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Retrospect

[News from the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections at Winthrop University](#)

October 2022

Volume 18, Number 3



University Collection Spotlight

By Andrew Johnston, Coordinator of Archives and Special Collections

Haunted Winthrop



Did you know that the ghost of founder and first president, Dr. David Bancroft Johnson, Jr. roams the campus late at night and on foggy mornings? Many ghost stories exist about Dr. Johnson. There are stories of the president peering through the windows at Johnson Hall, students have sensed his presence in Tillman Hall and the smell of his cigar smoke late at night, but the most common report is seeing his spirit roaming from his original gravesite on front campus to his current resting place beneath the Little Chapel.

Dr. Johnson was born in 1856 in LaGrange, Tennessee where his father David Bancroft Johnson, Sr. (1820-1857) was also founder and first president of a female college (La Grange Female College). At age 9, David, Jr. had his left arm crushed by “a hand car loaded with rock” which was later amputated. Despite the loss of his arm, Dr. Johnson was an exceptional tennis player while excelling

academically. At fifteen, Johnson enrolled in East Tennessee University in Knoxville (which became The University of Tennessee in 1879). Working his way through college, Johnson became valedictorian of his graduating class and received his bachelor's degree with “first honors” in 1877.

Dr. Johnson founded Winthrop in 1886 and remained Winthrop president until his death on December 26, 1928. He was adored in life and mourned in death. Hundreds of Winthrop daughters arrived to pay their respects to their beloved “Debe” as he was laid to rest on front campus near where the stone seating area is across Alumni Drive from Margaret Nance. He poured his soul into building Winthrop into the institution it is today and his spirit is inextricably linked to the school. As he wrote shortly before his death, “Having been



President of this institution for forty-two years you can imagine how dear to my heart has become every brick and stone, every individual – the members of the Board of Trustees, the officers and faculty, the student body, in fact everything connected with this institution.”



In 1936, The Little Chapel, which served as Winthrop's first classroom in Columbia, SC, was moved to Rock Hill and reassembled on Winthrop's back campus. The decision was made to dig up the founder's remains and reinter him in the Little Chapel. A boy, just 16 years old was tasked with sitting by the open grave to make sure it was not disturbed. The boy spent a sleepless night watching over the remains of Winthrop's founder. The young man would never talk of the things he saw and heard that night, but what was clear to family and friends of the boy was that he was never the same.

Being reinterred woke up the resting spirit of Winthrop's founder and almost immediately sightings became common of a one-armed apparition roaming Winthrop from front campus to the Little Chapel at all times of the day. These sightings continue, although they have become less common since 1978 when his wife, Mai Rutledge Johnson died and was buried at his side in the Little Chapel. Mrs. Johnson's presence seems to have eased the restless spirit of Dr. Johnson. However, a one-armed apparition is occasionally seen late at night, but most often on foggy days in the early morning hours wandering the campus.



Ebonites Get Minister From the [Johnsonian November 13, 1972](#)



The Association of Ebonites will secure services of a Black minister through Westminster House, it was decided last Monday night. Rev. Robert George Toatley, pastor of Rock Hill's Hermon Presbyterian Church, volunteered his services to Westminster House, primarily to help Winthrop's black students. A. O. E. believes their chances of adequate representation will increase if Winthrop has a black minister. Toatley believes that the Rock Hill black community will become more involved with the college procedures. He also believes through the project that more black freshmen will enroll at Winthrop.



Manuscript Collection Spotlight

By Gina Price White, Dir. of Archives and Special Collections

[James Alexander Milling Civil War Reminiscence—Accession 877 M395 \(446\)](#)



The collection consists of a typed transcript of the recollections of James "Jim" Alexander Milling (1846-1916) of his service in the American Civil War 1862-1865. Milling wrote it sometime prior to his death in 1916. He was a native of Fairfield County, South Carolina and is buried at First Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Greenwood, SC. Milling joined the Confederate Army in 1862 and served as a Corporal in Company G, 3rd Battalion South Carolina Infantry. He participated in the Battles of: Fredericksburg; Chancellorsville; Chickamauga; Chattanooga; Battle of the

Wilderness; Spotsylvania; Cold Harbor; Fisher's Hill; New Market Heights; and Bentonville. Milling was married to Martha Ann Morrow Milling (1872 - 1972), and they had two children: David Mills Milling (1878 - 1954) and Emma Cornelia Milling (1904 - 2009). The original handwritten manuscript was found by Jim Milling's daughter, Emma who was a graduate of Winthrop, Class of 1926, after her mother (Martha) passed away in 1972. It consisted of 38 pages which had been tightly rolled and placed in a purse belonging to Martha. The typescript reminiscence may be viewed in its entirety in the Pettus Archives Manuscript Collection on Digital Commons by clicking on the title of the collection above or by visiting Pettus.

