Abstract: The history of the University of the South and of its forest is intertwined. The health of the forest—and of the university—hung in the balance when Benjamin Wiggins took charge of both in 1893.

EMINENT DOMAIN

B. L. WIGGINS, FORESTRY, & THE NEW SOUTH AT SEWANEE

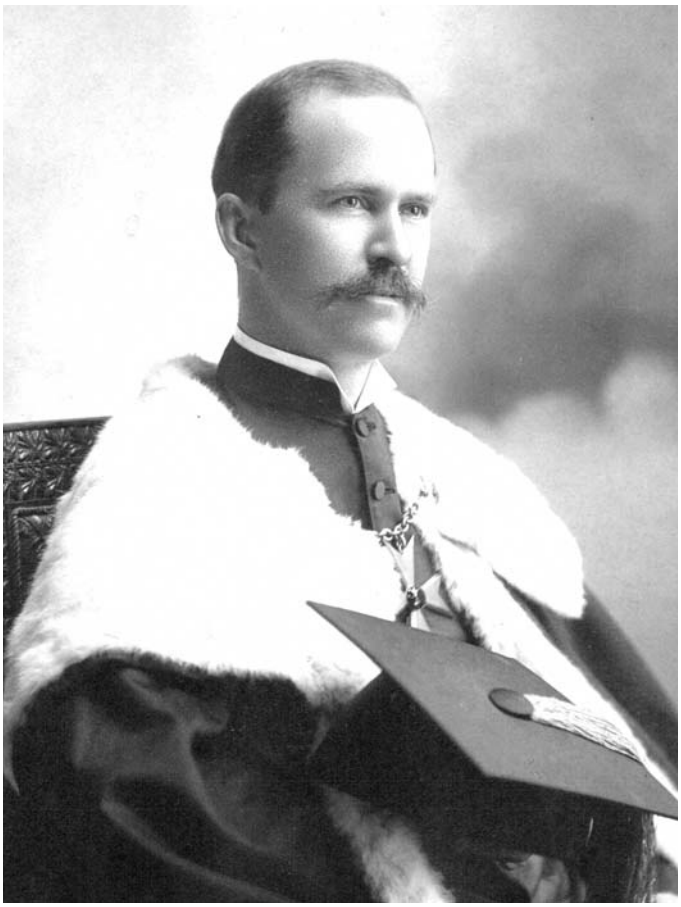
"The idea of the University of the South and the idea of its splendid domain are inseparable."
—Arthur Ben Chitty[1]

President Theodore Roosevelt rarely minced words, and his vivid keynote address to the American Forest Congress in January 1905 proved no exception. Well aware that the conference had drawn a glittering assemblage of the nation's economic, social, and academic elite, and aware, too, that it had been staged in Washington, D.C., to pressure a recalcitrant U.S. Congress to pass a series of legislative initiatives advancing the administration's conservationist agenda, Roosevelt welcomed the nearly two thousand attendees and then gave them their marching orders. "For the first time the great business and forest interests of the nation have joined together," he declared, "to consider their individual and common interests in the forest." There was much for the two groups to discuss, too. Contemporary news accounts of widespread land fraud on public lands in the West dovetailed with staunch legislative resistance at the state and national levels to regulations that would control the sale, dispersal, and management of the public domain. Bucking this trend were those who, like Roosevelt, believed that conservation would produce better land management and more appropriate stewardship. "You all know…the individual whose idea of developing the country is to cut every stick of timber off of it and then leave a barren desert for the homemaker who comes in after him," the president declared. "I ask, with all the intensity that I am capable, that the men of the West remember the sharp distinction that I have just drawn between the man who skins the land and the man who develops the country. I am going to work with, and only with, the man who develops the country. I am against the land skinner every time."[2]

Roosevelt expected his large audience to share his antipathy and his outrage, as well as his conclusion that the real "prop of the country must be the businessman who intends so to run his business that it will be profitable to his children after him." Adopting such a multigenerational perspective was critical, for the nation was at a crossroads of its own devising: "If the present rate of forest destruction is allowed to continue, with nothing to offset it, a timber famine in the future is inevitable. Fire, wasteful and destructive forms of lumbering, and the legitimate use, taken together, are destroying our forest resources far more rapidly than they are being replaced."[3]

How to forestall this complex, dangerous situation? The "remedy is a simple one," the president assured his listeners. If the forest congress would adopt resolutions advocating more conservative use of natural resources, and if the U.S. Congress

BY CHAR MILLER



COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH ARCHIVES.

