“ Our Anglo-Saxon Blood”:

How Belief in Anglo-Saxon Racial Supremacy Connected Men at the University of the South Architecturally and Ideologically to the Larger Nation from 1886-1912

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Introduction

In August 1890, the Board of Trustees for the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee met for their annual deliberations. When the Board left Sewanee several days later, they had accepted both the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor, the Rev. Telfair Hodgson, and the first long term architectural plan for the University since before the Civil War. The events were entirely related. A young trustee and architect named Silas McBee came to the meetings bearing a new plan for the university: a grand quadrangle built in the latest collegiate architectural style. This style, collegiate Gothic, was only four years old and existed entirely in the North. Silas McBee wanted to bring it South to his alma mater.

After McBee and his partner, A.M.Mc. Nixon, an architect from Atlanta, Georgia, presented their plan, a debate broke out over more than just what The University of the South should look like, but what vision the leaders of the small university should follow. A small group led by George R. Fairbanks from Florida saw the new plans as a betrayal of the founder's vision for a university with colleges for every discipline covering their land on the Cumberland Plateau. The rest saw the $20,000 and beautiful plan that Silas McBee had brought with him, and sided with the new plan.

Seeing the act as a betrayal of his own vision for the University, Vice-Chancelor Hodgson went to his office during the lunch break and drafted a letter of resignation, which he left for the Board when they returned for their afternoon session. To these men, architecture meant more than just appearances; it was a crucial part of the educational mission of the University of the South. As the-turn-of-the-century approached, a new way of viewing architecture made its way from Victorian England

stressing that architecture created the morals of a society, rather than the conventional view that architecture reflected the values of that society.

Architecture, then, was as much about the morals of the men designing and building churches and schools throughout the turn-of-the-century as it was about aesthetics. At Sewanee, architecture revealed a belief in Anglo-Saxon racial superiority rooted in antimodernism. This same impulse influenced how these men viewed the wider nation, and the South's role in the modern world, connecting them to larger national discussions about race in the national and international context.

Others have not seen the connection between Sewanee and the wider nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In *Sewanee Sesquicentennial History*, Samuel R. Williamson Jr., a former Vice Chancellor of the University, identified a martial spirit at Sewanee, but saw it as separate from the Lost Cause until 1910. Williamson thought it was simply Southern nationalism. He identified a measure of racial respect as well as charity through the Episcopal Church.[1] The racial respect Williamson observe, however, was more likely a result of the small number of blacks and the paternalism that the Sewanee leaders displayed towards African-Americans, rather than Sewanee actually being a bastion of racial good will in the South.

Charles Reagan Wilson regarded Sewanee's growth and development as "a peculiar mixture of British, Episcopal, and Southern elements."[2] He specifically cited that Bishop Charles Quintard avoided the North. The letters, writings, and decisions

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[1] Samuel R. Williamson et al., *Sewanee Sesquicentennial History: The Making of the University of the South*, Sewanee Sesquicentennial History Project (Sewanee, Tenn: The University of the South, 2008), 101.

[2] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), 147, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46nk5g.

made surrounding The University of the South, however, reflect interactions with Northern antimodernists even while memorializing Confederate veterans within the growing Lost Cause sentiment in the South. While the former Confederates in the faculty and administration undoubtedly influenced Sewanee, when the next generation of leaders --who were the first generation that graduated from Sewanee-- began to imprint their visions and views upon the University, Sewanee, much like the wider New South, pivoted northward seeking to modernize the University while trying to stay distinctly "southern."

Both of these works regarded Sewanee through a narrower lens than the school actually operated in. Rather than focusing simply on the South, the leaders of Sewanee participated in national conversations not only about the South, but about Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and antimodernism.

