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# Clemson's Past Digitized: The Future of Archival Access

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Metadata and Monographic Resources Team

### THE PROJECT

This project created and applied a controlled vocabulary of local subject headings to items in the [Clemson University Historical Images Online](#). Because of their visual nature and importance to Clemson history, the images needed enhanced description to provide additional access points.

Decisions were user-informed based on researcher questions fielded by Clemson University Libraries' Special Collections and Archives.

Digital collections at Clemson Libraries expand archival access into the digital realm. In the future, online collections may become the first entry point into the archives. With this comes challenges for library employees who describe items to improve access and discovery—now and into the future.

### CHALLENGES

1. Library of Congress Authorities not sufficient for local researcher needs local names, events, and topics.
2. Existing local subjects not controlled, leading to inconsistencies.
3. Unwieldy local subject faceted list could overwhelm researchers.
4. Minimal guidelines on how to create, format, and apply local subjects.

Who or what is important enough to receive a local subject?

How broad or narrow should they be?

When do you apply narrow local subject vs. broad LC Authorities?

### EXAMPLES

#### Personal Names



<http://purl.clemson.edu/424C0D0731385A7C1C484D669338D997>

**TITLE**  
Mess Hall staff preparing food

**COLLECTIONS**  
[Clemson University Historical Images](#)

**DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION**  
Interior shot of Mess Hall staff members cutting and preparing meat in the kitchen. Tom Littlejohn, long time staff member and namesake of the Tom Littlejohn apartments for Clemson's African American staff, looks on. On back: [Mess Hall Kitchen and Staff]; [Tom Littlejohn (far right facing camera)]

**LOCATIONS**  
Barracks No. 1 (Historical), Pickens County, South Carolina [\(34.67968,-82.83795\)](#)

**TOPICS**  
[College buildings](#)  
[Lost architecture](#)  
[Restaurants](#)  
[Kitchens](#)  
[Littlejohn, Tom](#)  
[Mess Hall \(Barracks No. 1 \(Clemson, S.C.\)\)](#)

