the college. Aull insisted in a letter to Taylor that when Hudgens wrote to Watkins saying that the Resettlement Administration was ready to turn over the project to Clemson College as soon as the college was "willing to assume the responsibility," Hudgens actually meant "as soon as the college is willing to put up the \$15,000.00 to \$25,000.00 which it is estimated it will require to operate it until it can be placed upon a self-supporting basis."<sup>119</sup> If this was the case, Clemson's ownership of the project and its land would never come to be as the college simply did not have that much money at its disposal. What the Clemson party had thought, ever since the 1936 meeting between President Enoch W. Sikes, the college Board of Trustees, the college's business manager James C. Littlejohn, and Aull, was that the federal government would give them financial support to help pay for the administration of the project.

Luckily for Aull and the college, they had a major supporter in Representative Taylor who offered to take personally a new proposition petitioning for federally-assisted ownership of the Clemson project on behalf of the college to the Resettlement Administration's regional offices in Montgomery.<sup>120</sup> Unfortunately, Aull had no time to write up a new proposal as he was undergoing PhD examinations during the summer of

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> John C. Taylor to George H. Aull, Letter, 30 July 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

1937, his final summer spent away from Clemson studying in Madison in the University of Wisconsin's department of applied economics and rural sociology. Because of this, Aull was unable to write a new proposal for Taylor regarding the Clemson project. However he passed along the knowledge that Dr. Sikes and the Board of Trustees still wanted the project but were simply unable to come up with the \$25,000 to \$35,000 per year needed to manage the project. They were also overwhelmed by the \$250,000 estimated by assistant director Hartman that would cover the permanent purchase of the land from the federal government.<sup>121</sup>

Aull received two pieces of good news that summer. First, the University of Wisconsin notified Aull that he had passed his PhD examinations and dissertation defense. Second, Representative John C. Taylor notified Aull that the Federal directors of the Resettlement Administration had rejected W.A. Hartman's proposal for a federal business corporation to control the Clemson project. Taylor learned as much from a 26 August letter from William Alexander, the federal administrator of the Resettlement Administration in its office in Washington that he forwarded to Aull. Instead, the Resettlement Administration advised Hudgens to prepare a plan to involve cooperation with state agencies, such as state forest services or land grant colleges, in the administration of each project.<sup>122</sup> This meant that in the words of the chief officer of the Resettlement Administration for the first time real consideration would be given to the

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<sup>121</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 4 August 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>122</sup> William W. Alexander to John C. Taylor, Letter, 26 August 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

possibility that the Clemson project would be managed by Clemson College, a statement in writing that Aull retained in his personal records.

If the Resettlement Administration was to give serious consideration to turning over the project to Clemson, then the college would need to submit a new request for the land on which it sat. This normally took the form of extended leases between the federal government who originally purchased the land for such projects and the agency taking over management duties, as had already happened by the summer of 1937 between the federal government and Iowa State College. The only person capable of writing such a request for Clemson was George Aull. That is not to say that other members of Clemson's faculty and staff were ill-equipped to write such a lease as there were gifted scientists, economists, writers, mathematicians, speakers, historians, and political thinkers on staff. Moreover, the president and his deputy, the college business manager were men of profound influence and standing. President Sikes, a graduate of Wake Forest's undergraduate program and Johns Hopkins's Ph. D. program in history, government, and economics where he studied under Henry Adams and Woodrow Wilson, had established himself as one of the South's leading academic administrators. He was also instrumental in steering Coker College prior to his successful tenure at Clemson, which began in 1925. He and business manager James Littlejohn helped guide the college financially through the World War I and Great Depression by cultivating relationships with nationally-known donors and political figures.<sup>123</sup> But Aull's intimate knowledge of the Clemson project and

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<sup>123</sup> Reel, *The High Seminary* Vol. 1, 79, 216, 231-232, 245-250. One should note, however, that Littlejohn's title as "business manager" only came into existence during Sikes's administration. He filled a similar role as assistant to the previous president, Walter Merritt Riggs, however.

the Resettlement Administration and his research on land use policies in other states, especially those in the Midwest, made him a natural choice to be the person to write the new lease proposal. This is precisely what happened in September 1937 after he was summoned before the Clemson Board of Trustees to deliberate on and explain the Land Use project.

For lack of a better term, Aull borrowed Iowa State College's land tenure lease that it had already used to acquire Resettlement Administration land in its state and formatted it to fit Clemson's particular situation. The lease was written for a fifty-year period, beginning 1 July 1938 and ending 30 June 1988, at a rate of one dollar per year, payable in advance on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July of each year. It included a clause that made renewal of the lease for another fifty years automatic upon the expiration of the original. The document also gave the college the right to purchase the land outright at the end of the lease period or at least the opportunity to opt out within ninety days of the culmination of the lease. The agreement also outlined an eight-part plan to present a "unified, coordinated and practical program of social and economic improvement" through "the effective utilization and management of land."<sup>124</sup> The eight parts consisted of experiments and demonstrations in the economic possibilities of marginal land for forestry purposes, wildlife preservation and management, erosion control, pasture development and management, organized recreation for rural inhabitants, agricultural and non-agricultural employment, land utilization as a public expenditure, and any miscellaneous land use activities that either Clemson or the United States federal

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<sup>124</sup> George H. Aull, "A Lease Between the United States of America and The Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina." MSS 255 B2A F1.

government could agree on in writing.<sup>125</sup> Through an administrator of the project and an “Advisory Committee on Land Utilization,” all appointed by the president and the Clemson College Board of Trustees and with the committee consisting of members or representatives of the Extension Service and the Experiment Station, the college was to devise and implement these eight pieces of the lease’s larger mission. Standard legal procedures regarding such leases, such as the college’s assumption of all costs *and profits* from the land, the U.S. government’s ownership of any mineral or oil deposits, or the mandatory issuing of yearly progress reports by the college, applied to Aull’s contract as well. He was careful to make both the college and United States government as happy as possible in order to facilitate the transfer.

Looking at this in retrospect, Clemson’s side of the deal was staggeringly good. It is true that the college would have to assume the day-to-day administrative costs of working the land and conducting the demonstrations and/or experiments, but, as a land grant college, it had to engage in those activities anyway. The Hatch Act of 1887, which created state agricultural experiment stations, the Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890, which created land grant colleges and mandated that they teach agriculture, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which formalized the cooperative extension service and provided it with federal funding, all placed agricultural and dendrological experiments at the core of the college’s mission. Moreover, the applied economics and sociology work to be carried out on the land-use property by Clemson also fit within the agricultural mission of the various land grant acts. In short, the college was already carrying out the

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

eight platforms of the lease's general mission, so one would have to imagine that the \$15,000 to \$25,000 administrative fees that Ralph Hudgens estimated would logically be lower for Clemson. And the deal that Aull "cut," to lease the 29,000 acres of land for only one dollar a year, was outstanding. Also, because the lease was for such a long term—fifty years to start—Clemson could engage in all the complicated agricultural and forestry experiments that it wanted without fear that they would be interrupted.

In early September, the South Carolina General Assembly, echoing the Clemson party's opinion about land-use projects and the new directives of the Resettlement Administration under Alexander, passed a resolution to express the state's interest in rural development through multiple land-use projects administered by state agencies.<sup>126</sup> In the case of the Clemson project, the General Assembly proposed that the college be the administrator while presumably the state forest service would assume control of the other projects. Aull authored the General Assembly's resolution just as he had the lease proposal that was sent by President Sikes to William Hartman on 15 September 1937. Barring rejection by Hartman, the proposal would, according to Sikes, go for review before the college's Board of Trustees on 24 September.<sup>127</sup> Attached to the cover letter was a version of the lease proposal that established the organizational and financial capabilities of the college to allay any remaining apprehension that Hartman and Hudgens had that the school would be able to administer the land properly. But Aull was equally worried that other federal officials would have as much to do with the decision to

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<sup>126</sup> George H. Aull, unnamed resolution for South Carolina General Assembly. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>127</sup> Enoch W. Sikes to William A. Hartman, Letter, 15 September 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

transfer the land to Clemson as the Resettlement administrators would. In a letter to Representative Taylor on 28 September, he expressed his concern that L.C. Gray, chief administrator in charge of land utilization for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics; Harry Brown, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture; and Dr. A.G. Black, Chief of the entire Bureau of Agricultural Economics, would be “important factors” in determining the future of all South Carolina projects, including the Clemson one. At the end of this letter, Aull warned Taylor that the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Department of Agriculture had shown interest in the Clemson project, so it was going to be necessary for Clemson “friends” to “work very hard” in order to secure the transfer goes to the college rather than into the holdings of either of these two federal agencies.<sup>128</sup>

President Sikes’s attempt to sway W.A. Hartman worked. This was surprising given his long-standing antagonism to the Clemson project. His testimony to the organizational and financial effectiveness of the college reappeared in a packet of information that Hartman himself passed on to L.C. Gray, the assistant administrator of the Farm Security Administration and chief officer of the land utilization section of the Agricultural Economics Bureau, on 7 October 1937 together with Hartman’s endorsement of the college’s assumption of control of the Clemson project.<sup>129</sup>

Between the late autumn 1937 and early spring 1938, a wave of organizational restructuring hit the various governmental agencies associated with land use projects. A whole new division within the USDA’s Farm Security Administration was created to oversee project organization and determine agencies’ jurisdictional lines with regard to

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<sup>128</sup> George H. Aull to John C. Taylor, Letter, 28 September 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

<sup>129</sup> William A. Hartman to L.C. Gray, Letter, 7 October 1937. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

in-progress projects. The director of that division, C.F. Clayton, wrote George Aull on 4 February to indicate that while the Farm Security Administration and USDA had always appreciated Clemson College's interest in the Clemson land use project, it could not guarantee that it would receive the rights of management in the future. Clayton's job, and his entire division, was to place projects under the most capable and suitable management bodies, and, as such, the Farm Security Administration had to evaluate the college with that in mind.<sup>130</sup> What Aull had feared—that the hours of effort that he and President Sikes and Representative Taylor had spent lobbying for Clemson to William Hartman and Ralph Hudgens of the Resettlement Administration would not, ultimately, influence the decision about the school's right to control the land use project there—had come to pass.

What Aull could not have seen coming was something that would prove more damaging to the Clemson Land Use Project than the fighting with Hartman and the Resettlement Administration had been or the “grabbiness” of various federal agencies could have potentially become. What he did not see coming was a growing division in the “Clemson party” that he had always believed was unified. Aull always thought he had the support of the agriculture faculty and staff at Clemson and the Board of Trustees, or at least that was what he had believed since his successful 1936 meeting with them all. As 1937 gave way to 1938, and though the occasional rumor of Clemson's wavering interest in the project had continue to pop up from time to time, Aull could not have known that some members of the “Clemson party,” men he counted as allies in the Clemson Land Use Project were about to turn against him.

