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James Nelson Frierson Papers

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**The Papers of
James Nelson Frierson**

The papers of James Nelson Frierson (1874-1960), attorney, educator, and dean of the University of South Carolina School of Law, were transferred to the South Caroliniana Library via deed of gift in 1999 by Professor Dargan Frierson, of Wilmington , N.C. Information concerning copyright must be secured in writing from the Director of the South Caroliniana Library.

Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 1.25
Shelf location : Annex
Accession numbers: 13219

JAMES NELSON FRIERSON

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

One and one-quarter linear feet, 1911-1959, reveal something of the life and work of attorney and educator James Nelson Frierson (1874-1960). A native of Stateburg in Sumter County, S.C., Frierson began his education at Porter Military Academy in Charleston and went on to earn a B.L. degree from Hobart College, Geneva, N.Y. (1896), an LL.B. degree from Columbia University (1899), and an LL.D. degree from Hobart College (1921).

Following his graduation from law school, Frierson practiced as an attorney for several years in Buffalo, N.Y., but returned to South Carolina and in 1908 became a professor of law at the University of South Carolina School of Law. In addition to teaching, he was a partner in the Columbia, S.C., law firm of Barron, McKay, Frierson & McCants until 1932. During the First World War, Frierson held a lieutenant's commission in Co. K, First South Carolina Reserved Militia, and was active in the Liberty Loans Campaign and War Camp Community Service. When courted by the University of Alabama to head their newly established Law School, he politely declined, stating in a letter of 1 May 1912 to President George H. Denny that he felt his duty was to his home state-"The proposition...has very many attractive features connected with it and I deeply appreciate the compliment implied in the extension of the invitation to me. After mature consideration, however, I have come to the conclusion that my duty lies here and that I should not, therefore, allow myself to further contemplate or consider your very attractive offer, for fear that my personal interests might entice me away from what I consider my opportunity and duty here in South Carolina."

In 1920 Professor Frierson was named dean of the University of South Carolina School of Law. Under his leadership, the school implemented a three-year program of study, markedly increased the volume of its library holdings, and added two faculty members. With these changes the School of Law was admitted to the American Association of Law Schools in December 1924. Following thirty-eight years of distinguished service to the University of South Carolina, Dean Frierson retired in 1946. The 1947 *Selden Society Year Book*, issued by the School of Law, paid tribute with the following words-"The modern development of the School is reflected in his life and can be attributed to his insistence on keeping abreast of the times in law education and the maintenance of a high academic standing. Lawyers and students alike love and respect him, and he will always be remembered for his scholarly and inquiring mind."

After retiring, J. Nelson Frierson and his wife, the former Louise Dwight Mazyck, moved to Charleston where they concentrated their efforts on humanitarian issues. Nelson became involved with the South Carolina Association for the Blind, the Charleston Association for the United Nations, and the South Carolina Tuberculosis Association, which he served as president. He remained highly regarded in his retirement and was asked in 1956 by Governor Timmerman to represent South Carolina at a national conference on the aging. Frierson declined for reasons of failing health. He died four years later in 1960.

Much of Frierson's correspondence and writings focuses on the legal history of South Carolina. He was a founding member of the American Legal History Society and often spoke of the importance of preserving and studying early legal records. Among his contributions in this field, Frierson collaborated with Anne King Gregorie on a volume titled *Records of the Court of Chancery of South Carolina, 1670-1779*, which was published in 1950. He also was concerned

with the subject of divorce law and spoke out in opposition to proposed legislation to amend state law prohibiting divorce. Included with files of newspaper clippings and notes on the topic is a typescript copy of Frierson's article "Divorce in South Carolina," which appeared in the *North Carolina Law Review* (vol. 9) in 1931.

Correspondents include Alma B. Adams, Frank H. Bailey, Sol Blatt, Rossa B. Cooley, Anne King Gregorie, Daniel W. Hollis, Olin D. Johnston, Richard B. Morris, Francis S. Philbrick, and Yates Snowden. Among the few items of a purely legal nature are the estate papers of Samuel A. Horn, E.M. Rucker, and Ormsby Bourke Tilton .

Almost half of the bulk of Frierson's papers is made up of his writings. Also included are notes and writings on various legal history topics and the state of archival preservation in early twentieth-century South Carolina. Items of particular interest are a paper by Duke University professor [Robert H.] Woody entitled "Report on the South Carolina Archives" and an anonymous report on "Charleston Archives Prior to 1783."

JAMES NELSON FRIERSON

CONTAINER LIST

Folder 00	Exhibit items (letterhead stationery, business cards, etc.)
Folder 1-47	Correspondence, 1911-1959 and n.d.
Folder 48	Tax documents
Folder 49	Bank books and miscellaneous financial records
Folder 50	Alumni-related materials
Folder 51	University of South Carolina School of Law
Folder 52	Miscellaneous legal materials
Folder 53	Rucker estate
Folder 54	Tilton estate
Folders 55-59	Horn estate and trust
Folder	Speech notes
Folders 61-63	Miscellaneous writings
Folders 64-65	Divorce in South Carolina notes and writings
Folder 66	Notes for <i>The Records of the Court of Chancery in South Carolina, 1670-1779</i>
Folders 67-68	Typescript copy of <i>The Court of Common Pleas in South Carolina</i>
Folder 69	General history of law writings
Folder 70	Humanitarian work
Folder 71	Scripts for plays believed to have been authored by Louise F. Kerr