Vice Chancellor Benjamin Lawton Wiggins strongly believed in conservation and federal cooperation when neither idea was popular in the South. His vision for the Domain saved the college's badly cutover forest and made it a model of public-private cooperation.

finally acquiesced to the administration's requests for the creation of a national forest service to coordinate federal conservation management, then contemporary Americans and their progeny would be well and truly served. "I wish to see all the forest work of the Government concentrated in the Department of Agriculture," Roosevelt told the congress. "It is folly to scatter such work, as I have said over and over again."[4]

The convention took the hint, passing eighteen resolutions, one of which supported the creation of a forest service in the Department of Agriculture. The U.S. Congress did its part, too: within a month the legislature had signed off on a bill, to which the Roosevelt gladly attached his signature, which transferred the national forest reserves from the Department of the Interior to Agriculture and established an agency, to be known as the Forest Service, to manage these lands. In his charge to its new chief, forester Gifford Pinchot, Agriculture Secretary James Wilson reinforced Roosevelt's arguments about the significant purpose of the national forests: "the permanence of the resources of the reserves…is indispensable to continued prosperity, and the policy of this Department for their protection and use will be invariably guided by this fact, always bearing in mind that the conservative use of these resources in no way conflicts with their permanent value." And when a conflict arose, Wilson concluded, "the question will always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."[5]

Because of its role in the creation of the national forests and Forest Service, the 1905 American Forest Congress is much celebrated as a transformative moment in the history of conservation in the United States. Much less well known was its impact at the local level, especially in the South, a region that was largely ignored during the conference; President Roosevelt's tough-love admonitions about the West's need to reform itself were of a piece with the conference's general focus on the management (and mismanagement) of that region's forested estate.

Yet at least one southern attendee took Roosevelt's provocative words to heart; he was Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, vice chancellor of the University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee. In the published version of his speech to the congress, Wiggins applauded the president's assertion that "the forest problem is in many ways the most vital internal problem in the United States," accepted that the sole remedy for the impending timber famine was "the introduction of practical forestry on a large scale," and as an educator, shared Roosevelt's conviction that only "men trained in the closet [schools] and also by actual field work under practical conditions" could avert the coming calamity of a deforested America. If national awareness of the "economic peril is coming to be realized everywhere," Wiggins confessed, that knowledge was considerably less well diffused throughout the South. Even so, there were some "far-seeing men [who] are now convinced that something must be done to prevent diminution of water supplies, the occurrence of disastrous floods, and the almost inevitable and speedy exhaustion of the timber supply." Wiggins counted himself among their number, and rightly so: since 1900, and at his insistence, agents of the federal Bureau of Forestry had been managing the university's more than six thousand acres of woodland, making it arguably the first academic environment so regulated. His embrace of the principles of forestry had had a major impact on this small mountainous community in southeastern Tennessee. When we explore the ramifications of his actions on the campus woodlands and its cultural identity, it becomes clear that at the University of the South, forestry was not just about trees; its greatest good may have been human.[6,7]

A PROMISED LAND

When Wiggins became vice chancellor of the University of the South in 1893, he entered a landscape—natural and culture—that was thick with memory. Sited atop a spur of the mid-Cumberland Plateau in Franklin County, with elevations ranging from eight hundred to nearly two thousand feet above sea level, the rugged terrain, and especially the caves in the escarpments that fall away from the plateau, had been semipermanent homes to hunter-gatherers whose presence dates back to 8000 BCE. By the 1820s, white land speculators had begun to lay claim to this high ground; because the soils did not sustain extensive agriculture, settlers grazed animals—cattle and hogs—as a food source. Timber harvesting accelerated when the Sewanee Mining Company began its coal operations on the plateau in the early 1850s. Extracting this valuable resource depended on the construction of a spur line down to Cowan, where it linked with the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, a route that tied the once-isolated mountain to the larger forces then shaping the antebellum southern economy.[8]

The plateau was also inextricably tied up with the raging cul-

tural war between the South and the North that would later erupt into armed conflict. Five years before the Civil War, Episcopal Bishop Leonidas Polk of Louisiana, after considerable thought about how best to train the rising generation of southern gentry, decided that the region needed a college to rival Princeton and Yale, with an academic environment better suited to promote southern values, set "within the pale of the plantation south." Those young men who went north for their studies, he advised his fellow southern bishops, traveled "beyond the reach of our supervision, or parental influence, [and were] exposed to the rigors of an unfriendly climate, to say nothing of other influences not calculated, it is to be feared, to promote their happiness or ours." As tempers flared in Congress and mobs fought in city streets over the vexing issues of slavery and sectionalism, Polk was convinced that the establishment of a new university was the only thing "that will save us as a church, and as a Southern Church in particular." Because this new campus was to be the joint property of all southern Episcopal dioceses, it had to be readily accessible. He assured his correspondents that the best location in which to place the school—to be known as the University of the South—was in Sewanee, near Chattanooga and its multiple, intersecting railroads.[9]

Couched to appeal to southern nationalism, Polk's letter received warm reviews. Most of its recipients supported his calls for a college—southern in name and in deed—and after a series of conferences, the bishops launched an endowment campaign. Polk was convinced that it would prove a success, for regional religious sensibilities and academic aspirations would impel philanthropists to support the cause. So, too, would the pressing need to defend slavery: "*The negro question will do the work*," he advised Bishop Stephen Elliott of Georgia. "It is an agency of tremendous power, and in our circumstances needs to be delicately managed…. If we—churchmen—do not let it have its own way and operate through us, it will cast us aside and avail of the agency of others." Co-opting southern resentment of northern abolitionism would produce a strong, well-funded university that would rebut the northerner's sneer that "a slaveholding people cannot be a people of high moral and intellectual culture."[10]