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<sup>130</sup> C.F. Clayton to George H. Aull, Letter, 4 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F1.

## CHAPTER III

### Mr. Aull and His Divided House

“I cannot escape the conviction, however, that a very small but powerful minority here at the College has so far successfully blocked adequate consideration [of the Clemson Land Use project]...”

--George H. Aull to Trustee Christie Benet, Letter, 12 September 1938

The first indicators of serious internal strife within the “Clemson camp” came as a complete surprise to George Aull when he learned of them while on a trip to Atlanta in early February 1938. He was in town for the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers, one of the numerous professional organizations to which he belonged, when he had a brief but troubling encounter with his former “sparring partner,” William Hartman. The personage of Hartman was not what troubled Aull, as the regional administrator for the Resettlement Administration still apparently endorsed Clemson’s case for managing the land use project adjacent to the campus. Unfortunately, however, during his conversation with Hartman, he learned that some administrators in Washington had heard a rumor that Clemson College no longer wanted to administer the project, and actually supported turning it over to a different state agency. Hartman had been in Washington in the early winter of 1938 or December of 1937 (the exact date is unknown) for a professional conference when he learned from a Dr. Bost and Dr. Richardson that Clemson was only interested in pasture development on part of the

project lands. If the project were assigned to the game and fish department, it would be “agreeable with the officials of Clemson College.”<sup>131</sup>

Hartman was stunned. He dutifully reported the incident to Aull as soon as he saw him, which was at the February meeting of the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers in Atlanta. Though Hartman indicated that Bost and Richardson “might not have been in condition to know exactly what they were saying,” the fact that federal administrators were even talking about Clemson’s possible decision to turn down the land use project worried him greatly. What probably worried Aull more was that the only way that Bost and Richardson could have learned of any apprehension on the part of Clemson’s administration or faculty and staff was if someone in the ranks was spreading dissension. But who could have been doing that? Aull had learned of “persistently recurring rumor[s] that the college was not interested in the project and had been putting out such fires left and right since that January, but he had not heard of people within Clemson’s ranks contacting federal administrators with the goal of getting rid of the property until now.”<sup>132</sup>

Aull’s first step to control the damage was to contact all parties concerned with the Clemson project to make sure they knew that the school was, and always had been, interested in managing the land use project. He began with a 4 February letter to L.C. Gray, which was the letter that C.F. Clayton responded to by thanking Clemson for its interest.<sup>133</sup> Next, he drafted a letter describing the conversation that Hartman had with

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<sup>131</sup> George H. Aull to Christie Benet, Letter, 10 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>132</sup> George H. Aull to L.C. Gray, Letter, 21 January 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>133</sup> See chapter 2.

Bost and Richardson and sent it to Christie Benet, one of Aull's contacts on the Clemson Board of Trustees. In that letter to Benet, who was a managing partner of the esteemed law firm Benet, Shand, and McGowan of Columbia and a well-regarded attorney in his own right, Aull was careful to point out that in all of his conversations with President Sikes the two men were in agreement that Clemson wanted, and would benefit most, from having the whole land use project.<sup>134</sup> Aull and Sikes also agreed that should the college decide to do away with any part of the land it was receiving from the Resettlement Administration it could then fall under the administration of another department of state government. This provided the college with a legal "out," an escape clause that enabled it to do away with excess land if it proved that the 27,000 acres was too large or too costly to administer. Still, that was most likely an exercise in preparedness as Aull felt that the college was in a strong position to operate the project and that it wanted to do so. Benet's advice to Aull was befitting a man of such sharp legal acumen: do away with hearsay arguments and have Sikes speak with Gray directly regarding questions about the college's intentions. Benet also agreed with Aull that Clemson would only reap the fullest benefit from the land if it had "primary charge" with the right to sublet use of parts of it to other government agencies.<sup>135</sup> Aull did just that and asked Sikes to write to L.C. Gray to reestablish the college's interest in the project. This Sikes did on 15 February. For his role in this, the Board of Trustees selected Christie Benet to be the official trustee advise.r to the project and Clemson's involvement with it.

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<sup>134</sup> George H. Aull to Christie Benet, Letter, 10 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>135</sup> Christie Benet to George H. Aull, Letter, 14 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

This position ensured that he would be one of the two individuals, along with W.D. Barnett, who kept the Board of Trustees abreast of the goings on with the project.<sup>136</sup>

George Aull's next step was to contact the various department heads at Clemson College that he thought could stand to benefit from the project's affiliation with the school. On 21 February 1938, he mailed out a form letter to select department heads, asking that they submit proposals regarding how each could use the land in his department's work. Enclosed was an updated version of the statement on the history, purpose, and scope of the Clemson Land Use Project that Aull had presented before the Board of Trustees and college administration in the autumn of 1936, the document that won over any remaining doubters and brought them to his side. What Aull wanted was a detailed list of how different departments would utilize the land and how much they would require, as well as whether or not they had access to funding that would enable them to take advantage of the land. The purpose for this was likely threefold. First, it enabled Aull to gain an understanding of the various experiments and demonstrations that the college would use the land for in fields he only had training in as an undergraduate in the 1910s. He could only *guess* as to what the chemistry department or animal husbandry department, for example, could use the land for, and so he wanted detailed descriptions from the experts themselves. Second, after knowing how the Clemson faculty and staff would use the land, Aull could look for federal funding that could help defray the costs of the work carried out on it by matching college projects to federal research initiatives. Third, he could also probably use the written statements by the department heads as

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<sup>136</sup> Enoch W. Sikes to L.C. Gray, 15 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

evidence of the college's interest in and need for the project's management by Clemson.<sup>137</sup>

At the same time that Aull was sending his form letters to Clemson department heads, one of the major attractions of the land use project, Lake Issaqueena, was completed. Aull wrote to Christie Benet on 24 February that the lake had just reached full pool and that 1,600 people had paid a visit to the site on a single Sunday about a week earlier. He had also learned that the federal government had arranged for the planting of one million trees on the land use acreage for the creation of a managed forest.<sup>138</sup> These developments, in conjunction with another successful presentation before the Board of Trustees that he made on 21 February and the steady inflow of responses to his form letter from Clemson department heads, probably made George Aull feel cautiously optimistic about the project's prospects and the level of support he could count on from college faculty, staff, and administration - optimism that he shared with trustee W.W. Bradley on 24 February.<sup>139</sup>

Between 26 February and 16 April, no less than seven separate departments at Clemson answered Aull's request for detailed plans regarding the 27,000 acres to be leased to the college in the near future. Charles Lee Morgan, head of the poultry department, endorsed plans to build a game preserve for local fowl, but he reported a severe shortage of in-house funds and staff to build any necessary structures.<sup>140</sup> William Hayne Mills, a venerable colleague of Aull's in the department of agricultural economics,

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<sup>137</sup> George H. Aull, form letter, 21 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>138</sup> George H. Aull to Christie Benet, Letter, 24 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>139</sup> George H. Aull to W.W. Bradley, 24 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>140</sup> Charles Lee Morgan to George H. Aull, Letter, 26 February 1938. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F2.

drew up an extensive plan that touted not only the agricultural and recreation utilities of the land for the school, but also the “human-interest side” which he felt had been heretofore underdeveloped. Mills’s ideas aligned with Aull regarding usage. In addition to the development of a variety of farming, erosion control, forestry, recreation experiments and demonstrations already under consideration, Mills advocated for the creation of social experiments on the site. He proposed that the ultimate goal of the project was to create a “self-contained, prosperous, happy community, year-by-year becoming more contented” and sought to meet that end through a program that stressed continuing education and participatory government (community councils) for tenants. Mills suggested that tenants be relieved of state and county taxes on the land, which were most likely delinquent given what Aull and his early surveying teams had found out in 1935. They should have the right to permanent occupancy with “moderate” rents attached.<sup>141</sup>

Lawrence V. Starkey, head of the department of animal husbandry, and J.P. LaMaster, head of the department of dairying, expressed keen interest that their respective departments had in the development of fruitful pasture lands.<sup>142</sup> LaMaster even mentioned in his response how he had attempted to negotiate directly with the Resettlement Administration for some of the land ultimately contained in the Clemson project for creating experimental pasture lands and how he had met with failure each time. The prospect of his college acquiring the entire swath of land, a portion of which

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<sup>141</sup> William Hayne Mills to George H. Aull, Letter, 26 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>142</sup> J.P. LaMaster to George H. Aull, Letter, 26 February 1938; L.V. Starkey to George H. Aull, Letter, 4 March 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

his department could utilize, excited him greatly.<sup>143</sup> C.S. Patrick, head of the college farm and its entire farms' department, wrote Aull about the possibilities that he saw for his department to increase its output of cotton, grains, corn, hay, and fuel wood used by the college.<sup>144</sup> Franklin Sherman, head of the department of zoology and entomology, described how his department could benefit in its study of native insects and animal life from just a single acre of lake-frontage property with a laboratory cottage built on it.<sup>145</sup> The most ambitious proposal, however, came from the department of agronomy and its emerging subfield of agricultural engineering.

Agricultural engineering, a cross between two of the three historical land grant missions (the other being military science and tactics) had, since its formation, been an unusual discipline at Clemson. It was a program jointly administered by the schools of agriculture and engineering and had a curriculum made up of mechanics, agronomy and soil science, and applied agriculture. Perhaps more than any other major on the Clemson campus at the time, agricultural engineering was the application of the classroom to the practical, writ large. It required students to be equally familiar with horticulture, farm machinery (and how to repair it), irrigation and soil maintenance, and chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. In short, agricultural engineering was a major that taught future farmers how to farm. As such, the department needed a farm near the campus to facilitate instruction. Other schools made farm experience a prerequisite for enrolling in or graduating from agricultural engineering courses and usually arranged for

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<sup>143</sup> LaMaster to Aull, 26 February 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>144</sup> C.S. Patrick to George H. Aull, Letter, 8 March 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>145</sup> Franklin Sherman to George H. Aull, Letter, 16 April 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

such experience on college farms in the summer months. Clemson, other than its farms administered by C.S. Patrick and his department that were used to grow staples for the school and its other departments, had no such arrangement. What George B. Nutt, an associate professor of agricultural engineering at the vanguard of Clemson's entrance into the field, suggested was the creation of a 400-acre farm. He believed that 200 acres in farm land and 200 acres in managed timber, along with facilities for a summer camp that would allow his students to accumulate on-the-job training, as it were.<sup>146</sup> In truth, what Nutt proposed was really to create a microcosm of the entire land use project—agriculture paired with land management—within the larger project itself. Such ambitious proposals had to have excited Aull greatly after having heard rumors of a lack of interest in land use on the part of Clemson.