Historian T.J. Jackson Lears' book, *No Place of Grace*, redefined antimodernism at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries as more than a "late blooming flower of 'the Romantic movement,'" or a "cranks' crusade."[3] Rather, the antimodernist impulse was a serious longing for an intense experience by upper class Americans, who felt betrayed by the false promises of modernity. Lears defined antimodernist Americans at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century as, "thoughtful Americans who, by the 1880s, had begun to question the very basis of industrial capitalist society: not merely the unjust distribution of wealth and power but the modern ethic of instrumental rationality that desanctified the outer world of nature

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[3] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, University of Chicago Press ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), xi.

and the inner world of the self, reducing both to manipulable objects."[4] The antimodernists did not seek to replace or halt modernism and industrialization; instead, they sought to enhance their world by rediscovering those parts of human experience that they believed had been lost in a rational, industrial society. Several of these men found these experiences in a fantasized Anglo-Saxon past, which they emphasized as an ideal time when individual achievement and religious fulfillment were emphatically joined. The unintentional result of trying to rediscover intense experience in Anglo-Saxon heritage was the unification and solidification of upper class white Anglo-Saxon Protestant character and values in the modern world by emphasizing Anglo-Saxon heritage as American heritage.[5] While, Lears' work principally focused on antimoderism in the northeast, Sewanee was a southern school where the men and architecture reflected this antimodern impulse. A look into collegiate Gothic architecture and antimodernism at Sewanee can further complicate and expand upon the understanding of the antimodernist impulse and its role in the New South.

The New South was the period following Reconstruction until the First World War in which southerners conscientiously sought to modernize the South and reconnect it with the larger nation. In his landmark work, *Origins of the New South*, C. Vann Woodward redefined the Post-Reconstruction South, and he suggestively placed colleges and universities in the same chapter as churches and Southern architecture. He observed that Southern universities and colleges were too poor and too numerous.[6] Architecturally, he noted that not since the frontier generation had the South been "so

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[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 301.
[6] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, A History of the South, v. 9 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 438.

completely isolated from the main streams of Western culture," and that the South's "architectural taste reached its lowest ebb." [7] While Woodward cited collegiate architecture as the exception, he did not explaining why. Aside from praise of William P. Trent and *The Sewanee Review*, which he named, "the first journal with reasonably high critical standards" in the South, Woodward excludes both colleges such as Sewanee and the Episcopal Church from his survey of the New South.[8]

Woodward's work, while comprehensive, did not cover all aspects of the New South. Edward L. Ayers' *The Promise of the New South* sought to fill the gaps in Woodward's work. Ayers noted the hostility of the South towards academics, citing Trent's departure from Sewanee in 1900 after publishing a biography of William Gilmore Simms that was critical of the ante-bellum South.[9] In Ayers view, the Southern intellectual was born in the South, schooled in the North, and returned back to the South to teach. Ayers saw Southern colleges as torn between the "weight of the past and pull of the present."[10] Southern colleges were areas of conflict between the southern upper-class establishment and northern ideas.

The life of Silas McBee framed this desire to modernize as more than just a mimicry of northern styles, but an ideological twist of northern racial sentiments towards immigrants in the North to help answer the problems of the South. The cornerstone of this ideology was advocacy of Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy. This overarching belief came across in the architecture and the ideas of men in Sewanee and

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[7] Ibid., 454.
[8] Ibid., 498.
[9] Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 424.
[10] Ibid., 426.

the larger nation. From Silas McBee and Benjamin Lawton Wiggins to Theodore Roosevelt and Ralph Adams Cram, the idea that Anglo-Saxon men were inherently superior brought these men to a common understanding and friendship that resulted in Sewanee's participation in national dialogue on race.

The architecture of Sewanee, as well as the life and work of McBee from 1886-1912, reflect a period in the life of the University distinct from the period of the re-founding of the University beginning in 1866, and the period following the sudden death of Benjamin Lawton Wiggins. Dramatic changes in the financial situation and structure of the university from 1907 through 1909 altered the focus of the University inwards. From 1886-1909, however, the University of the South participated in debates about race, the South, and the Nation on a national level, and McBee was a crucial part connecting men in Sewanee with leaders and thinkers outside of the South until the collapse of the Bank of Winchester in 1907 began to change the focus of the University's leaders from national and international issues to a regional focus on fundraising.