Their elevated ambitions came into being in late 1857, when the bishops approved Sewanee as the preferred locale and accepted the generous offer of Samuel F. Tracy, president of the Sewanee Mining Company, to match an earlier pledge of five thousand acres of land from citizens of Franklin County; at ten thousand acres, the University of the South was one of the largest campuses in the United States. Tracy then sweetened his company's gift by promising one million board feet of timber, two thousand tons of coal a year for ten years, and free transport of twenty thousand tons of building material. The school's construction seemed assured, and the mountain, once a source of considerable mammon, would now be devoted to more sacred ends.[11]

Or it would have been had not the Civil War exploded. Although a cornerstone had been dedicated at elaborate ceremonies in October 1860 and a few homes constructed, the planning and development of the university were suspended because of the sectional crisis, or as the *Church Intelligencer* proclaimed, "until this unnatural and wicked invasion shall cease." Though far removed from the war's first engagement—the April 12, 1861, southern cannonade on Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston—its explosions immediately rocked Sewanee. That very evening, someone hurled firebombs into the Polks' hilltop home, where the bishop's wife and daughters were staying, and into the empty house of Bishop Elliott; both were completely gutted. Polk's family escaped thanks to the quick action of a domestic slave. "Was there ever in the all the world such a hellish proceeding," the bishop fumed from his residence in New Orleans. "I am satisfied that it was the work of an incendiary, and that it was prompted by the spirit of Black Republican hate."[12]

Polk was provoked in response to accept a commission as a brigadier general in the Confederate army; a West Point graduate who years earlier had resigned his commission to enter the church, the bishop now made haste to "buckle the sword over the gown." The "Fighting Bishop" returned to Sewanee once during the long campaign, staying at the site on July 3, 1863, as his troops staged rear-guard actions on the mountain to slow the Union army's advance on Chattanooga by chopping down trees to block passage along its narrow roadways. Later that day, Polk's forces retreated down the mountain, hooking up with the rail network into Chattanooga that had made Sewanee such an attractive site for the proposed university.[13] He was killed in action in May 1864.

The idea of the school did not die with Polk or the defeat of the Confederacy, however. Indeed, its prewar sectionalism was manifest in postwar campus life. The Reverend Charles T. Quintard, who had served with Polk in the Confederate army and would later become the second bishop of Tennessee, in the late 1860s sailed to England and there raised enough money to jump-start the new college. After hiring four faculty, he helped devise a curriculum that one historian has described as "a solid Anglo-Saxon mixture of British and southern elements, which looked to the past, to tradition, for inspiration." British in orientation, too, was the university's spatial design and architectural references: Gothic motifs dominated, "with some buildings being replicas of those at Oxford and Cambridge." Dress requirements reinforced the separatist mien: students wore Confederate-gray uniforms until 1892 and were drilled by former Confederate officers, and at least five members of the faculty were former generals in the Confederate army. Those who had been too young to fight, like Bishop Thomas Frank Gailor, a teacher and administrator at Sewanee, felt impelled to extend the "the conflict's pervasive presence." His outlook was reinforced by the number of war widows who moved to the mountain to live in the surrounding community, a self-contained aerie in which to nurse the wounds of war and mourn the Lost Cause.[14]

William Alexander Percy, a 1904 graduate, captured the nostalgic haze that, like the region's legendary fog, enshrouded Sewanee, a community "presided over by widows and Confederate generals." Its altitude reinforced its retrospective gaze: "a long way away, even from Chattanooga," he wrote in his memoir, *Lanterns on the Levee*, the school is perched "on top of a bastion of mountains crenellated in blue coves. It is so beautiful that people who have once been there always, one way or another, come back. For such as can detect apple green in an evening sky, it is Arcadia…." Old times there could not be forgotten.[15]

SHIFTING GROUND

There was, however, nothing sentimental about the college's exploitation of its vast acreage, dubbed the Domain; Sewanee's economic actions were not nearly so conservative as its politics.

COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH ARCHIVES.

Otey Hall housed the school's first nine students when Sewanee first opened in 1868. This image, taken between 1868 and 1889, shows the heavily cutover 10,000-acre campus shortly before Benjamin Wiggins embarked on his efforts to reforest the Domain.