For more information on the Manuscript Collection, contact Pettus Archives at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



Quote of the Quarter



Winthrop's founder and first president, D. B. Johnson, noted in his 1911 Commencement Speech:

Winthrop does not stand for an education without purpose. We hold that education is a training of the individual for life's duties—for service. If you should make no use of that which has been given you for the good of others, you would contradict the best meaning of your education. To fail here is to make your college training a hindrance rather than a help to your usefulness and happiness. Often a college education seems to "unfit" the individual for life and

I think it is because he becomes self-centered, selfish, in working for his own advancement, forgetting obligations to others. We need to change our attitude somewhat when we begin the new kind of life after graduation and think more on "How much can I give?" and less on "How much can I get?" Never forget that your obligation to serve is the greater because of your greater opportunities.

For more information concerning the *Quote of the Quarter* please contact Gina White at (803) 323-2334 or whitegp@winthrop.edu.

What's Happening

From [The Johnsonian October 26, 1994](#)



On Monday, Oct. 31 at 8:00 p.m. at the Shack, the [Winthrop] Literary Society and the Graduate Student Association will be having the "Bring Out Ya Dead," All Hallow's Eve Party. This will be BYOB for those of age.



Recently Processed

By Drew Russell, Reference and Special Projects Archivist

Mary Phillips White Gettys Family Papers—Accession 1801



Mary Phillips White Gettys' family papers were donated to the Pettus Archives in May by Mrs. Gettys' daughter, Sara Elizabeth Gettys Pierce.

Mary Phillips White was born August 6, 1920 to Wilson Carlisle White and Julia Phillips White and was the oldest of four children. Mary was valedictorian of her graduating class from Chester High School, she went on to receive a degree from Erskine College in Due West, SC in 1941. After she finished college, Mary would go on to teach at the junior high school in Anderson, SC.

In 1943, Mary White enlisted in the US Navy during World War II, serving in the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) Corp where she would work as a code breaker. Mary White

would leave the navy after WWII, receiving the rank of Lieutenant for her code breaking work.

Mary White would go on to meet Tom Gettys in 1947 and the two would marry later that year. Tom Gettys was a teacher, principal, postmaster, and attorney in Rock Hill before moving to Washington, DC to work as an aide to Congressman James Richards. Gettys would then go on to become an elected member of the United States House of Representatives in 1964, representing South Carolina for five terms before returning to Rock Hill where he and Mary would spend the rest of their lives. Mary Phillips White Gettys passed away on December 8, 2021, at the age of 101.

The Mary Phillips White Gettys Family Papers consist of letters that her parents, Wilson Carlisle White and Julia Phillips wrote to each other during their courtship while White was stationed overseas during World War I. The collection also includes war remembrances by Mary Phillips White's two brothers, Thomas Henry White III, who was wounded in battle during World War II twice, left the Army, and was killed 3 months later in a car crash, and Wilson Carlisle White, Jr. (Bubba). All letters have been transcribed by Mary Gettys' daughter, Sara Elizabeth Gettys Pierce with annotations, giving valuable context and even more history to the texts. Mrs. Pierce also painstakingly tracked Tom White III's movements as best as she could through Europe using his letters and maps of the regions he described.

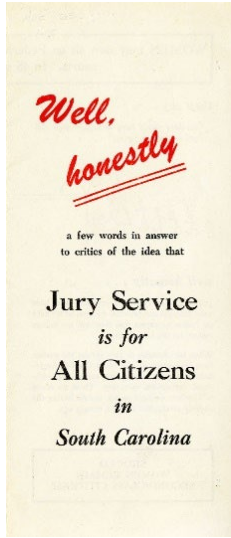
For more information on collections being processed, contact archives@winthrop.edu or (803) 323-2334

Department features new courses From [The Johnsonian Nov. 3, 1982](#)



The English Dept. will feature two new courses in '83 Spring Semester. New courses are The Popular Novel (ENG 311) and Image of Women in Literature (ENG 320) The Popular Novel will include readings in detective fiction, science fiction, espionage thrillers, and horror stories. The Image of Women in Literature will explore women's roles.