Every letter from every department head, though they contained much enthusiasm and optimism for the project and Clemson's ownership of it, had one depressing trait. All contained statements that no extra money, no extra buildings, and no extra staff existed within the departments to facilitate the creation and management of these projects. Aull would need to look for available federal money to help defray the college's costs of managing the land and the initial capital investments for the various departmental projects. However, he remained confident, as evidenced by the presentation he had made at the request of the Board of Trustees on 21 February, that the project would pay for itself in the near future and supply the college with financial gains beyond that.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> George B. Nutt to George H. Aull, Letter, 4 March 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>147</sup> See Aull's explanation of the Clemson College Community Conservation Project in Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

George Aull had even more reason for optimism at the beginning of March. He learned that the Farm Security Administration was “considering favorably” the application of Clemson to take control of the land use project and that the project was apparently garnering federal attention with regards to the placement of one of a handful of proposed “million dollar research laboratories.”<sup>148</sup> He shared this good news to President Enoch Sikes in mid-March while simultaneously forwarding copies of his project proposal and summary so that any interested board member could have one. The Dean of the School of Agriculture (the school to which Aull’s department of agricultural economics and rural sociology belonged) and de facto director of the experiment station, Herbert Press Cooper, wrote Aull along with professors Albert M. Musser (horticulture), Lawrence V. Starkey (animal husbandry), J.P. LaMaster (dairying), George B. Nutt (agricultural engineering), Charles Lee Morgan (poultry husbandry), Barnett O. Williams (rural sociology), William Barre Aull (“vice-dean” of the school of agriculture, associate professor of bacteriology, and second cousin to George), Gilbert H. Collings (agronomy), Franklin Sherman (zoology and entomology), C.S. Patrick (college farm superintendent), and George M. Armstrong (botany and bacteriology) asking, in a manner similar to that of Aull two months prior, that each man submit detailed plans for the land use project on behalf of his department. This would help the Farm Security Administration and other federal agencies make decisions regarding appropriations for the coming year and help the college attract funding.<sup>149</sup> Aull did Cooper one better.

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<sup>148</sup> George H. Aull to Enoch W. Sikes, Letter, 14 March 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>149</sup> Herbert P. Cooper to George H. Aull, et al., Letter, 15 April 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

Aull submitted not only his department's tentative plans for the project but also a tantalizing piece of information that he had learned while on a professional visit to Mississippi. While there, Aull learned that the Mississippi Senate had approved an appropriations bill that gave the state's land grant college, The Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Mississippi, or Mississippi A&M, \$100,000 for the development and administration of a land use project that was similar to Clemson's. If anything, Aull looked at this event as precedent-setting. If Mississippi could spend that much money on a project (that Aull found to be inferior to Clemson's upon his inspection), then so could South Carolina.<sup>150</sup> Aull wrote up a budgetary request of only \$15,000 for the South Carolina Free Conference Committee to review, a meager figure compared to the amount given to Mississippi A&M by its own state assembly. He was careful to point out that the \$15,000 would only assist in the acquisition of the project land and that a total of \$50,000 to \$100,000 would be necessary for Clemson to obtain from governmental agencies, state and federal. The state could only allot Clemson \$15,000 in an "emergency appropriation" situation. Otherwise, the state would have to send a full appropriation bill before both South Carolina's Houses. The Free Conference Committee's \$15,000 was a good place to start, though.<sup>151</sup> It would, in the estimation of Aull, support the salaries for the land use project's general manager (\$2,400), a planning engineer (\$1,800), a chief forester (\$1,800), a game and wildlife "technician" (\$1,800), a forage crop and livestock specialist (\$1,800), two fire tower wardens (paid \$300 each), and two patrolmen for the land (also paid \$300 each). That left \$4,000 for labor (at \$0.10

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<sup>150</sup> George H. Aull to Herbert P. Cooper, Letter, 19 April 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

an hour), repairs to buildings and roads, motor vehicle supplies, and miscellaneous supplies. Aull amended these totals to include extra allocations for a chief mechanic (\$1,200), an extra \$1,000 for supplies, an extra allotment for day laborers (to an increased total of \$5,000), and an additional investment of \$4,000 for 100 head of cattle needed to complete the dairying project.<sup>152</sup> Aull would later estimate that Clemson could expect about \$13,950 in annual profit. These profits would be the result of the sale of firewood, sawed crossties, and other lumber products as well as hunting and fishing privileges, concessions, public grazing, rental of farm land, and sale of beef raised on project lands. The project would then virtually pay for its administration costs within the second year of operation.<sup>153</sup>

Later that April, staff members of the South Carolina Experiment Station, most likely under the direction of Aull, published a list of developments that they suggested for the Clemson project and forwarded them to Herbert P. Cooper, Dean of the School of Agriculture and chair of Clemson's Land Utilization Project Committee. Taking ideas from the proposals made by the department heads earlier that winter, the staff developed eighteen items that included issues such as the reforestation of unused areas, electrification, construction of recreation facilities around Lake Issaqueena and the Todd's Creek impoundment, repairs to the Todd's Creek dam and the tenant and laborer dwellings on the land, creation of six "model" farms, development of a dairying facility near the D.W. Watkins home place, construction of two barns and six more tenant

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid; George H. Aull to Herbert P. Cooper, Letter, 6 June 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>153</sup> Aull to Cooper, 6 June 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

houses, restoration of the C.C. Pinckney historical house (called “Woodburn”), completion of a fire warden’s unit at the lower fire tower, the construction of various camps and a wildlife research building around Lake Issaqueena, development of a road system, construction of supplemental dams to help create settling basins for Lake Issaqueena, creation of the Agricultural Engineering Laboratory, which would include machinery and lodging, and the terracing of all land not set aside for forest purposes. The proposal list also included plans for a 100- to 150-acre arboretum on the Ravenel place property along U.S. Highway 76. This particular item and the extensive forestry plans are noteworthy as they foreshadow the eventual purpose for the project—planned, experimental forestry.<sup>154</sup>

All of the planning and all of the petitioning by Aull still had produced no progress on Clemson’s acquisition of the land use project by the autumn of 1938, however. The only explanation that Aull could think of for this lack of movement was that a group within Clemson’s administration and staff, a “small but powerful minority,” had been successful in blocking “adequate consideration” of the project. Aull had no clues about whom specifically he should suspect, but his optimism had clearly waned as he was writing to Christie Benet, Trustees’ advisor to the Clemson Land Use Project, on 12 September 1938. He asked that Benet be watchful of potential adversaries in his correspondence, but he was also careful to indicate that he was writing him in “strictest confidence” for the means of defending himself and, of course, his beloved project.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup>South Carolina Experiment Station Staff, “Developments Suggested on the Clemson College Community Conservation Project.” Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

<sup>155</sup> George H. Aull to Christie Benet, Letter, 12 September 1938. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F2.

By late December 1938, Aull was certain—to a degree—that the people responsible for blocking progress on the Clemson project were the college’s business manager, James Corcoran Littlejohn, and president, Enoch Walter Sikes. He finally scheduled a meeting to discuss the matters with President Sikes and the business manager privately on 9 January 1939, convinced that his skill in cost-benefit analysis could persuade the men he assumed would have the most cause to worry over the project. Aull never explained *why* he thought Littlejohn was the culprit behind the delays in the transfer of the leased land to Clemson having just a hunch that was the case—based on the repeated financial questions about the project (Littlejohn was the business manager)—and the increasingly wavering opinion about the project on the part of President Sikes (whose closest associate in the college’s administration was Littlejohn). With regards to both the financial question and Dr. Sikes’s confidence in the project, Aull wrote the president on 12 January asking that Clemson consult Governor-elect Burnet R. Maybank for support. While serving as Mayor of Charleston, Maybank had supported Roosevelt’s New Deal program that favored public works projects and job creation. And he had served on the South Carolina State Advisory Board for the Federal Administration of Public Works and chaired the South Carolina Public Service Authority. His “obvious interest” in the “development of the resources of the State” would translate to support for the Clemson project, Aull thought, and maybe into appropriated money for the college’s cause.<sup>156</sup> On 5 May, L.J. Leffelman, the new acting regional director for the Land

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<sup>156</sup>George H. Aull to E.W. Sikes, Letter, 12 January 1939. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F3.

Utilization department within the Soil Conservation Service (the most recent federal agency to receive jurisdiction over the Clemson Land Use project), reported that the Clemson Board of Trustees recommended that Clemson officially take over management of the Land Use project. They were emboldened by the example of the State of Mississippi's appropriation of \$100,000 to Mississippi A&M and recommended on 4 May that the college assume management of the entire Clemson project so long as the state legislature appropriate \$5,000 to the college to help defray administration costs. He also reported that the Land Utilization section should not move forward with any discussions about leasing the 27,000 acres to either Clemson or the state forestry commission until the college's committee overseeing the potential project met at least one more time and reissued their approval.<sup>157</sup> In other words, serious discussion about cancelling the appointment of Clemson College as the managing body for the former Land Use project was going on within the federal government, which was also considering turning the project over to the South Carolina State Forestry Commission/Department of Forestry.

This—the three-way discussion between the federal government, the South Carolina State Forestry Commission, and Clemson College—was a larger problem than Aull could have guessed. It had been going on since at least 1932, well before Clemson's acquisition of the land under Aull, and was responsible for President Sikes's recent "weakness." At the beginning of the Roosevelt presidency, the State Forestry Commission was looking for federal funding to acquire forest land and sub-marginal land

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<sup>157</sup> L.J. Leffleman to E.G. Grest, Letter, 5 May 1939. Aull Papers, CUL.SC. MSS 255 B2A F3.

needing tree seeding. H.A. Smith, the state forester, proposed a cooperative program with the state Extension Service, then under William Williams Long, to find farmers living on idle, sub-marginal land parcels of more than 25 acres and bundle them into demonstration areas.<sup>158</sup> Smith also drew up a proposal similar to the one that Aull would create three years later to petition Washington for financing South Carolina's acquisition of approximately 200,000 acres of abandoned farm lands at an estimated cost of \$5.00 per acre. This would allow tenants living on submarginal land to receive a measure of compensation and allow the state to create a system of public forests made up of approximately twenty units, five to 20,000 acres each, which included demonstration areas, recreation areas, and game preserves.<sup>159</sup> One of Smith's partners in this endeavor was Enoch W. Sikes who, as president of Clemson College, had an automatic seat on the State Forestry Commission. By the summer of 1933, the Commission was in negotiations with Clemson to use 1,000 acres belonging to the school to set up a Civilian Conservation Corps camp to do "some good forestry work."<sup>160</sup> The following January, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior authorized \$25,000,000 to fund plans like the one proposed by the State Forestry Commission. The Public Works Administration, the federal organization administering the funds on behalf of the Department of the Interior, mandated that only plots of land of more than 25,000 acres would be up for purchase (similar to the request described in chapter one that George Aull expand the size of his project before the federal government would express interest). The Forestry Commission

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<sup>158</sup> H.A. Smith to J.T. Lazar, Letter, 2 April 1932. President Enoch Walter Sikes Correspondence, CUL.SC. Series 2 Box 2 Folder 23.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> H.A. Smith to Enoch W. Sikes, Letter, 24 July 1933. Sikes Correspondence, CUL.SC. S2 B2 F23.

had already gone so far as to send field agents throughout South Carolina to scout out land by January 1934 and had found suitable stretches in the Upstate.<sup>161</sup> On 29 August 1935, the Forestry Cooperative Agreement Act, or the Fulmer Act, passed, enabling the Secretary of Agriculture to purchase forest land and submarginal farms. A similar bill passed by the General Assembly of South Carolina soon followed.<sup>162</sup>

The State Forestry Commission *thought* that it had an ally in its work in Clemson College. Shortly after its February meeting, the Commission's unofficial head, State Forester H.A. Smith, contacted D.W. Watkins, head of South Carolina Extension Work at Clemson, to discuss the Extension's involvement with forestry work in the state. Watkins favored the Commission's plans to create erosion control and forestry demonstration areas as both agricultural instruction grounds and measures of poverty relief. The Extension Director reported that Pickens, Anderson, and Oconee Counties already had a soil erosion and labor camp set up for the Civilian Conservation Corps to provide the work force for approximately 30,000 acres. This was the Civilian Conservation Corps camp administered by George Aull, the seed of his plan to create a massive multi-use land experiment. Importantly, Smith indicated that he still saw the eventual administration rights over this land falling to State Forestry Commission; he made no

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<sup>161</sup> H.A. Smith to H.L. Tilghman, Letter, 10 January 1934. Sikes Correspondence, CUL.SC. S2 B2 F23.