Sandstone deposits were heavily quarried to build the main campus structures, and tons of rock was also sold to the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad to build its depots. Wood for fuel and building material was logged on site, coal deposits were mined, and livestock roamed freely. For a new school without a hefty endowment, the land's natural resources must have seemed bountiful, and so they also appeared to local residents, many of whom apparently used the Domain as a commons. Before the Civil War, the trustees had reacted to the repeated depredations by hiring a forest guard to patrol for trespassers and "prevent cutting down this valuable forest growth." After it, the thievery resumed: in 1880, Vice Chancellor Telfair Hodgson posted notices throughout the forest warning "against purchasing Wood from any person who does not exhibit Written Evidence of having purchased the same" from university-sanctioned loggers, "under pain of having the same confiscated."[16]

Neither guards nor signs seemed to have much effect. By the late nineteenth century, the woods had been high-graded, leaving behind only the poorest-quality timber; forest regeneration was compromised by extensive, unregulated grazing; and fires, whether from lightning strikes or human action, swept across the plateau, threatening the community's safety and adding to its environmental woes. Observed George R. Fairbanks, a historian of the university, "ignorant or willful wielders of the axe, disregarding all instructions or contracts…marred and destroyed large portions of the original forest growth." Whatever the impulse or source, the Domain had been so degraded that in 1896 a timber company proposed clearcutting the remaining forest cover for a paltry $2,000.[17,18]

In difficult financial straits, the university was tempted by the offer. In the end, Vice Chancellor Wiggins persuaded the board to reject it. Jealous of the university's rights and prerogatives associated with Domain woodlands, within six months of his appointment to the university presidency, Wiggins was confronting trespassers on the land and in the courts. The university attorneys, Banks & Embrey of Winchester, cautioned the vice chancellor about being too aggressive: admitting that Wiggins was "pursuing the right course in getting after these offenders," T. A. Embrey advised, "We of course do not want any more lawsuits than are absolutely necessary to protect the timber on the Domain." In the case of one poacher, the lawyer suggested that the university settle the dispute on two conditions: that the miscreant pay damages and agree not to "trespass on your lands anymore."[19]

The strategy may have reduced the university's legal bills, but existing records indicate that the pilfering continued. Seeking a more effective strategy for controlling illegal resource use and

COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH ARCHIVES.

Built in 1878, St. Luke's Theological Hall is seen around 1889. The fences were erected to keep out the locals' livestock. The livestock ran throughout the Domain and caused extensive damage. About 1000 acres of the campus were enclosed in a belated effort to protect the forest.

promoting better management of the Domain, in 1896 Wiggins contacted consulting forester Gifford Pinchot. He may have done so because of Pinchot's prior experience managing the Biltmore forests, which like the Domain had been heavily logged, burned over, and badly grazed. That the forester had wrestled with many of the same land management issues that had so irked successive administrators of the Domain surely recommended him to Wiggins, who was searching for a more comprehensive and effective method of bringing order to an unruly terrain.[20]

The parallels may have also accounted for Pinchot's interest in the campus reforestation project. Yet the press of his consulting business interfered: "Mr. Gifford Pinchot, the well-known forester, continued to disappoint me in the long expected visit to Sewanee," a frustrated Wiggins advised the trustees in 1897, and "so we are still without expert advice as to the disposition of our timber and a proper care of our forests."[21]

Finally, in August 1898, Pinchot arrived on the mountain and was much struck by its manifold possibilities. "[H]e told me that the prospect for forestry was more encouraging than at any other place that he had seen except, perhaps, in the Adirondacks," Wiggins wrote to trustee Silas McBee, who had been instrumental in arranging the forester's much-anticipated and long-delayed visit. "We are all charmed with Mr. Pinchot, and I can't tell you how grateful I am to you for securing his interests and services."[22]