**TITLE**  
Main Building

**COLLECTIONS**  
[Clemson University Historical Images](#)

**DATES**  
Date Created 1923

**DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION**  
On back: [Tillman Hall] [Main Building] [1923]

**LOCATIONS**  
Tillman Hall, Pickens County, South Carolina [\(34.6801,-82.83737\)](#)

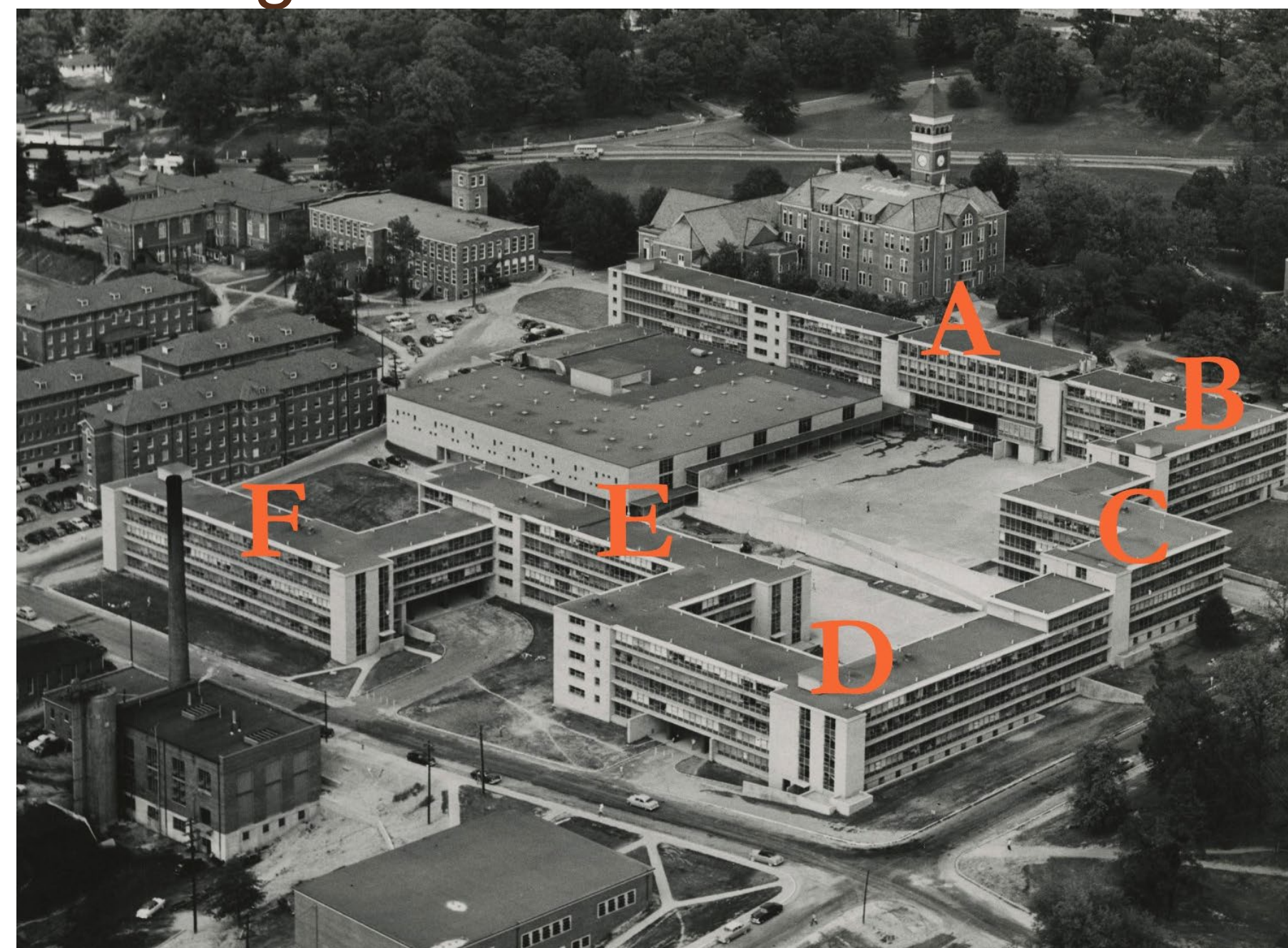
**TOPICS**  
[College buildings](#)  
[Main Building \(Clemson, S.C.\)](#)

#### Questions of Chronology



<http://purl.clemson.edu/1C395F741F3858905209FCFD5E61F90C>

#### Building Confusion



<http://purl.clemson.edu/5C9A7EE9348484DzB7604717576D3DD72>

**TITLE**  
Aerial view of Johnstone Hall

**COLLECTIONS**  
[Clemson University Historical Images](#)

**DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION**  
Language English  
UA100\_001549; On Back: [Johnstone Hall] [Tillman Hall] [Godfrey Hall] [c1954]; Aerial View of Campus

**LOCATIONS**  
Johnstone Hall, Pickens County, South Carolina [\(34.68022,-82.83799\)](#)

**TOPICS**  
[College buildings](#)  
[Dormitories](#)  
[College campuses](#)  
[Johnstone Hall \(Clemson, S.C.\)](#)

### CONCLUSION

#### Solutions

1. Normalized existing local subject headings deduplicated, fixed inconsistencies, deleted/broadened certain terms.
2. Implemented controlled vocabulary of local subject headings.
3. Created more detailed guidelines to standardize formatting and provide criteria for creating local subjects.
4. Relied on cataloger judgment, experience, and knowledge of collection to create/apply subjects.

#### Continuing Challenges

- Relating historic names to current names of buildings and departments.

How do we find all images of a building by a single term?

- Defining broadness of local subjects on case-by-case basis but also within and across all digital collections.

How can a local subject serve all digital collections?

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Images courtesy of Clemson University Libraries Special Collections and Archives [Clemson University Historical Images Online](#)

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Poster PDF



Clemson University Historical Images Online