The life of Silas McBee serves as a framework to understand this important period in the history of the University of the South as a reflection of changes in the relations between the North and South in the emerging New South. McBee's time in Sewanee, his role as an architect and architectural critic, and his role as editor of *The Churchman*, a national Episcopal periodical published in New York City, are distinct, yet interconnected, aspects of his life and the wider role of Sewanee men in North-South relations. At a time when Southern colleges were torn between the "weight of the past and pull of the present," McBee, Wiggins, and others at Sewanee were determined to

carve a place for The University of the South in the modern nation.[11] While this venture was neither lasting nor wholly successful, it left its mark on the institution in more ways than just the buildings this period inspired.

This paper argues that McBee's place in both the University's history and the history of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries needs more attention. His impact on the architecture of not only Sewanee, but the nation, and his role as an editor gave him mediums to advocate antimodern Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy and converse with other men of similar beliefs. Belief in Anglo-Saxon racial superiority motivated McBee to advocate for the University and Episcopal churches to adopt a later phase of Gothic revival architecture that took its inspiration from English Gothic buildings. As McBee moved from being an architectural critic to a periodical editor, the same belief in Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy followed him to the press, where he could more clearly articulate his ideas, and the ideas of his friends, colleagues, and correspondents to Episcopalians across the nation. McBee provided a vital link between the nation and the University of the South that helped the ideas from both to interact and influence each other.

Focusing on McBee as a link between men such as Theodore Roosevelt, Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, and Ralph Adams Cram reveals a dialogue that shaped the appearance and ideas of The University of the South at a crucial period in the history of the University, the South, and the Nation. From the National Cathedral to Roosevelt's speeches to the South, this southern antimodern from Lincolton, North Carolina connected a belief in Anglo-Saxon racial superiority to architecture, imperialism, and

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[11] Ibid.

the race question in ways that bring T.J. Jackson Lears' description of northeastern antimodernism into dialogue with C. Vann Woodward and Edward L. Ayers depictions of the New South. Neither northern antimodernism nor the New South were as isolated as they may have appeared.

This story about McBee and Anglo-Saxon racial superiority as a link between the University of the South and the larger nation began at his alma mater, a school whose history almost ended with the Civil War.

McBee in Sewanee

In 1857, a group of Southern Episcopal bishops led by the Rt. Rev. Leonidas Polk, the first Bishop of Louisiana, founded The University of the South, whose governing body, the Board of Trustees, met for the first time on July 4th of that year. After selecting Sewanee, Tennessee as the site of the new university, these men set out to create an Episcopal university in the South to rival Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Civil War broke out shortly after, however, and by the War's end not only were all of Sewanee's buildings destroyed, but the entire endowment was lost, and many of the original founders, including Bishop Polk, were dead.

In 1866, Bishop Charles Todd Quintard, the second Bishop of Tennessee, and George R. Fairbanks, a former Confederate major and member of the original Board of Trustees, led the efforts to re-found the University, which slowly grew, enrolling its first class in 1868. A decade after the re-founding, Silas McBee from Lincolnton, North Carolina graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences.[12]

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[12] Williamson et al., *Sewanee Sesquicentennial History*.

McBee did not stay absent from Sewanee for long. He was elected as a lay trustee from North Carolina in 1878 and remained a trustee for twenty-seven of the following twenty-eight years. (The only year he stayed off the board was 1887, his first year as the first Commissioner of the Endowment for the University of the South, a position he held until 1893.)[13]

From 1883 until 1887, McBee was the principal of the Fairmont School for Girls in Monteagle, Tennessee, whose chief patron was McBee's mentor and closest friend, The Rev. William Porcher DuBose. DuBose, who arrived in Sewanee in 1871, was the schools' first chaplain, founder of both the School of Theology and the Order of the Gownsmen, the university's academic honor society, and he became one of the most prominent Episcopalian theologians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From McBee's time as a student at Sewanee, the two men began fostering a friendship that DuBose's son, William Haskell DuBose, described as the most significant in both men's lives.[14] McBee once described DuBose as "A Southerner of Southerners, and an American through and through."[15] When DuBose appointed McBee president of The Fairmont School for Girls, McBee served as the architect, chief carpenter, and stonemason for the Chapel of the Holy Comforter at the school.

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[13] Allen H. Stokes, Jr., "McBee, Silas," *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), NCPedia.