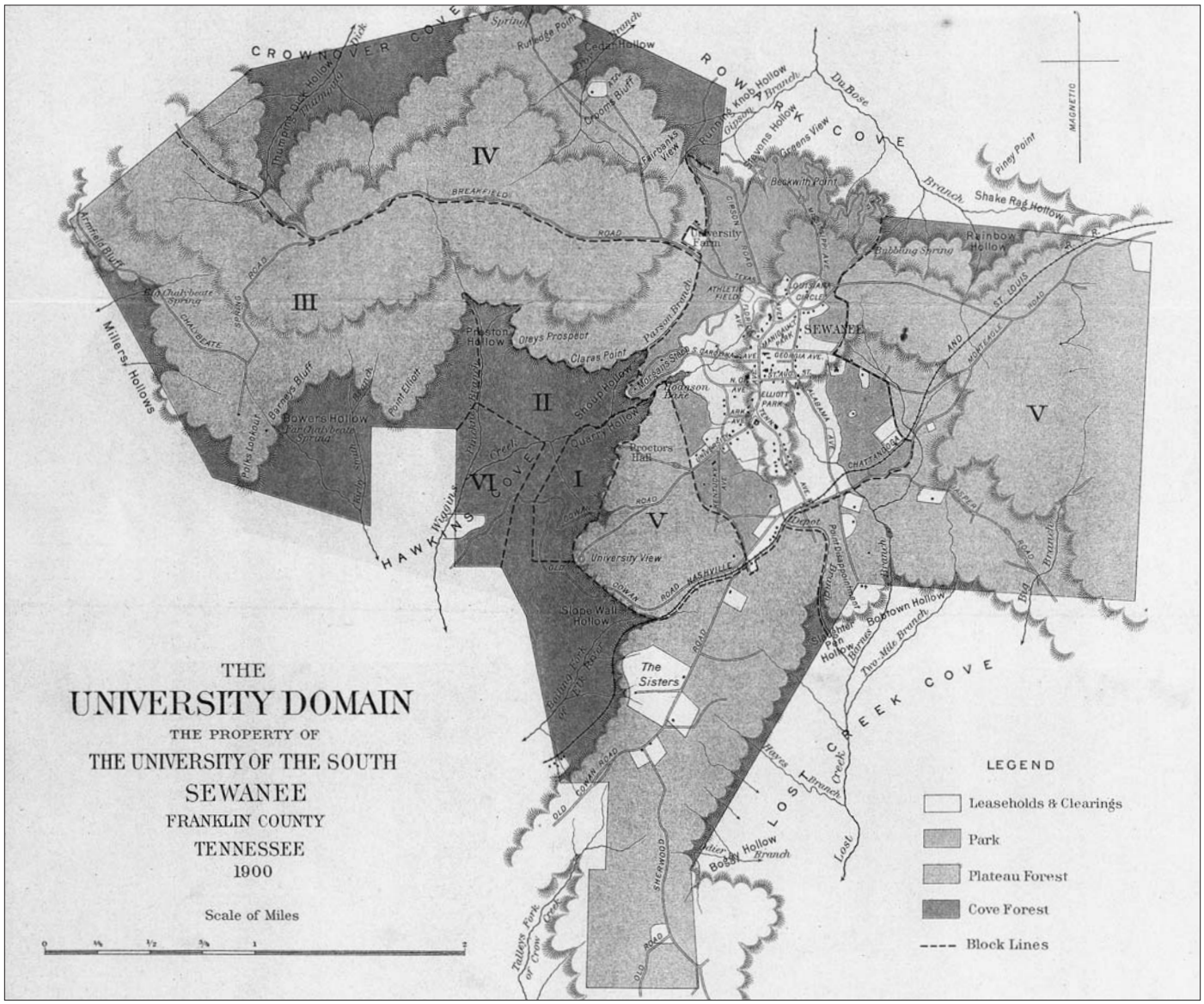
The wait had been worth it because Pinchot was no longer just an independent consulting forester. One month earlier he had been named head of the Division of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture, and his agency was in need of work. Because the nation's forest reserves were then under the purview of the Department of Interior, the small number of federal foresters in Agriculture had no public lands under their control. To practice their craft, gain publicity, and generate support for their work, in 1898 Pinchot issued a pamphlet, "Circular 21," which encouraged private landowners to make use of the foresters' technical skills and managerial advice. "The program was immediately popular," historian Harold K. Steen has noted. Within a year, there were more than 123 "applications for assistance from 35 states, involving 1.5 million acres." Vice Chancellor Wiggins's request for the agency's aid could not have been better timed.[23]

WORKING PLANS

After his visit to the university, Pinchot hired Biltmore forester Carl Schenck as a special agent to prepare a full-fledged management plan for Sewanee. By July 1899, Schenck and five of his Biltmore students had prepared an ambitious working draft, containing a complete survey of the Domain. It segregated the more than six thousand acres into compartments that identified ecological niches and geographic zones; proposed the construction of an extensive network of roads for logging and fire protection; advocated the building of fire towers and a fence to enclose the woodlands; argued for the hiring of a full-time, on-site forester to manage the lands; and laid out a timber-harvesting cycle that Schenck estimated would net the university upward of $2,000 per annum. Together, these propositions were essential to the successful introduction of forestry on the plateau.[24]

Wiggins demurred, if only because he had to steward the university's too-thin budget. He made plain his disagreements to Pinchot when he forwarded Schenck's proposal to Washington. "I objected to certain items of expense which seemed unnecessary and would consume almost the entire profit from the sale of the timber," the vice chancellor reported to the trustees, indicating that Pinchot shared his negative reactions. The chief forester "recognized the fact that the wire fence and fire watchers were calculated to provoke trespass rather than prevent it, that the building of roads would not facilitate the transportation of logs to such an extent as to justify the large appropriation, and that the inspector who would be stationed here by the Bureau of Forestry, without expense to the University, would be sufficient." Rebuffed, Schenck was also replaced; Pinchot assigned one of his Washington assistants, John Foley, to take charge of the Sewanee operations.[25]

Years later, Schenck would remember that his 1899 plan was "never executed, since the university was short of money. Forestry is no go with an owner short of money." But it was executed, if on a less expensive basis, following the same managerial means and achieving similarly profitable ends. Foley's report, "Conservative Lumbering at Sewanee, Tennessee" (1903), indicated that careful, regulated lumbering on the plateau and the



FROM CONSERVATIVE LUMBERING AT SEWANEE, TENNESSEE.