<sup>162</sup> "Bill Approved by the U.S.F.S. For Purchase State Forests," December 1934; "Cooperative Agreement with States for Acquisition of Forest Lands by the United States," 28 January 1935; "A Bill to Authorize and Empower the State Commission of Forestry to Acquire Property for State Forests and State Parks: to Enter into Cooperative Agreements with the Federal Government and to Pledge Assets in Its Hands for the Retirement of Obligations Incurred in Acquisition of Such Lands in Promoting Reforestation in This State and Providing Work for the Unemployed." Sikes Correspondence, CUL.SC. S2 B2 F23.

mention of Clemson’s future involvement with the project.<sup>163</sup> The State Forestry Commission would continue under this assumption—that the Clemson Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, which became the Clemson Land Use Project, would become “property” of the Commission in end—for the next two years. President Sikes did nothing to help correct this impression by continuing to work both sides of the equation, George Aull’s Land Use Project and Smith’s Forestry Commission. By spring 1938, however, the State Forestry Commission began to see that Clemson did have designs for the land and for the Commission’s direction of forestry work in South Carolina. Extension director Watkins wanted to have state foresters work out of Clemson College as extension agents before entering into their work across the state, ostensibly undercutting the Commission’s authority as a training and management organization. This did not sit well with Smith or the Commission.<sup>164</sup>

The Commission had the federal government’s confidence in its ability to manage over 160,000 acres of mixed use land in South Carolina, so the institutional momentum seemed to point to it as the most capable manager of the Clemson project. By autumn 1938, the Commission had already leased, using authority granted to it by the Bankhead-Jones Tenant Farm Act, the 30,000 acres that made up Poinsett State Park in Sumter County by autumn of 1938, had management rights over 92,000 acres reserved for resettlement in Cheraw, and had a tentative agreement to assume control over 42,000

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<sup>163</sup> H.A. Smith to H.L. Tilghman, E.W. Sikes, B.S. Meeks, and C.P. Cuthbert, Letter, 11 February 1935. Sikes Correspondence, CUL.SC. S2 B2 F23.

<sup>164</sup> H.A. Smith to Enoch W. Sikes, Letter, 31 March 1938; H.A. Smith to D.W. Watkins, Letters, 31 March 1938 and 19 April; D.W. Watkins to H.A. Smith, Letter, 13 April 1938. Sikes Correspondence, CUL.SC. S2 B2 F25.

acres of land in Chesterfield County.<sup>165</sup> Later in his life, Aull related a story that would tie together, albeit humorously, the State Forestry Commission's attempts to take over the Clemson project with Littlejohn's foot dragging. At an undated meeting at the Columbia Hotel, Aull was conversing with H.A. Smith about the Clemson project when Smith asked Aull "G.H., why are you holding out against my taking over administration and control of your project? Both Dr. Sikes and Jim Littlejohn have told me that Clemson does not want the land which you have bought and that, if you will agree, I can have it." While Smith was attempting to negotiate with Aull, South Carolina state Senator Edgar Brown, who became a Clemson trustee in 1935, walked up to the men and, putting one of his arms around Smith and the other around Aull, listened as Smith spoke. When he finished, Brown said, "H.A., let me tell you something. Dr. Sikes and Jim Littlejohn are not running that institution now; Hubert and I are in charge."<sup>166</sup> If there were any doubts in Aull's mind that the other organizations, including the State Forestry Commission, wanted the Clemson Land Use Project acreage or that Dr. Sikes and J.C. Littlejohn were negotiating with them *against* Clemson, they were dashed that night and in the days of 1938 and 1939.

It would have been irresponsible for Aull to blame Sikes and Littlejohn publicly. One must remember that Clemson only just emerging from the Great Depression, including the "Roosevelt Recession" and, as the chief executive and business officer,

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<sup>165</sup> H.A. Smith to State Forestry Commission members Enoch W. Sikes, W.L. Rhodes, W.A. Stilley, Jr., B.A. Moore, and J.W. Perrin, Letter, 25 August 1938; H.A. Smith to State Forestry Commission members Enoch W. Sikes, W.L. Rhodes, W.A. Stilley, Jr., B.A. Moore, and J.W. Perrin, Letter, 21 September 1938; H.A. Smith to State Forestry Commission Members Enoch W. Sikes, W.L. Rhodes, W.A. Stilley, Jr., B.A. Moore, and J.W. Perrin, Letter, 26 September 1938. Sikes Correspondence, CUL.SC. S2 B2 F25.

<sup>166</sup> Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project," 1975.

respectively, Sikes and Littlejohn had to keep the college afloat financially, and non-instructional expenses received the deepest cuts. It would have been conceivable for the college to acquire the land only on two grounds: if it could receive financial assistance, which is why Littlejohn ostensibly requested a \$5,000 appropriation from the General Assembly,<sup>167</sup> or if the college could determine a way to use the land in instruction. Now, various Clemson department heads had stated their interest in the college's assumption of control and had even provided detailed plans on how they could use it. Yet they all needed money to develop the land as an "outdoor classroom." If the college could use the land in ways that required little overhead—most likely in the fields of forestry, soil conservation and erosion control, or pasture development. The only overhead needed would be the labor, done by students and professors, and the machines and plants (grasses or tree seedlings) for the experiments/demonstrations. And already George Aull had secured federal funds for the forestry demonstrations. Moreover, forestry represented a potential growth industry for the South still struggling with drought conditions in the Depression era. As such, Sikes's seat on the State Forestry Commission meant that he was in prime position to lobby for Clemson's entrance into the industry as the forestry training school. That would have been possible for Clemson if it united its agricultural extension work with the State Forestry Commission's management of the 27,000 mixed use acres and started an accredited forestry program.

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<sup>167</sup> Aull, for the record, found Littlejohn's motives suspect. He intimated that Littlejohn drew up the request figuring that the Assembly would reject it, enabling the Business Manager's office to pass on the project while shifting all blame to the State of South Carolina.

Clemson had technically taken that first step toward establishing a forestry program, in 1903. That was two years prior to the creation of the U.S. Forestry Service. Professional forestry education, according to Allen Dunn, historian of the Clemson forestry department, began in the United States five years prior with the establishment of the Biltmore Forest School in Biltmore, North Carolina and the New York State College of Forestry at Cornell in 1898. Clemson's forestry offerings, however, were simply part of the department of botany and bacteriology not a stand-alone program. Professor Haven Metcalf taught the course "Elements of Forestry," a two-hour, one-term senior lecture, that in 1904 received a two-hour laboratory component. In 1906 H.D. House took over the course's instruction, the first year a description of the course was provided in the college's *Catalog*, and a year later Henry Walter Barre, Aull's mentor, guided the course and expanded it to a two-hour lecture/four-hour laboratory unit. C.H. Shattuck, who introduced the Minnesotan Samuel B. Green's 1903 textbook, *Principles of American Forestry*, to the curriculum, L.I. Knight, J.G. Hall, and Arthur B. Massey taught the course between 1908 and 1911, at which time Barre resumed his instruction and continued teaching it until 1917.<sup>168</sup>

The nascent Clemson forestry department took another step when Duane B. Rosenkrans took over the class in 1914. He implemented the use of the book *Elements of Forestry* by Frederick Franklin Moon and Nelson Courtlandt Brown, both of the New

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<sup>168</sup> Allen Dunn and Elizabeth M. Holladay, *A History of Forestry at Clemson University*, Department of Forest Resources Technical Paper No. 7 (June 1997). Available online at [http://www.clemson.edu/cafls/departments/forestry/cef/history\\_forestry\\_dunn.pdf](http://www.clemson.edu/cafls/departments/forestry/cef/history_forestry_dunn.pdf). Last accessed 10 February 2012. Information about the development of the discipline of academic forestry at Clemson comes from Marlin Bruner's *Forestry at Clemson University*, an unpublished 1968 report by way of Dunn's paper. The information is also contained in the various editions of the Clemson *Catalog* for the years referenced.

York State College of Forestry. Rosenkrans used the book as the foundation of his version of the course which he taught from 1917 to 1935. According to Allen Dunn, Rosenkrans and his students used the laboratory (which was discontinued in 1922 and resumed in 1926) to establish and maintain forests throughout the Upper Piedmont, applying the pedagogical elements of forestry to the real world. The Clark-McNary act of 1924, which built upon the 1911 Weeks Act, which provided for the purchasing of land to enlarge the National Forest System, provided money for the creation of a forestry division within the Cooperative Extension Service, which Clemson, as the land grant school in the state, ran. In 1924 Clemson used part of that money to hire its first “extension forester,” H.H. Tryon, who remained with the school until 1927, to help create programs and public demonstrations to educate South Carolinians on forestry basics and wildfire control methods. The McSweeney-McNary Law of 1928 provided for a broad program of forestry research, and the Knutsen-Vandenberg Act of 1930 authorized a large-scale national forest planting program, furthering the national movement for forestry education and instruction.<sup>169</sup>

Back at Clemson, the vacated position of extension forester would go unfilled until D.K Brewster was hired in 1938. Brewster would leave after only six months, when Marlin H. Bruner, who alongside Kolomon D. Lehotsky, laid the foundation for the modern Clemson forestry department, was hired. In 1935, meanwhile, the Department of Botany and Bacteriology, in which the nascent forestry program resided, had hired R.A.

