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J. Mitchell Reames Papers

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J. Mitchell Reames (1920-1987)
Papers, c. 1907-1990

Volume: 12.5 linear feet (10 cartons)

Background

Academic librarian; president, 1970-1971, South Carolina Library Association.

Scope and Content

The papers of James Mitchell Reames (1920-1987) span the years 1907 through 1990. Included in the papers are correspondence, writings, reports, newsclippings, scrapbooks, and audio tapes. Units of material in the collection reveal Reames's dedication to librarianship and Methodism in South Carolina, and the collection focuses principally upon these two lifelong commitments.

The primary focus of the collection is Reames's professional career as an academic librarian working in and for South Carolina libraries, with the exception of six years spent in Louisiana. Reames's library work experience started when he served as secretary and student assistant to the Furman University librarian during his undergraduate years. It continued at the University of North Carolina, where he earned the B.S. in Library Science in 1942, and at the University of Michigan, where he earned the A.M.L.S. (advanced) degree in Library Science in 1954. After military service in the United States Navy during World War II (1942-1946), Reames embarked upon his career as a college librarian, which lasted from 1946 to 1983 and took him to four institutions--Clemson College, 1946-1952; Northwestern State College of Louisiana, 1952-1958; University of South Carolina, Columbia, 1958-1970; and Marion State College (now Francis Marion College), 1970-1983, where he held the position of Director and in 1971 presided over the dedication of a new college library.

The correspondence series illustrates Reames's relationships with other college librarians and details the history of academic librarianship in South Carolina and the Southeast during the post-World War II years. Chief among these correspondents are J. Isaac Copeland, with whom Reames was first associated at Furman and later at the University of North Carolina; John Goodman, of Clemson; Alfred H. Rawlinson, of the University of South Carolina; and Guy R. Lyle, of Emory University. Large units of material attest to his membership in such professional organizations as the American Library Association, the Association of Southeastern Research Librarians, and the South Carolina Library Association, which he twice served as president. The collection also shows the extent of his participation as consultant in the work of evaluation committees sent out by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Also present is a series of letters relating to Furman University. Primary among the correspondents are the following individuals: Bennette E. Geer, who served as president of Furman University, 1933-1938; Herbert K. Gezork, the German-born professor who was exiled for his faith and then in 1938 was dismissed from his position as assistant professor of Religious

Education at Furman; Albert S. Berghauer (1881-1962), a professor of German with whom Reames corresponded for twenty-five years; and Edwin McNeill Poteat, to whom Reames wrote out of his concern for academic freedom and the retention of non-Baptist members of the teaching faculty at his alma mater. Included also in the correspondence series are specimen letters circulated among members of the "Caboose Club"-- Reames, Rhett Jackson, Eben Taylor, Harris Parker, and Larry Jackson.

Reflected in many of the topical series files is Reames's dedication as a layman in the Methodist Church. Reames became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, when he joined McLeod's Chapel, Rembert, S.C., in 1934. He was later active in the Trenholm Road United Methodist Church, Columbia, and the Central United Methodist Church, Florence, serving variously on local official boards and commissions and as steward, trustee, teacher, church school superintendent, and certified lay speaker. A series of letters from three of Reames's South Carolina Methodist contemporaries, the Rev. J. Claude Evans, Rhett Jackson, and the Rev. Eben Taylor, illustrate the close association of concerned churchmen consulting one another on what they perceived to be the crises of the day facing the Methodist Church. A sizable unit of material documents Reames's tenure on the board of trustees of Methodist-related Claflin College, Orangeburg, from 1973 to 1987. The topical series also reveals his ties with such entities as the Alston Wilkes Society, the Christian Action Council, and the Columbia School for the Laity and provides biographical information of Reames's cousin, journalist Weldon James, who made headlines when he was involved in the Panay incident in China in 1937.