The U.S. Bureau of Forestry (later USDA Forest Service) mapped the University of the South's forest holdings in 1900 as part of its effort to provide a forest management plan. This map appeared in Bulletin 39, Conservative Lumbering at Sewanee, Tennessee.

coves (where most of the cutting had occurred) produced more than $2,000 in 1900–1901, slightly less the next year, and, he estimated, $1,500 in the coming years. "In a word, timber formerly valued at $3,000 will have been made to yield a profit of about $7,000." Forestry paid.[26]

Profitability was but one goal of the university's timber program. Another was a more sustained effort to manage the local population's activities. Foley gave voice to this when in his report he delineated which tree species could be harvested, when cutting could occur, and under what conditions. It appeared as well in his recommendation that the university, "besides making every effort to create a sentiment against forest fires"—it had been a long-standing practice among plateau farmers to burn the woods to clear the land—"should be vigilant in extinguishing them." And it framed his conviction that the university's "lax forest management" in the past had encouraged "excessive abuse." With "no thought for its welfare," the school and Sewanee residents had pillaged a once-magnificent hardwood forest. Those attitudes and actions would change under the forester's tutelage; rational land management would make for a more rational people.[27]

NEW SOUTH PROPHET

Forestry would also change habits in another respect: its instruction would transform university curricula, alter the character of the student body, and reinvigorate college life. Or so Wiggins professed in his address to the 1905 American Forest Congress. In it, he detailed the rise of forestry education in America, paying special attention to the significant influence that the Yale School of Forestry had had on its university. That forestry science "is in active touch with the demands of practical life and the opportunities for employment," he argued, "gives the students of Yale an assurance that side by side with their training in general culture and public spirit, they are adapting themselves to speedy usefulness in the complex organization of modern commercial life." Recognizing that not all educators agreed with

WOODROW BLETTEL, UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH.

The Domain as it looks today. The University of the South's campus and surrounding houses comprise about 2,500 acres of the total 10,000 acres of this mostly urban forest. Selective harvesting occurs on 60 acres a year in the predominantly oak/hickory forest.

him, that many still resisted the introduction of scientific study in any form into college classrooms, Wiggins nevertheless believed that curricular reform was inevitable. "The world [is] moving on. New constituencies and new demands [are] arising, new problems [are] being projected on the economic and political horizons, new questions [are] pressing for answer."[28]

Forestry, as an academic discipline, was emblematic of the coming transformation in American higher education. Because a forester is "above all a man with practical problems to handle…he needs the democratizing influence of university life," Wiggins asserted. But for the same reason American campuses needed to offer forestry courses; their presence in course catalogues, and the students they would attract, "will cause our universities to come forth from their cloistered seclusion into a closer touch with the activities of life."[29]

Wiggins's assertions placed him in league with other New South reformers, those of the postwar generation who wanted to shake off the dead hand of the Civil War and the Lost Cause and believed that only a modern economy—efficient, rational, and planned—could revive the impoverished region. Collectively, they also sought, Paul Gaston has observed, a "lexicon [that] bespoke harmonious reconciliation of sectional differences, racial peace, and a new economic and social order based on industry and scientific, diversified agriculture." From their search would emerge a more progressive South, a landscape of plenty for all, a people eager to embrace the future, not trapped in the past.[30]

Wiggins's unique contribution to this turn-of-the-century intellectual debate was his conviction that forestry was a key to a southern renaissance. It is no surprise, then, that he tried to launch a school of forestry at Sewanee, expecting it would demonstrate to the region how to rebuild its fortunes, environmental and economic.[31] Because funding was unavailable, the project never got off the ground. But Wiggins's ambition to upgrade the university's curriculum by binding it more closely to the contemporary progressive impulse, found expression in his expansion of the medical and law schools, revitalization of the on-site grammar school, and increased investment in undergraduate scientific studies.[32]

His appreciation of foresters and forestry also impelled Wiggins to embrace a political vision that was at odds with the South's historic disdain for the federal government, a disdain born of slavery, the sectional crisis, and its aftershocks—the Civil War and Reconstruction. As with some of his peers, he realized that the South would rise again only if it were a full, contributing partner in the Union, a point he emphasized in a 1905 article in *Forestry and Irrigation*. Writing about the critical need for a southern Appalachian forest reserve that would stretch from "West Virginia and Virginia through Tennessee and the Carolinas to Georgia and Alabama," he made the case that such a vast national forest would "safeguard the farming, commercial, and manufacturing interests of one of the most important sections of the United States." And only Washington would be able to buy the land and effectively regulate use of its riches, principally timber, water, and coal. The South did not have the capital, expertise, or will to create this much-needed reserve, a point he hammered home in his conclusion: southerners must "entrust the management of this magnificent domain to the wise, liberal,

comprehensive administration of the general government."[33]

That was a radical declaration. Few southerners with a memory of the war or its aftermath—and Wiggins, born in South Carolina, had grown up during those years—had ever made so bold. And surely few at the University of the South, that stronghold of Rebel sentiment, were so public in their affirmation of beneficent national governance.