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<sup>169</sup> United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook Committee, “Trees Part #3,” *The Yearbook of Agriculture*, (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1949). Available online at <http://science-in-farming.library4farming.org/Trees-Seasoning-Vacation/FORESTS-AND-MEN-part-3/Yesterday-and-Today/HISTORY-OF-FORESTRY-4.html>. Last accessed 10 February 2012.

Cockrell, who received his training at preeminent forestry programs at Syracuse University and the University of Michigan. Cockrell immediately took over forestry instruction and set about establishing a program for agriculture students to receive a “major emphasis” in forestry, but the program never took off. Instead, a pre-forestry curriculum was instituted to enable general agriculture students to receive forestry training through courses in forestry, dendrology, and electives centered on themes of woodland management. This mini-program was abandoned as well when Cockrell left Clemson in July 1936.<sup>170</sup>

Another federal bill, the 1937 Norris-Doxey Farm Forestry Act, assisted in the creation of national forestry education programs. The Norris-Doxey Act aimed at improving forestry practices on small farm forests, authorizing appropriations up to \$2,500,000 a year to provide advice, investigation, and plants for farmers, in cooperation with the individual states. Clemson, however, was unable to parlay any of this federal support into the creation of a state-wide forestry program for one simple reason: South Carolina already had a forestry school. During his tenure as mayor of Charleston (1931-1938), Burnet Maybank, a product of the College of Charleston and member of two of Charleston’s most powerful and aristocratic families, implemented a program to establish the city of Charleston as a center of pulp and paper processing. This was part of Maybank’s plan to create jobs in the style of President Roosevelt’s New Deal (of which he was a major supporter) and to alleviate some of the economic damage done to Charleston by the Great Depression. Maybank secured Charleston’s first major industrial

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<sup>170</sup> Dunn and Holladay, *A History of Forestry at Clemson University*.

plant since 1900 by persuading officials at the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company to build a \$5,000,000 plant in the city. Perhaps more importantly, he persuaded his friend, former professor, and then-president of the College of Charleston Harrison Randolph, to propose a forestry program at the school.<sup>171</sup> According to Nan Morrison’s study of the “modern” era (post-1936) of the College of Charleston, there was some initial opposition to the introduction of a “pre-professional” degree into a liberal arts college. However, when supporters pointed out that the hallowed halls of Yale also held such a program and that, fundamentally, premedical training, for which the College of Charleston was famous, was also a pre-professional degree, opposition quieted. Maybank arranged for the county to appropriate \$7,000 to help underwrite some of the costs of creating a new program at the college and to hire a professor of forestry, Dr. Kenneth Hunt from Cornell University. To get the program r, Hunstartedt secured 6,000 acres of forest land from alumnus J.J. Pringle, who owned Middleton Gardens. So by the mid-to-late 1930s, Charleston had received the support of an influential state politician, hired an enthusiastic and well-trained Cornell academic as its chief forester, and secured 6,000 acres of forest land for experimentation and instruction. Why, then, would South Carolina and its State Commission of Forestry need Clemson to have a forestry program? So long as it could continue training extension foresters through its Cooperative Extension Service, Experiment Station, and fledgling forestry pre-professional emphasis area for agriculture students, all parties—except Clemson, that is—were satisfied.

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<sup>171</sup> Nan Morrison, *A History of the College of Charleston* (Columbia: USC Press, 2011), 17; Cann, Marvin “Burnet Rhett Maybank and the New Deal in South Carolina from 1931 to 1941” Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1967; *Charleston Evening Post*, July 19, 1937.

Before the next meeting of the Clemson Land Utilization Project Committee, Aull tried to recruit new powerful allies who could make his project appear to be as indispensable to the state as the College of Charleston's emerging program was rapidly becoming. Specifically, Aull reached out to trustee William Dickson Barnett, a fellow Clemson alumnus. W.D. Barnett, originally from Oconee County, graduated from Clemson with a bachelor's degree in textiles in 1910 and then taught in Oconee's public school system for a year before enrolling in the University of South Carolina law school. He graduated with his LLB in 1913 and settled in Columbia where he, along with his wife Nellie Aycock Caughman and two daughters, were active in the local Presbytery and in Columbia's public affairs. Those activities helped lead to his election as a legislative trustee in 1920.<sup>172</sup> Barnett, who also served as mayor pro tempore of Columbia, served in the South Carolina House of Representatives, gaining the seat for Richland County in 1921 and giving it up in 1924.<sup>173</sup> As an ally who had ties to Clemson and the Upstate and also powerful friends in the state government, Barnett perhaps had no equal.

In any case, Aull wrote Barnett in June 1939 to make him aware of the \$5,000 made available to Clemson through an appropriation by the South Carolina General Assembly's Free Committee. Aull also wanted to point out to Barnett and the rest of the trustees that Mississippi A&M had made good on the appropriation given to it by the State of Mississippi earlier; the project in Starkville had produced a "recreational phase," like Clemson's lake and trail system, on its own project lands that proved to be "quite

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<sup>172</sup> Reel, 270.

<sup>173</sup> Clemson University Libraries, Special Collections Series 30, Board of Trustees Records, 1888-1991, Biographical Files, "Barnett, W.D."

productive of revenue.”<sup>174</sup> Aull’s contact with Barnett produced fascinating and interesting results.

As it turned out, the impetus to ask for the \$5,000 from the General Assembly Free Committee came from J.C. Littlejohn who argued it was most suitable for Clemson to receive any assistance on the project in the form of “gifts.” The reason Littlejohn suggested this was dubious. After learning that the \$5,000 appropriation would have to go through the General Assembly like any other financial boon handed out by the state, Aull was concerned. He had understood that a Free Committee appropriation would slip through the Assembly because the amount, \$5,000, was almost negligible, even for a state dealing with hard times. Moreover, South Carolina had always made yearly appropriations to its universities and colleges, Clemson included, which had fallen off in recent years. Still, the precedent for the state to make financial concessions to Clemson existed, and Aull probably hoped the \$5,000 would be included in that total and slip through the General Assembly unimpeded. Littlejohn, according to Aull’s notes added to his correspondence later, knew otherwise. The \$5,000 item had to appear as an Appropriation Bill, and when it did, it was dropped. Aull, both in 1939 and reviewing the events later in life, suspected that Littlejohn planned as much. What Aull did was to contact Barnett to see if he could use his Columbia contacts generate the \$5,000 that Aull thought the college needed. Aull would later remember in his 1975 personal history of the Clemson Experimental Forest, receiving a call in the early morning hours one Sunday and finding out that the Free Conference Committee had dropped the Clemson

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<sup>174</sup> George H. Aull to W.D. Barnett, Letter, 10 June 1939. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F3.

appropriation bill, which did not surprise him. Luckily, Aull's petitioning of Barnett had already set in motion a process that would produce the \$5,000 denied to Clemson by the Free Committee.<sup>175</sup>

In his own history of the Clemson Experiment Forest, Robert Sorrells suspected that Aull's call to Barnett led to the latter's contacting the influential politician Edgar Allen Brown. Born on a farm near Aiken in 1888, Brown received his education in the local schools near Aiken before attending Graniteville Academy. He then learned shorthand in Augusta while working as a public reporter, and as a law clerk, he read the law. In 1910, at the age of twenty-two, Brown received admission to the South Carolina bar and in 1914, the Barnwell County Democratic party chose him to be its chair. Six years later Brown entered the South Carolina House of Representatives and "allied himself with the 'Progressive' wing" of the South Carolina and national Democratic party.<sup>176</sup> That Progressive wing favored job creation, public works, poverty alleviation, and land management. All of these were in some form or another goals of the Clemson project. From 1922 to 1926, Brown served as the state Democratic Party chairman, and in 1926, Brown ran unsuccessfully against Ellison D. "Cotton Ed" Smith for his U.S. Senate seat (which he also unsuccessfully challenged again in 1938). In 1928 He did capture a seat for Barnwell County in the state legislature. Brown, along with his wife Annie Love Sitgreaves and daughter Emily McBurney Brown, made his home in Columbia where he, like Barnett, exerted great influence over happenings in the State House. With his ally Speaker of the state House of Representatives Solomon "Sol" Blatt, Sr., Brown formed

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<sup>175</sup> Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project," 1975.

<sup>176</sup> Reel, 270.

the heart of what J. Strom Thurmond would later called “The Barnwell Ring.” The Ring was a seemingly unbeatable group Democratic political leaders that pushed a progressive agenda in the state, promoting education and rural poverty eradication from the late 1930s to the 1970s. Perhaps one of its first notable political machinations was the drafting of a “Deficiency Appropriations Bill” that floated Clemson the \$5,000 that Littlejohn had requested. In a 1975 manuscript, Aull remembered receiving a call from Columbia. This time he was notified that the Deficiency Appropriation Bill passed, granting Clemson the \$5,000 it requested and giving him an evening of celebration and easy sleep which was interrupted by a 7AM call from J.C. Littlejohn. The college’s business manager was calling, on the verge of tears, to let Aull know the sad news he had just heard: that the Free Committee’s bill had died in the Assembly. This meant that Clemson would simply be unable to accept the land leased by the federal government. Aull, remembering later, simply did not “have the heart to tell him anything different.”<sup>177</sup>

In the summer of 1939, after the \$5,000 deficiency bill passed, the Clemson Land Utilization Project Committee met. In its meeting the committee decided to ask that, even though there could be “many problems in the administrations of such a project,” Dr. Sikes declare the college’s intent on managing the project lands. The committee felt that, if nothing else, there was “need for additional study of the problems of adjusting our agriculture to new conditions,” which the project lands could facilitate.<sup>178</sup> As an interesting side note, despite the fact that thousands of people had visited since it reached

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<sup>177</sup> Aull, “The Clemson Land Use Project,” 1975. Aull’s story of the “back door” political play is in his 1975 story of the project and jotted down on the 19 June 1939 letter he wrote to W.D. Barnett.

<sup>178</sup> The Clemson Land Utilization Project Committee, Herbert P. Cooper, Rupert A. McGinty, D.W. Watkins, George H. Aull, and James C. Littlejohn, “Recommendation Concerning the Acceptance of the Administration of the Clemson Land Use Project,” 21 June 1939. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F3.

full pool, the hesitation on the part of Clemson to take over the project delayed the official opening of the lake by the Soil Conservation Service until the summer of 1939. This was despite the fact that it had been dedicated in early April of the previous year in a ceremony highlighted by speeches from Sikes, Governor Olin D. Johnston, and Dr. Eric Englund, chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics with the USDA) . The college's hesitation also forced Acting Regional Director of the SCS, L.J. Leffelman to threaten C.W. Rentz, Jr., the project manager at Clemson, with revocation of its tentative management rights if it could not come to an agreement on the project.<sup>179</sup>

On 7 July 1939, a monumental day, Clemson finally took over the former Clemson Land Use Project by a vote of the Board of Trustees. As it was, the land stood at 153 tracts with fifty-six more pending, amounting to a total acreage of 19,009.88 acquired and 8,058.41 pending. This meant that Clemson was under contract for 27,058.29 acres at an estimated cost of \$262,253.74 if the college had to purchase the land on the open market.<sup>180</sup> On that land were 287 families, 159 of whom were moved before Clemson abandoned its resettlement plans, leaving 128 families behind on the project area land. Of those remaining 128 families, fifteen were receiving Farm Security Administration aid, and forty-seven total residents were Works Progress Administration laborers.<sup>181</sup> Clemson's lease with the federal government was for fifty years with three, fifteen-year renewals possible.