A Century Ago...



*SC Jury Service
Leaflet 1967*

From an article in the [October 27, 1922 Chester News](#) titled “Women Play Roles in Nine Tragedies Now in Limelight”

Cleveland—The trial of Mrs. Mabel Champion, 22, alleged slayer of Thomas O’Connell, carnival promoter, is continuing with four jurors, three of whom are women, selected for service.

Ohio began allowing women to serve on juries in 1920 after the 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote, was ratified. South Carolina did not allow women to serve on juries until 1967—forty-five years later. South Carolina finally voted to ratify the 19th amendment on July 1, 1969. The vote was not certified until 1973. For more information, see the [Sara Vandiver Liverance Papers, Acc. 65](#).



Photograph of the Quarter

By Brittany S. Pigford, Archivist



Dr. Les Reynolds’ Acting Class in Johnson Hall-Fall 1980

For more information on the Photograph Collection, contact Brittany Pigford, Archivist at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



News Flash from the Past

By Gina Price White, Dir. of Archives and Special Collections

Winthrop's library, since the school moved to Rock Hill in 1895, has been housed in three different locations—Main Building, Carnegie (now Rutledge), and the current Dacus Library. In 1928 the *Johnsonian* featured an article about the library in its January 14 issue. Winthrop, with a student body of about 1500 in 1928, had an impressive library for a small college only 42 years old. The library's quality collection and excellent service has continued to this day.

From the [Johnsonian January 14, 1928](#)

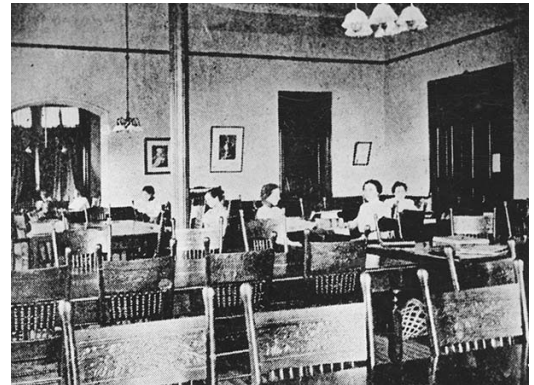
Winthrop's Library Yesterday and Today



Ida Jane Dacus

In 1895 Miss Ida J. Dacus, with the ever prevailing spirit of all Winthrop girls, proudly sought Dr. Johnson and his institution. At that time our library consisted of a collection of books filling only two small book cases. These are today in the lecture room of the library. This meagre collection included, almost exclusively, books on education, which were bought when the college was moved from Columbia. You could hardly call it a library. Rather, it was a study hall, at that time located in the Administration Building. It was composed of three small rooms across from the auditorium: the reading room, the magazine room, and the newspaper room.

In 1896, the library was placed in the hands of three service scholarship girls. Miss Dacus was one of the three chosen for this work. At that time there were few libraries and few institutions with libraries. Dr. Johnson, in his wisdom, realized the value of a library to the growth and development of any educational institution, and included in his yearly budget a sum for the library's enlargement. In 1898, he was fortunate enough to be able to have it made one of the depositories for the federal government publications. We now have practically a complete file of the records and debates of our federal government.



Library in Main Building 1900



Carnegie Library under construction 1905

Realizing the value of trained service, Dr. Johnson encouraged Miss Dacus to attend Drexel Institute, the school of library methods of Philadelphia. She was the first woman in South Carolina to specialize in library work. In 1900, she became Winthrop's first trained librarian. Today, she holds that same position. Can there be a finer tribute to anyone than this? Together, Miss Dacus and the library have grown, each helping the other, until now they are inseparable. For who thinks of our library but calls up associations of Miss Dacus, and who speaks of Miss Dacus without mentioning our wonderful collection of books?

The library grew with the institution and, in a very short time, the space in Main Building became very inadequate. Dr. Johnson, ever alert and energetic, secured funds from Andrew Carnegie for the erection of our present building [now known as Rutledge]. This work was completed in 1905. Since then, the growth has steadily continued. Again the library has outgrown itself and demands more space. In 1905 the library was built to meet the needs of the students at that time:

today there are 2,000 students to be accommodated. The shelving space, large enough in 1905, is now completely filled and more space is badly needed for forthcoming books.