Yet Wiggins's energetic leadership on campus and active promulgation of southern forestry was also in keeping with Sewanee tradition. Like the school's founder, Bishop Leonidas Polk, Wiggins, whose father was a minister and whose father-in-law was Bishop Charles Quintard, believed that the mountaintop campus must exemplify his beloved region's most important cultural values. Like his predecessors, Wiggins was convinced that this city on a hill should illuminate the darkness below. So it functioned in this generation, he advised his audience at the American Forest Congress, through its commitment to wise land management. In language that deftly fused Sewanee's religious heritage with its modernist aspirations, the vice chancellor declared that the university served as "a zealous missionary, preaching everywhere and at all times the gospel of forestry."[34] □

Author's note: This essay was written in memory of the late Stephen Puckette, long-time member of the faculty of the University of the South, and in honor of his wife, my cousin, Upshur Puckette; their love of the Domain has been contagious, and it was in their rambling home on Morgan's Steep in 1998 that I began to think about the impact of the idea of forestry on Sewanee. I am grateful for their support, for the help and guidance of Karen Kuers and her generous colleagues in the Department of Forestry and Geology, and for the invaluable aid of archivist Anne Armour.

NOTES

1. Arthur Ben Chitty, "Leases at Sewanee: Founders' Concept of the University Domain," *The Sewanee Alumni News*, August 15, 1953, 16.
2. Theodore Roosevelt, "The Forest in the Life of the Nation," *Proceedings of the American Forest Congress* (Washington, DC: H. M. Suter Publishing Co., 1905), 4–5; 10–11.
3. Ibid., 11.
4. Ibid.
5. James Wilson to Gifford Pinchot, February 1, 1905, Pinchot Papers.
6. B. Lawton Wiggins, "The Attitude of Educational Institutions toward Forestry," in *Proceedings of the American Forest Congress* (see note 2), 30–31.
7. Since its inception, the University of the South has also been known as Sewanee, and I will use the terms interchangeably.
8. John Foley, *Conservative Lumbering at Sewanee, Tennessee* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 8–10; Arthur Ben Chitty, "Sewanee Now and Then," Tennessee Historical Quarterly 34, no.4 (Winter 1979): 383–84.
9. Joseph H. Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: The Fighting Bishop* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), 117–24.
10. Ibid., 124; 138–39.
11. Ibid., 131, n. 22.
12. Ibid., 163–64; Edgar Legare Pennington, "The Battle at Sewanee," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 9, no.3 (1950): 218–19.
13. Parks, *Leonidas Polk*, C.S.A., 170, 381–86; Pennington, "The Battle at Sewanee," 230–31.
14. Charles Reagan Wilson, "Bishop Thomas Frank Gailor: Celebrant of Southern Tradition," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 38, no.3 (Fall 1979): 325–26.
15. William Alexander Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1941), 93–96.
16. Chitty, "Sewanee Then and Now," 383–84; Charles T. Quintard, Diary 1880; and B. Lawton Wiggins to S. McBee, August 23, 1898, quoted in Arthur Ben Chitty to Charles Edward Cheston, August 4, 1970, DuPont Library Archives, University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee (hereafter DLA).
17. George F. Fairbanks, *History of the University of the South* (Jacksonville, FL: H. & H. B. Drew Co., 1905), 262–63; B. Lawton Wiggins to George R. Fairbanks, July 7, 1905, DLA; Steverson Oden Moffat, "The Gospel of Forestry According to the University of the South," December 1986, 1, DLA; Foley, *Conservative Lumbering at Sewanee, Tennessee*, 7.
18. Evidently Fairbanks was himself one of those who despoiled the Domain: in 1905, Vice Chancellor Wiggins reprimanded his colleague for hiring "two negro men [who] were caught cutting trees just beyond the Infirmary. They stated that they were acting under your instructions. As you know, we are under contract with the Forest Service to cut only such trees as are marked by representatives of the Service, and we have been strict in punishing all offenders. Ordinarily these two men would have been arrested; but as they would have placed the responsibility on you, I wished to refer the matter to you, and request that whenever you need poles that you will let me know, so that the trees may be properly marked and so that negroes may not be led to believe that they can make depredations at will." As a member of the faculty, Fairbanks had a moral responsibility, on a number of levels, to uphold university policy.
19. T. A. Embrey to B. Lawton Wiggins, January 4, 1894, DLA, University of the South.
20. R. M. Dubose to B. Lawton Wiggins, August 30, 1895; September 28, 1896, DLA; Miller, *Gifford Pinchot*, 77–88, 107–12; Sewanee's struggle to regulate depredations through a new managerial and conservationist regime was in line with similar, contemporary efforts in the Adirondacks, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon; see Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservationism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). The university's successes were episodic. Between 1900 and 1915, grazing, fire, and timber thievery diminished considerably, only to resurface in the late teens and early twenties. This resurgence was checked again when, in 1923, George A. Garrett was selected to hold the new endowed chair in forestry and serve as university forester; to regain control of the Domain, he initiated a permit system for timber harvesting, used the campus water tower as a fire lookout, established forest patrols, and trained students to help battle fires. A new Franklin County ordinance "prohibiting free ranging of livestock and a reduction of the annual burn to less than one percent," when combined with the elimination of incendiarism, prompted Vice Chancellor Finney to argue in 1926 that "the University forested area…is in better and healthier condition than at any time during the last decade"; *The University of the South Forest: A Demonstration of Practical Applied Forestry for Student Instruction and Regional Use* (Sewanee: University of the South, Forestry Department, 1953), 1–2.
21. Report of the Vice Chancellor, 1897, 63, quoted in Moffat, "The Gospel of Forestry," 2, DLA.
22. B. Lawton Wiggins to S. McBee, August 23, 1898, quoted in Arthur Ben Chitty to Charles Edward Cheston, August 4, 1970, DLA; D. M. Suter to B. Lawton Wiggins, January 1, 1901, DLA: "Mr. Pinchot considers Sewanee a fine place…from a scientific standpoint, and said it would be an excellent place to practice forestry."
23. Proceedings of the Board of Trustees, July 28 to August 3, 1898, 64, DLA; Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 54–55.
24. Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism*