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<sup>179</sup> L.J. Leffelman to C.W. Rentz, Jr., Letter, 23 June 1939. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F3.

<sup>180</sup> "Status of Land Acquisition As of June 30, 1939." Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F3.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

Two interesting and significant potential changes to the lease agreement drawn up by Aull took place shortly before Clemson's assumption of control. First, the lease was made between the Experiment Station and the federal government rather than between the college and the government, a change patterned on the lease signed by the Georgia Experiment Station. Aull opposed this change because the Georgia lease only covered a small part of the former Land Use Project in the Eatonton area whereas the Clemson lease covered the whole 27,000-acre property. Further, the revenue potentially produced by the former Land Use project in Clemson would be more "advantageously spent" by the college than just the Experiment Station. Finally, many of the experiments and demonstrations that Clemson planned involved non-Experiment Station activities in engineering, extension work, vocational education, and even recreation, athletics, and the military sciences.<sup>182</sup> Aull's opinion must have won as the College eventually became the party of record on the lease with the federal government rather than just the Experiment Station, and the financing for the project, and earmarking of its profits, went through the college's Treasurer.

The other significant potential change to the lease was that, rather than having Herbert P. Cooper listed as the "Project Administrator," Aull's name was to appear on the lease, as well as an "advisory committee" to be named later that would work alongside the Project Administrator, as per a motion made by W.D. Barnett at the Board of

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<sup>182</sup> George H. Aull to Christie Benet and W.D. Barnett, Letter, 28 July 1939, with attached document "Comments on the Proposed Changes in Cooperative and License Agreement between The United States of America and the Clemson Agricultural College" by George H. Aull. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F3.

Trustees' July meeting.<sup>183</sup> Originally, Christie Benet “questioned the wisdom” of appointing Aull, qualified though he was, without first consulting Dean Cooper. Barnett agreed with Benet’s nod to practicality and sought out Cooper to discuss the matter. At the next meeting of the board, the trustees, in a vote of eight to five, implemented a motion made by Aull’s ally Edgar Brown that the project be placed under the administration of the Experiment Station and Dean Cooper, its director. Barnett was among the voting dissenters.<sup>184</sup> No explanation for the transfer of administration was given.

The Board of Trustees did decide how to use the \$5,000 given to Clemson College by the General Assembly without much debate. It was to be divided up in the following manner: two \$1,000 salaries for the Administrator and his assistant, \$1,200 in wages for temporary administrative assistants, \$400 for travel, \$1,000 for supplies, and \$600 for “contingencies.”<sup>185</sup> The board also directed that the administrator of the project open up a “reinvestment account” in the office of the college treasurer, Samuel Wilds Evans, into which all receipts resulting from the project’s operation would funnel.

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<sup>183</sup> Resolutions by W.D. Barnett, July 1939. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F3; “Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Clemson Agricultural College, July 7, 1939,” *Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Trustees of the Clemson Agricultural College/Clemson University*, CUL.SC.CUA S 30 Vol.5, 162-163.

<sup>184</sup> CUL.SC.CUA S 30 Vol. 5,195.

<sup>185</sup> Resolutions by W.D. Barnett, July 1939. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F3; “Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Clemson Agricultural College, July 7, 1939,” CUL.SC.CUA S 30 Vol.5, 162-163.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Mr. Aull Gets Disappointed

“At no time was I in any way officially associated with the administration of the area which I worked so hard to acquire (against great odds) for Clemson College. I wasn’t really hurt by that just amazed.”

--George Aull’s notes on his correspondence

By September 1939 George Aull was curious why he had not received contact about the transfer of the land use project’s land to Clemson. He must have wondered why the transfer he orchestrated, which took place in July, had not come through and why no one had asked for his input. W.D. Barnett also must have told Aull that he nominated the professor to be the chief administrator of the project land at the Board of Trustees’ July meeting. In a 26 September letter to Herbert P. Cooper, Aull wrote, “It has been several months since I have heard any discussion of the Clemson Community Conservation project or any mention of plans for administering this project.” In his later notes on that letter, Aull remembered, “At no time was I in any way officially associated with the administration of the area which I worked so hard to acquire (against great odds) for Clemson College. I wasn’t really hurt by that just amazed.”<sup>186</sup>

Instead, D.J. Watson, Superintendent of Campus, Roads, and Buildings and Dr. Herbert Cooper, Dean of the School of Agriculture, were charged by the trustees with the

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<sup>186</sup> George H. Aull to Herbert P. Cooper, Letter, 20 September 1939. Aull Papers MSS 255 B2A F4.

administration of the Land Use property. Meanwhile, Aull, the person most suited to direct it, based on his training in land economics at Wisconsin and his experience with the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, watched from the sidelines, being resigned to make suggestions to Cooper and the trustees that they could consider. The earliest one was in September when he suggested that Cooper contact prospective renters on the Land Use property, beginning with Mr. Clinkscales and his grain farm.<sup>187</sup> These were the kinds of duties that Cooper and Watson would need to meet and the kinds of decisions they must make. To be certain, neither man was familiar with this kind of work, but Aull, with his sociology training, was.

Watson quite literally sought to utilize the forest as a resource for the Clemson by setting up a sawmill at Cherry Farm to cut lumber from diseased and stunted trees. Yet but that fell into disuse quickly. This logging was but one of the threats to the project dreamed up by Aull in 1933 as vandalism and general neglect between 1939 and 1946 led to the degeneration of the Land Use Project's progress up to that point. The Lake Issaqueena Recreation Area boathouse was destroyed and its bathhouse burned in, bridges washed out, roads turned into "chuckholes," a handful of picnic shelters vandalized, destroyed, or deteriorated, trails grew unkempt, and scheduled tree plantings forgotten.<sup>188</sup> In July 1941 the *Anderson Independent* described the sad condition of the Lake Issaqueena Recreation Area:

The water, instead of being crystal clear, has remained murky and, therefore, unsuited for swimming. The fishing, too, has not been good; and the College can't afford to keep a set of lifeguards for an occasional

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Sorrells, *The Clemson Experimental Forest: Its First Fifty Years*, 18.

individual who might want to take a boat ride on the lake. The park is open now; but roads are in a bad condition, some bridges are missing and picnic grounds are not being kept up. The stone bathhouse [still intact but would later burn]<sup>189</sup> and a sand beach built at one section of the lake have never been used and probably never will.<sup>190</sup>

Some feel that the neglect for the project was not just mismanagement by Cooper and Watson, but also, in part, the product of Clemson's focus on the building war effort. Like most other military schools in the country, Clemson was turned into a large-scale military training camp. And its resources most likely went toward that patriotic endeavor. Yet in one way World War II directly influenced the Clemson Land Use Project. Clemson leased a portion of the northern section of the area to the War Department so that bombers stationed at Donaldson Air Force Base in Greenville could use the land for bombing runs. In total, 135 acres were cleared for the bombing range and targets were floated in Lake Issaqueena, meaning that the land was littered with one hundred pound "bombs" made of sand (95%) and black powder (5%). A "military contingent" was stationed in the Ramsey House near the Keowee River to patrol the area and monitor its use.<sup>191</sup>

After World War II Clemson restarted its efforts to create a forestry program as a way to help resuscitate the Upstate. In 1946 the College hired Norbert B. Goebel, a product of Duke University's renowned forestry program, as its first forest manager, and, as Aull recalled in 1975, "for the first time since acquisition, things began to look up."<sup>192</sup> Goebel was actually appointed as a research forester to the Department of Botany and

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<sup>189</sup> Note inserted is my own and did not appear in the column.

<sup>190</sup> *Anderson Independent*, 20 July 1941.

<sup>191</sup> Sorrells, 20; Dunn and Holladay.

<sup>192</sup> Sorrells, 20; Aull, "The Clemson Land Use Project."

Bacteriology, but President Robert Franklin Poole had other plans. Poole, who became president of Clemson College in 1940, recognized the importance of forestry to the Land Use Project and Clemson, named Goebel to be the director of the forest.<sup>193</sup> Goebel began a program of timber inventories and forestry management practices to bring the forest “back to life.” By 1949, Goebel and Koloman Lehotsky, who joined Clemson’s staff in 1947, had drawn up maps for the fifteen divisions of the forest.<sup>194</sup>

According to Robert Sorrells, there was no pulpwood market—of the kind that the College of Charleston had grown in the Lowcountry—in the area in the late 1940s. Goebel set out to avoid D.J. Watson’s mistake and create a market before he began the harvest. Goebel negotiated with Champion Paper and Fiber Company of North Carolina to absorb the marketable forestry products produced by the College, and, on 5 June 1950, the first load of pulpwood, 13.18 cords, was loaded up and shipped out of the forest by rail at a price of \$2.35 a cord.<sup>195</sup>

Forestry work on the Clemson Land Use Project continued as such through 1954 when, thanks to two Clemson friends, the project was “reborn.” For that, Clemson would owe its thanks to Charles E. Daniel, prominent businessman, philanthropist, and Clemson Life Trustee (he was elected in 1949), who was then serving out the rest of Burnet Maybank’s unexpired term in the U.S. Senate, and U.S. Senator J. Strom Thurmond (Clemson 1923) who followed Daniel. Together, they introduced a bill that was passed by the U.S. Senate on 22 December 1954 that deeded, in perpetuity, 27,469 acres of the

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Sorrells, 21.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

Land Use property to Clemson College for a token dollar.<sup>196</sup> Another major development for the Clemson Land Use Project, now the Clemson Forest, was the creation of Lake Hartwell on 7,000 of its acres. This land had generated almost 30% of the Forest's total income up to this point. Knowing of the inundation of the acreage ahead of time in the fall of 1955, forest manager Norbert Goebel and his colleague Marlin Bruner—who would become the next manager of the Experimental Forest with Goebel's return to research forestry in July 1957—instituted a cutting schedule to harvest the timber that would be drowned when the Seneca River became impounded. After approval by the College's Board of Trustees the following April, cutting began in early summer (May-June) of 1956 and continued until July 1958. Goebel also managed to negotiate terms of an agreement where the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers paid for any timber left standing that would become covered by Hartwell's waters. In the end, 11,680,479 board feet of lumber, totaling \$167,310.58, were removed and purchased by lumber companies, and the Corps paid \$73,000 for 4,317,000 board feet left behind by the college, bringing the revenue for the Hartwell-instigated cuts to \$240,835.58.<sup>197</sup>

By the time that the dam, which impounded the Seneca River was finished in 1962, effectively creating Lake Hartwell, Clemson had parlayed its educational forest and increasingly accomplished forestry faculty into a full-fledged department. The Department of Forestry within the College of Agriculture had existed since 1956 and had Koloman Lehotsky at its head. By 1957, the department had a full four-year degree-granting program (a Bachelor of Science in Forest Management). Of course, George

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid; Reel, 431-435.