From the beginning, South Carolina literature has been of vital interest to those connected with the college. Through continual perseverance, second hand "out-of-print" books have been purchased. Today we have one of the best South Carolina collections in the State.

At present [1928], the library is subscribing to more than 100 magazines. From time to time the files are being brought up to date by the purchase of back numbers. We now have one of the best collections of bound magazines in the South. The collection consists of complete files of the "Edinburgh Review" from 1802, the "Living Age" from 1840, and many other magazines. The complete volume of "Peale and Fletcher's Index" and "Readers' Guide" prove a most valuable source of reference.

Having provided a library for his students, Dr. Johnson again had the wisdom and foresight in 1905 to put into the college curriculum a course of training in the use of books. This was almost an unheard of thing at that time, but now almost every institution in the United States is giving this training. Such a course is invaluable to the college student. After studying the classification and arrangement of the library, we are able to use it easily and intelligently.

Lecturers, speakers, and teachers who come to us during the summer school and who are accustomed to using larger libraries, express their surprise and pleasure in finding such a wonderful selection of general collections. The shelves are packed with books to suit every taste and need. There are reference collections, fiction books of entertainment and books pursuing special subjects.

There are now 31,040 volumes in the library, all bound, classified and catalogued, ready for use. There are 11,000 pamphlets and government publications, all ranged according to serial number and with easily accessible catalogued indexes.

In 1896, the library was under the supervision of three service scholarship girls. Now, besides three service scholarship girls, there are four trained librarians. The library is open from 8:10 in the morning until 10 at night.

It is surely due to the ever higher ambitions and ceaseless efforts of our beloved librarian for 27 years that this, our library, has indeed been a success. J.P.



Current Exhibitions

By Kaitlin Burdette, Archivist

JUST ONE MORE...Celebrating the Life and Work of Joel "Nick" Nichols



Joel Nichols 1985

A third-generation photographer, Joel "Nick" Nichols spent 46 years telling the Winthrop story through pictures as the university's full-time photographer. But his ability to capture fleeting moments in time touched generations well beyond Winthrop. *Just One More ... Celebrating the Life and Work of Joel "Nick" Nichols* brings Nick's varied images into focus in the Pettus Archives fall exhibit. The photographs and other material in the exhibit reflect the life and work of our "Nick" who was not only a great photographer, but one of the best members of the Winthrop family.

Characteristically on his bike, Nick rode through campus documenting the big events and day-to-day activities of the students and employees at Winthrop from 1962 to 2008. Always aiming to take the perfect shot, Nick was famous for asking for “just one more.”

Through this exhibit, we hope to represent the span of his life and his life’s work, in which he captured not only Winthrop’s history, but the essence of the people and places he visited throughout his career. Apart from the portraits and some of the family photographs, almost every photo displayed was taken by Nick. Sadly, we lost Nick in December



Rat Week Fall 1970

2020. We hope this display will serve as a Winthrop family tribute to Joel Nichols. You can find more information on our website. ([Just One More...](#))



Campus Fall 2000

The exhibit in Pettus will be up until December 16. If you can’t get to the Archives in person, we will be presenting a Facebook Live session on Nov 7 at noon featuring Nick’s wife Janice (Class of 1963). Please join us in celebrating Nick’s brilliant life and work (in person or via Facebook) with just one more look!!

For more information, contact the Pettus Archives at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



Collegiate Contemplations

By Gina Price White, Dir., Archives and Special Collections

From The Winthrop College Journal November, 1903 Vol. III, No. 2



The Morning Glories

Arise while yet the morn is still,
Ere the sun’s bright rays dispel the mist,
And watch how the breeze from over the hill
With the morning glories keeps his tryst.

The delicate blue waits with downcast head,
Assuming a calm which her trembling belies;
While the artless purple, by love’s instinct led,
Lifts in sweet greeting her soulful eyes.

The coquettish pink, in trifling fun,
Essays to case round him her beauty’s spell;
But the gay young breeze laughs with each one,
And benign leaves listen, but never tell.

Henrietta Eve, Class of 1905

For information on the Archives’ collections and holdings, how to donate historical material, or how you can help, contact:

Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections

Telephone: (803) 323-2334

E-Mail: archives@winthrop.edu

Website: <http://libguides.library.winthrop.edu/archives/home>

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