(Washington, DC: Island Press, 2001), 112–17; Proceedings of the Board of Trustees, University of the South, July 27 to August 3, 1899, 95–97, DLA; Carl A. Schenck to B. Lawton Wiggins, February 25, 1899; July 18, 1899; August 8, 1899; December 22, 1899; December 27, 1899; March 23, 1900, DLA.

25. Proceedings of the Board of Trustees, University of the South, July 27 to August 3, 1900, 91–92, DLA.
26. Carl A. Schenck, *Birth of Forestry in America* (Santa Cruz, CA: Forest History Society and the Appalachian Consortium, 1955), 81; Foley, Conservative Lumbering at Sewanee, Tennessee, 7–8.
27. Foley, *Conservative Lumbering at Sewanee, Tennessee*, 27–33.
28. Wiggins, "The Attitude of Educational Institutions Toward Forestry," 33, 36.
29. Ibid., 39.
30. Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 7–8, 68–79.
31. Gifford Pinchot to B. Lawton Wiggins, July 26, 1899, DLA.
32. Pinchot urged Wiggins not to develop a full-fledged forestry school, instead suggesting a series of courses at Sewanee; "in this way your work at Sewanee would be auxiliary to Schenck's [at Biltmore] and [Bernhard] Fernow's [at Cornell]." Wiggins revived the idea in 1903 when Percy Brown, of the Kirby Lumber Company, Houston, wrote suggesting that with the demise of the New York State College of Forestry at Cornell University, its director, Bernhard Fernow, might be available to head a new school at Sewanee. Brown knew from experience the benefit of well-trained foresters. Kirby Lumber had been one of the first companies to take advantage of Pinchot's *Circular 21* offer to provide private landowners with skilled technical aid; Steen, *U.S. Forest Service*, 54–55. Brown's enthusiasm for forestry was not backed by an offer to bankroll the new school, however, leading Wiggins to respond that "the chief trouble just now would be securing the necessary funds to inaugurate the movement. Without endowment, it is dangerous to undertake too much"; Wiggins to Percy Brown, July 24, 1900, DLA.
33. Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, "An Appalachian Forest Reserve and the South," *Forestry and Irrigation* (September 1905): 416, 421.
34. Biographical Sketch of Vice-Chancellor Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, DLA; Wiggins, "The Attitude of Educational Institutions Towards Forestry," 30.

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"This is a unique moment in time. This year, the Forest Service is a century old…. But this Centennial Congress is about more than just the Forest Service. What brings us together from so many different backgrounds is something we all have in common: our public spirit and our collective commitment to conservation. We sometimes have strong differences of opinion, but I see those differences as positive, partly because they reflect the same passionate commitment to conservation we all share. Every one of us here wants to do what's right for the land and for the people we serve.

This Centennial Congress is an opportunity for joint reflection on what that means. It's an opportunity to recognize our successes, to celebrate our collective commitment to conservation, and to look to the challenges ahead. At this historic moment, I see a real opportunity to renew a national dialogue on the conservation idea…. Please take that opportunity and use it well."

—Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, from his *Welcome Address*

Convened in January 2005, the U.S. Forest Service Centennial Congress was more than a birthday celebration for America's oldest federal land management agency. It was an occasion to reflect on its past as a starting point for discussing the agency's future. Delegates from industry, the environmental and academic communities, all sorts of user groups, and the agency's partners in government at every level gathered to discuss what that future may hold for the agency and what their own stake in it may be. The proceedings demonstrate that there is a wealth of opinion about what the Forest Service should do with the public's land and how it should do it—and even some question of whether the Forest Service should do it. They also make clear that the public's commitment to conservation which led to the agency's creation in 1905 is alive and well and will help guide the Forest Service as it embarks on its second century.