<sup>197</sup> Sorrells, 22.

Aull's former Land Use Program acreage, renamed the Clemson Experimental Forest in 1970, became the premier teaching tool.

What was so remarkable about George Aull was that he did not let any failure deter him from public life. If anything, when Aull did meet with disappointment, such as when he was passed over for the directorship of the Clemson Land Use Project in 1939 or when the resettlement aspect of the project fell through in 1937, he only tried harder to "do good." A look at his "Extra-Curricula" activities on his 1963 professional summary (included with this study as an appendix item) confirms as much. He served, in addition to being a joint author of the act establishing the State Agricultural Marketing Commission, as an economic consultant to the National Resources Board from 1938 to 1942 and the Secretary of Agriculture from 1956 to 1963. He had been an advisor to the Farm Credit Administration since 1944, a governor's appointee to the South Carolina Tax Survey Committee from 1938 to 1939 and again from 1958 to 1962, the Association of Land Grant Colleges' Agricultural Policy Committee from 1944 to 1948, a Guest of His Majesty's Government (George VI) on an agricultural mission to the United Kingdom in 1946, a member of the National Research Council's Agricultural Board from 1953 to 1955, and on the Farm Foundation's Conference Committee on Agricultural Policy in 1952. He worked as the Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Charlotte branch from 1958 to 1963. Aull was also a delegate to the American Assembly on Fiscal and Monetary Policy at Duke University in 1959 and to the U.S. Study Commission's Agricultural Economics Committee from 1959 to 1961. And let no one fool the reader into believing that his work as teacher in and head of the department of agricultural

economics and rural sociology, which he created at Clemson in 1934 and directed until his retirement in 1963, was anything but public work. As the department's head and most prestigious and skilled researcher, the work he directed on national and state tax policy, agribusiness, and economic development for South Carolina helped guide the state—and some say the South as a region—back to prosperity after World War II.

His affiliations and honors also reflected his public and professional interests. He had memberships in the American Farm Economic Association, the Royal Society of Arts, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the International Conference on Agricultural Economists, the Southern and American Economic Associations, the National Tax Association and Tax Institute, the Committee of the South and the National Council for the National Planning Association. He also belonged to a litany of honorary fraternities and groups like Phi Kappa Phi (academic honorary), Blue Key (service honorary), and Clemson's Tiger Brotherhood (leadership and loyalty honorary).

However, the dearth of correspondence kept by Aull regarding the Clemson project suggests that he cut ties with the project. The ties were severed after the 1939 Clemson Board of Trustees' meeting where Dean Cooper, as director of the experiment station, was named supervisor of the project and after he drafted a few helpful letters to offer assistance to Cooper. But the individual that *Progressive Farmer* named its "Man of the Year" in 1945 was not likely to rest on his laurels after cutting those ties; he simply threw himself into more work. Perhaps Aull's dedication to public activities was an outgrowth of his coming-of-age, academically and professionally, in pre-World War II,

Depression-era America. This was a period in American history where dedication to public work, as a means of reviving America, was at an all time high. Or perhaps Aull, a deeply religious man who was a member and deacon of Clemson Baptist Church for more than fifty years by the time of his death on 1988, had as much faith in America and its people as he did in the Divine.

It is hard to give a definitive explanation of what drove the “small, physically unimpressive man” who “always had a line of chalk dust across the back of his suit coat where he backed against the chalk tray during lectures” and who, despite being a well traveled scientist, spoke in the “soft, old-fashioned Southern accent” that betrayed his roots in Newberry.<sup>198</sup> It is hard to say what drove his dedication to service that never waned with age—one must, after all, remember that he spent his final years in the Clemson Downs, a retirement community that he had a hand in developing simply because the community lacked one. It is so hard to figure out Aull’s life of dedicated public work because, when asked, the man himself was so incredibly modest, shrugging of his lifetime of accomplishment as the product of luck: “I was fortunate in the time and place of birth,” he told an interviewer from the *Anderson Daily News* which ran an article dedicated to Aull in January 1962, “fortunate because of the family into which I was born...fortunate in the selection of my life’s vocation...fortunate in choosing the right place in which to labor...and I had a great stroke of luck in my choice of a wife.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Jim C. Hite, “George Hubert Aull, 1899-1988” *Clemson University Editorial Service* 1 May 1989 or see the *Hartsville Messenger* 1 February 1989 for the same article.

<sup>199</sup> “To This Distinguished Citizen,” *Anderson Daily Mail* 23 January 1962.

If one could understand what drove Dr. Aull, upon whom Clemson University bestowed its highest honor, the Clemson Medallion, in 1988, what pushed him to work so hard for the people of Clemson, the Upstate, and the state of South Carolina, then one might be able to understand what drove the Clemson Land Use Project ever forward. It would then be clear what prompted Dr. Aull to create the Clemson College Community Conservation Project in the 1930s and kept him going while enduring the slings and arrows of attackers from federal and state agencies and even his college itself. In short, one might then be able to understand what possessed “one of the chief architects of South Carolina’s agricultural development in this [twentieth] century”<sup>200</sup> to propose his bold and grand experiment.

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<sup>200</sup> *Anderson Independent-Mail* 27 January 1985.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix A

#### A Career Summary of Dr. George H. Aull

##### Vital Statistics/Personal

Born, Pomaria, Newberry County, South Carolina, 16 October 1899  
Died, Clemson Downs, Clemson, South Carolina, 16 December 1988  
Married Cleo Dobson of Gaffney, S.C., 1922  
Two children, George H., Jr. and Anne

##### Education

B.S.           Clemson Agricultural College, 1919  
M.S.           University of Virginia, 1928  
Ph. D.         University of Wisconsin, 1937

##### Employment

1919-1920    Teacher of Agriculture, First District A&M School, Statesboro, GA  
1920-1921    Teacher of Agriculture, Mathematics, and Science, Marion High School, Marion, S.C.  
1921-1934    Assistant Director of Research, S.C. Agricultural Experiment Station, Clemson College, Clemson, S.C.  
1934-1936    Senior Administrative Officer, Land Policy Section, Agricultural Adjustment Administration  
1934-1963    Professor and Department Head of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Clemson College, Clemson, S.C.

##### Extra-Curricula

1918           Private (Acting Supply Sergeant), U.S. Army  
1921-1922    Part-time Assistant Secretary, YMCA, Clemson College, Clemson, S.C.  
1938-1939    Member, S.C. Tax Survey Committee (Governor's Appointee)  
1938-1942    Economic Consultant, National Resources Board  
1939-1940    Staff Member, School for Agricultural Workers, USDA  
1943-1944    Public Member, National War Labor Board, Region IV  
1944-         Advisor, Farm Credit Administration  
1944-1948    Agricultural Policy Committee, Association of Land Grant Colleges  
1946           Agricultural Mission to United Kingdom (Guest of His Majesty George VI's Government)  
1947-1949    Member, S.C. Education Survey Committee (Governor's Appointee)

- 1949 U.S. Delegate to United Nations Scientific Conference, Lake Success, N.Y.
- 1949-1950 National Marketing Consultants Panel, Agricultural Research Administration
- 1949-1951 National Commission on Safety Education, National Education Association
- 1952 Conference Committee on Agricultural Policy, Farm Foundation
- 1953-1955 Member, Agricultural Board, National Research Council
- 1953-1955 Chairman, Town and Country Church Development Program for South Carolina
- 1954-1957 Member, Economic Policy Committee, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- 1955-1960 National Agricultural Data Committee, American Farm Economic Association
- 1955-1960 Member, National Committee on Youth Programs, National Council of YMCA
- 1956-1958 Member, Tax Equalization Committee, South Carolina State Chamber of Commerce
- 1956-1957 Economic Consultant, Secretary of Agriculture Staff, Church and Community Workshop, Emory University, Atlanta, GA
- 1957 Consultant, Joint Senate-House Committee on Economic Policy for Agriculture
- 1958-1962 Member, Tax Study Commission for South Carolina (Governor's Appointee)
- 1958-1963 Director, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Charlotte Branch
- 1959 Delegate, American Assembly on Fiscal and Monetary Policy, Duke University, Durham, N.C.
- 1959-1961 Member, Agricultural Economics Committee, U.S. Study Commission
- 1959-1962 Member, National Council of YMCA
- 1960-1962 Economic Consultant, U.S. Study Commission, Southeast River Basins
- 1961 Fellow, Tax Seminar, Claremont Men's College, Claremont, CA
- 1963- Consulting Economist, South Carolina National Bank
- 1963-1968 Editor, *The Carolina Economist* for the South Carolina National Bank

#### Affiliations and Honors

- Social Science Research Council (Fellow, 1929-1930)
- American Farm Economic Association (Educational Council; Vice President; President, 1951-1952)
- Royal Society of Arts (Elected Fellow, 1950)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (Elected Fellow, 1953)

International Conference on Agricultural Economics (Chairman, American Council)  
 Southern Economic Association (Vice President, 1946-1948; President, 1948-1949)  
 American Economic Association  
 National Tax Association  
 National Association of Assessing Officers (South Carolina State Chairman, 1955-1958)  
 Tax Institute (Advisory Council, 1948-1950)  
 National Planning Association, Committee of the South (1952)  
 National Council, National Planning Association (Charter member)  
 American Country Life Association (Director, 1951-1958)  
 Trustee, Penn School (for African-Americans) (1940-1960)  
 Trustee, Connie Maxwell Children's Home (1949-1954, 1956-1961, 1963-1968)  
 Blue Ridge YMCA Assembly, Inc. (Director, 1948-; Vice Chairman, 1960-)  
 Interstate Committee, YMCA (Member, 1938-; Vice President, 1960-; Board of Trustees, 1960-)  
 Clemson YMCA Advisory Board (Chairman, 1950-1956)  
 Rotary International (President, Anderson Club, 1941-1942)  
 International Torch Club (President, Western South Carolina Club, 1948-1949)  
 Eugene Field Society (Honorary member)  
 Mark Twain Society (Honorary member)  
 Pendleton Farmers' Society  
*Progressive Farmer's* "Man of the Year" in Service to Agriculture (1945)  
*Anderson Daily Mail's* "Scroll of Honor" for outstanding public service  
 Freemason (past Master)  
 Woodmen of the World  
 American Legion  
 Blue Key  
 Tiger Brotherhood  
 Alpha Zeta  
 Phi Kappa Phi  
 Gamma Alpha Mu  
 Gamma Sigma Delta  
 Clemson First Baptist Church (Deacon)  
 Recipient of Clemson Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award  
 Recipient of Clemson Medallion (8 April 1988)  
 Named Life Deacon of Clemson First Baptist Church in 1979 (only the second man to have that honor after Dean Samuel Broadus Earle)  
 Certified Heritage Site of Clemson Forest named "The George Hubert Aull Natural Area" in 1984