Additionally, the collection contains papers relating to the Reames and James families, as well as reference materials on the history of local places and persons in Sumter County, S.C. One item of particular interest is the audit of the records of the Sumter County Permanent Road Commission for the period from 1921 to 1927, and there are studies on the community of Stateburg, the High Hills Baptist Church, Salem Black River Presbyterian Church, and African-American Congressman George Washington Murray.

Timeline

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1920
Aug 31 | Born Rembert, S.C., son of James A. and Carrie James Reames |
| 1941
Jun 2 | Graduated, cum laude, Furman University, B.A. in English |
| 1942
Jun | Graduated University of North Carolina, B.S. in Library |
| 1942-
1946 | Served in U.S. Navy |

1946- Reference Librarian, Clemson College, Clemson, S.C.
1952

1948 Jul Married Mary Beall Hall
24

1949 President, South Carolina Library Association

1952 Son, James Alan Reames, born
Mar 7

1952- Associate Librarian, Northwestern State College of Louisiana,
1958 Natchitoches, La.

1954 Graduated University of Michigan, A.M.L.S.
Aug 14

1958- Director, Undergraduate Library, University of South Carolina
1970

1963- Member of Alston Wilkes Society
1987

1970- President, South Carolina Library Association Governor's
1971 Mansion and Lace House Commission

1970- Director of Library, Francis Marion College, Florence, S.C.
1983

1971 Dedication of James A. Rogers Library, Francis Marion College
Nov 12

1974- Trustee, Claflin College, Orangeburg, S.C
1987

1982 Received Distinguished Service Award from Francis Marion
College Received "Christian Action Award" from Christian
Action Council

1983 Jul Retired
1

1983 Received Distinguished Service Award from South Carolina
Oct 14 State Library

1987 Died
Aug 28

Description of series

- Box 1** **Biographical, 1920-1987 and undated**
Including awards and membership certificates, diplomas, academic transcripts, newspaper clippings, and resumes.
- Boxes 1-3** **Correspondence, 1938-1987 and undated**
Consisting chiefly of personal correspondence documenting J. Mitchell Reames's career as an academic librarian and churchman. Includes letters circulated among members of the "Caboose Club." Correspondents represented include Albert S. Berghauser, A. McKay Brabham, Jr., James F. Byrnes, Hodding Carter, J. Isaac Copeland, James McBride Dabbs, Cyrus B. Dawsey, W.J. Bryan Dorn, Ernest A. Finney, Jr., John Goodman, Frank P. Graham, Larry A. Jackson, Rhett Jackson, Weldon James, Ernest F. Hollings, Earle E. Morris, Jr., Jack Morris, Edwin McNeill Poteat, Robert Franklin Poole, Alfred Rawlinson, R. Wright Spears, Eben Taylor, and Estellene P. Walker.
- Box 4** **Education, 1938-1954**
School records, grade reports, notes, and student papers relating to Reames's studies as an undergraduate at Furman and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and graduate student at the University of Michigan.
- Boxes 5-6** **Professional Career, 1939-1986 and undated**
Includes materials documenting Reames's career as an academic librarian at Clemson College, Clemson, S.C., 1946-1952; Northwestern State College of Louisiana, Natchitoches, La., 1952-1958; University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., 1958-1970; and Francis Marion College, Florence, S.C., 1970-1983. Also included are items pertaining to his professional memberships in such organizations as the American Library Association, Association of Southeastern Research Librarians, and South Carolina Library Association. Includes files gathered in his work as a consultant with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the College of Charleston. Copies of speeches and published and unpublished writings complete this series.
- Boxes 7-10** **Topical Files, 1921-1990 and undated**
Includes materials documenting Reames's interest and involvement in religious, social, and political issues. Two major topics represented are Claflin College, with which Reames was affiliated as a member of the Board of Trustees, and religion. Reames joined the Methodist Church as a teenager and continued that affiliation until his death. These files document Reames's active role in the Trenholm

Road United Methodist Church, Columbia, S.C., and the Central United Methodist Church, Florence, S.C. Other topical files of interest include: Christian Action Council, the history of Sumter County, Hodding Carter, and journalist Weldon James.

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Administrative Notes

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