

# Honnold Library Record

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This issue includes sketches of some women who have made significant contributions to the libraries of The Claremont Colleges. The articles are written by women who are present or recent members of the library staff.

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## Caroline Burton Honnold: *Leading Lady of the Library*

*Mrs. William Lincoln Honnold  
enjoyed the social life of  
Johannesburg.*

Ardent women's movement proponents today are chagrined to hear of a woman achieving recognition or greatness through her husband. To a young woman in 1895, despite the advances of feminism and the egalitarian custom of mid-western states, married life and its duties offered the most acceptable and desirable career. But, wise Caroline Honnold appreciated the possibilities: she was perpetually, as James Blaisdell would say much later, her husband's "companion and inspirer and friend." Her success in supporting her husband was acknowledged for posterity on October 23, 1952, when the Colleges' long-hoped for central library was dedicated as the gift of Mr. and Mrs. William L. Honnold.



Born on October 7, 1868 into a prominent Chicago family, Caroline Burton was snatched from encroaching spinsterhood at the mellow age of 27 by a promising, energetic, and handsome Michigan School of Mines graduate. William Lincoln Honnold swept his bride off to an isolated mining camp near Minnesota's Lake Superior. After three years of iron mining, Caroline and William moved to California where his accomplishments caught the attention of a British mining concern. In 1902, Con-

solidated Mines Selection Company (London) asked William to continue his work for them as a consulting engineer in the mining fields of South Africa.

Undaunted by the waning Boer War and the prospect of nearly a month at sea, the Honnolds departed for an intended two-year sojourn in Johannesburg. Increasing responsibilities, discoveries, and investments in coal, gold, and diamond mining stretched their residence to 1915.

Those thirteen momentous years in South Africa provided Caroline the contrasts of threatening civil disorder, charity and social work, and the establishment of enduring friendships with such leaders as General Jan Smuts. When William responded to colleague Herbert Hoover's appeal to help with the relief of Belgium and France at the outbreak of the Great War, Caroline moved with him to London where she undertook, as after the Boer War, her rehabilitation work with the wounded.

London, New York, Europe, and, again, South Africa were home to the peripatetic Honnolds for the next few years while William pursued, at first, his relief work, and then, his financial and mining interests.

In 1922 the southern California phase of Caroline's life began. Settling in Los Angeles where the climate and vegetation reminded them of South Africa, the Honnolds built a house in Bel Air among familiar wild oak trees. From there they developed a growing interest in the support of higher education and a particular faith in Claremont as a center of learning.

Initially acquainted with Claremont through his fellow mining engineer Seeley Wintersmith Mudd, William served as a trustee of Pomona College and a founding member of Claremont College. Caroline joined the Honorary Alumnae of the young Scripps College and acted as a trustee of the institution from 1930-1936. Loyal and generous patrons of the developing colleges, the Honnolds expressed plans for their consummate gift in 1946 with their pledge to Claremont College of \$1,000,000 for the construction and endowment of a centrally located library as a "symbol of the unity and purpose of the Claremont group."

With William's death on May 6, 1950, the responsibility of distributing the actual funds for the library fell to Caroline. In April 1951, she did so with these words: "The erection of the Library will fulfill the long cherished aims of my husband and myself . . . to enrich and strengthen the Claremont plan by providing such a building for common use."

Caroline died on July 18, 1954, living to see her and her husband's dream realized — Honnold Library was dedicated on October 23, 1952. A great central library, "the breeding place of the great affairs of life," had been established.

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