Authored works (\* denotes joint authorship):

I. Experiment Station Bulletins and Circulars

*The South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, A Brief History, 1887-1930*  
(December 1930)

*The Taxation of Farmers in South Carolina* (October 1932)

*Taxation and "Ability to Pay" in South Carolina* (November 1932)

*Farm Real Estate Tax Delinquency in South Carolina* (August 1934)\*

*Some Inequalities in the Assessment of Farm Real Estate in South Carolina*  
(January 1938)\*

*Some Economic Characteristics of Owner-Operated Farms in South Carolina*  
(October 1938)

*The Probable Economic Effects of a Homestead Exemption Act on Public  
Revenues in South Carolina* (August 1939)

*Sharecroppers and Wage Laborers on Selected Farms in Two Counties in South  
Carolina* (June 1940)\*

*Rural Land Holdings in South Carolina* (October 1940)

*The Sale Price and Assessed Value of Farm Real Estate in South Carolina*  
(June 1941)

*The Nature and Extent of Farm Tax Delinquency in South Carolina*  
(December 1941)

*A Brief Economic Survey of the Anderson (S.C.) Trading Areas* (March 1944)

*Land Utilization and Agricultural Adjustment in Edgefield County, South  
Carolina*\* (June 1944)

*Peanut Production Possibilities in South Carolina*\* (June 1944)

*A Pattern of Agricultural Production in South Carolina After the War*\*  
(April 1945)

*The Postwar Economic Outlook in an Agricultural-Industrial Area*\* (May 1945)

*Agricultural Production to Meet 1946 Needs*\* (November 1945)

*Sweet Potato Production Possibilities in South Carolina*\* (April 1946)

*Land Use and Soil Conservation in the Broad River Soil Conservation District of  
South Carolina*\* (June 1948)

*The Composition of Farm Income in South Carolina, 1924-1950*\* (April 1952)

*Farm Marketing of Saw Timber and Pulpwood in a Selected Area of South  
Carolina*\* (January 1953)

*Some Operating Practices of the Poultry Processing Industry*\* (March 1953)

*Property Tax Problems in the Southeast*\* (January 1954)

*Assessment of Farm Real Estate for Tax Purposes in South Carolina*\*  
(January 1954)

*A Practical Approach to Improving Farm Real Estate Assessments in South  
Carolina*\* (June 1957)

II. Journal Articles, Pamphlets, and Reprints (\*denotes joint authorship):

- “Sulphate of Ammonia as a Nitrogenous Fertilizer,” *American Fertilizer*, Vol. 55 (1921)
- “The Responsibilities of the Church for Rural Planning,” *Christian Observer* Vol. 123, no. 26 (June 1935)
- “Some Economic Teachings of the Bible,” *Baptist Courier* (February-March 1938)
- “Inequalities in Farm Assessments in South Carolina,” *Southern Economic Journal* Vol. 5, no. 3 (January 1939)
- “The Church and Rural Planning,” *Rural America* Vol. 17, no. 2 (February 1939)
- “A General Survey and Investigation of the Tax Situation in South Carolina,” (General Assembly of South Carolina, Joint Committee of Printing, March 1939)\*
- “Needed Taxation Reforms,” *Southern Agriculturalist*, Vol. 69, no. 6 (June 1939)
- “The Fiscal System of South Carolina,” (South Carolina State Planning Board, December 1939)\*
- “An Appraisal of the Tax System of South Carolina,” (South Carolina Council for Research, October 1940)\*
- “Receipts and Expenditures of the State Government in S.C.,” (South Carolina Council for Research, November 1940)\*
- “Land Holdings in South Carolina,” *Land Policy Review*, Vol. 2, no. 8 (December 1940)
- “The Future of Cotton in the Economy of the South,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 23, no. 1 (February 1941)
- “The School and the Changing Pattern of County Life,” (Southern Rural Life Conference, May 1943)\*
- “Postwar Agricultural Policy,” (Committee on Postwar Agricultural Policy of the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, October 1944)\*
- “How A Teacher May Help Win the War and the Peace,” (State Department of Education, 1945)\*
- “American Agricultural Policies,” (The Economic and Business Foundation, March 1945)\*
- “Anderson After the War,” (Anderson, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, April 1945)\*
- “Adjustments in Southern Agriculture with Special Reference to Cotton,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 28, no. 1 (February 1946)\*
- “South Carolina Tomorrow,” *The South Carolina Magazine* (January 1947)
- “Employment Prospects in Southern Agriculture,” *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. 13, no. 4 (April 1947)
- “Research Needs in Land Tenure and Farm Finance,” *Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics*, Vol. 23, no. 3 (August 1947)
- “The Federally Sponsored Credit Services to American Agriculture,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 29, no. 4 (November 1947)\*

- “The Current Economic Situation,” *Clemson Alumni News* (March 1948)  
Contributor to *Readings in Agricultural Policy* (The Blakiston Company, October 1948)
- “Southern Farms Need More Employment,” *Farm Policy Forum*, Vol. 1, no. 4 (1949)
- “Our United States—South Carolina,” *The Arizona Cattlelog*, Vol. 4, no. 10 (June 1949)
- “United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 32, no. 1 (February 1950)
- “The Economics of the Bible,” *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. XVI, no. 4 (April 1950)
- “The Southern Farm Family in an Era of Change—Economic Aspects,” *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. 16, no. 4 (July 1950)
- “Economic Prospects of the South,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 32, no. 4 (November 1950)
- “The General Sales Tax,” *Torch Magazine* (1951)
- “Risk Problems of Production Credit Associations,” (Bulletin CR 5, Farm Credit Administration)\*
- “Economic Aspects of Cotton Mechanization in the South,” *Cotton Mechanization, Proceedings from the Fifth Annual National Cotton Council* (November 1951)
- “Economic Aspects of Mechanization in the South,” *The Nation’s Agriculture* (1952)
- “Turning the Searchlight on Farm Policy,” (The Farm Foundation, 1952)\*
- “The Competitive Position of Southern Agriculture,” *Farm Policy Forum*, Vol. 5, no. 4 (September 1952)
- “Foreign Trade: Farmer’s Friend or Foe?” *Virginia Farm Economics* (August 1953)
- “Production Controls and Price Supports versus Alternatives,” (Proceedings of the National Agricultural Credit Conference, American Bankers’ Association, December 1954)
- “The Pendleton Farmers’ Society,” *Agricultural History*, Vol. 3, no. 2 (April 1957)\*
- “Distinctive Problems of Agriculture in Adjusting to Economic Growth and Development,” (Report of Joint Economic Committee, 85<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress, November 1957)
- “Policy for Commercial Agriculture,” (Sub-Committee on Agricultural Policy, 85<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress, December 1957)
- “Changes in the Land of Cotton,” *1958 Yearbook of Agriculture* (Government Printing Office, 1958)
- “Fiscal Problems of South Carolina State Government,” *Anderson Independent* (five articles beginning on 18 January 1959)
- “The Situation and Outlook for Property Taxation in the South,” *National Tax Journal*, Vol. 12, no. 1 (March 1959)

- “Economic Development in the South,” *Torch International Magazine* (July 1959)
- “Rural Industry—One Answer to Farm Problems,” *Banking, Journal of the American Bankers’ Association*, Vol. 53, no. 4 (October 1960)
- “Pride, Cooperation and Faith—Keys to a Brighter Future in Farming,” *South Carolina Young & Future Farmer*, Vol. 12, no. 1 (Fall 1960)
- “A Lot is Happening to South Carolina Agriculture—Most of It Good,” *Clemson College, Agricultural Research*, Vol. 8, no. 2 (Summer 1961)
- “Let’s Push for More Rural Industry,” *Better Farming Methods*, Vol. 33, no. 7 (July 1961)
- “We Can’t Shut Down Agriculture,” *Better Farming Methods*, Vol. 33, no. 9 (September 1961)
- Discussion: Developments in State-Local Tax Systems and Their Implications For Agriculture,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 45, no. 5 (December 1963)
- “Job Opportunities,” *South Carolina Methodist Advocate* (27 June 1963)
- “Good Company,” *The American Ranger* (Convention Issue, 1966)
- “A Hundred Years of Crop Reporting, Special Milestone for South Carolina,” *Agricultural Situation*, Vol. 50, no. 9 (September 1966)
- “Textile Imports—Where Do We Go from Here?” *Carolina Economist*, Vol. 5, no. 11 (November 1968)
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- “The Hiding Place,” *The Senior Circle* (S.C. Federation on Aging), Vol. 4, no. 4 (July-August 1975)

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- “South Carolina” in *The Book of Rural Life*, George H. Aull and Henry W. Barre, eds. (Chicago: Bellows-Durham Company), 1925
- “Marriage and Divorce in Country and City,” Thesis presented to the University of Virginia in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (1928)
- “A Graphic Summary of Property Taxation in South Carolina, 1936,” (Clemson College Department of Agricultural Economics, 1937)
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- “Should South Carolina Exempt Homesteads from Taxation?” (South Carolina State Planning Board, 1939)
- “A Graphic Appraisal of South Carolina,” (Works Project Administration, September 1939)

- “Unified State Agricultural Program to Meet the Impacts of War,” (State Land Use Planning Committee, June 1941)\*
- “Unified Agricultural Program—Southeast Region,” (Southeast Regional Agricultural Planning Conference, June 1941)\*
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- “Bright Economic Outlook for State Continues,” *Annual Report of the South Carolina National Bank* (December 1966)
- “Economics of the Bible,” *YMCA Business Administration* (October 1967)
- “The Economic Situation and Outlook,” *Annual Report of the South Carolina National Bank* (December 1967)

Representative contributions

Initiated and developed program resulting in Clemson's obtaining approximately 27,000 acres of land adjacent to campus

Pioneered research on agricultural-industrial relations, rural industrialization, tax equalization, community development, and rural sociology in South Carolina

Negotiated agreement making Clemson an active partner with USDA in providing more and better agricultural date for South Carolina

Joint author of Act establishing South Carolina State Agricultural Marketing Commission

Co-developer of Clemson Downs Retirement Community in Clemson, South Carolina

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George H. Aull,” *Clemson University Biography Files* (Series 38), Clemson University Libraries, Special Collections.

“Henry W. Barre,” *Office of Public Relations Biographical Files* (Series 28), Clemson University Libraries, Special Collections.

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