[14] William Haskell DuBose, "Address Delivered by the Rev. Wiliam Haskell DuBose, D.D. At the Memorial Service for the Late Silas McBee, D.C.L At the Chapel of the Holy Comforter, Monteagle, Tennessee," October 5, 1924, Silas McBee Papers, Sewanee: The University of the South.

[15] Silas McBee, "William Porcher DuBose : Born April 11, 1836, Died August 18, 1918 : Address at the Unveiling of a Monument to His Memory at Sewanee," June 14, 1920, 12, Silas McBee Papers, Sewanee: The University of the South.

The construction of the Chapel of the Holy Comforter was a turning point in McBee's life. At the memorial service for McBee in 1924, the Rev. William Haskell DuBose, William Porcher DuBose's son and a professor in the School of Theology, remarked to the crowd that McBee not only taught himself architecture, but also carpentry and masonry, so that he could build the Chapel with his own hands. Additionally, McBee had every teacher and student work with their hands on the Chapel so that, in his own words, "every teacher and every pupil who had worked with me had contributed in some way to the chapel."[16] This fact was the clearest indication that McBee was an antimodernist: the focus on the handcrafted side of church architecture.

At some point after this, McBee formed the architecture firm, Nixon & McBee, with A.M.Mc. Nixon, which was based in Atlanta, Georgia. The firm's only building of note before 1890 was McBee's home church, St. Luke's Church, in Lincolnton, North Carolina. At the same time that McBee designed his first church, the Rev. Telfair Hodgson, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South, commissioned William Halsey Wood, an architect from New York City, to design a chapel and chapter house for the University. In 1886, partially funded from his personal fortune, Hodgson oversaw the building of Convocation Hall and Breslin Tower as the chapter house for his chapel. However, Hodgson had failed to gain approval from the Board of Trustees, who proved significantly less attached to Hodgson's vision for the university than Hodgson imagined. Neither Hodgson nor McBee foresaw that four years later a dispute over

[16] DuBose, "Address Delivered by the Rev. Wiliam Haskell DuBose, D.D. At the Memorial Service for the Late Silas McBee, D.C.L At the Chapel of the Holy Comforter, Monteagle, Tennessee."

architecture would lead to Hodgson's resignation and redefine the architectural tradition of the University.

The dispute occurred at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees in August 1890. One of the issues at hand was whether the University should finish the plans drawn out by Wood now that money was potentially available to build the chapel. Instead, McBee and Nixon arrived with a new plan for a quadrangle. McBee's motive for proposing his own plan in opposition to Hodgson's was twofold. First, McBee's lifelong interest in architecture gave him strong opinions on how the University should look. Second, and more importantly, in 1900 McBee wrote then Vice Chancellor Wiggins that his plan was partially a response to Mr. Shook, who explained, "in a university in the woods like Sewanee, you must establish a foundation of permanent buildings before you can expect men of large means to invest more in endowments."[17] Unlike Hodgson's designs to construct a chapel first, McBee's plan was to construct a new academic building, named Walsh Memorial Hall after the daughter of the principal investor, Col. V.D. Walsh of East Felicia Parish, Louisiana, before building a chapel befitting an ecclesiastical institution. Additionally, McBee had already raised roughly $25,000 for the University endowment, of which Col. Walsh had earmarked $20,000 for a new academic building.[18]

A debate ensued for the rest of that August morning. On one hand, McBee had a plan and the funds to begin it; on the other, Hodgson and a few of the older trustees

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[17] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to B.L. Wiggins," February 5, 1900, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.

[18] George R. Fairbanks, *History of the University of the South, at Sewanee, Tennessee: From Its Founding by the Southern Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Episcopal Church in 1857 to the Year 1905* (Jacksonville, Fla: H. & W.B. Drew Co, 1905), 279.

were completely opposed to any new plan. Quickly a debate over the appearance of the University was construed as a debate over the spirit of the University. George Rainsford Fairbanks and The Rev. Atkinson led the opposition to the McBee-Nixon Plan. Fairbanks was the only member of the Board of Trustees who had participated in the original founding of the University of the South in 1857, and along with Quintard had led the efforts to re-found the University after the Civil War. In his mind, McBee's vision for the University was contrary to the "grand future" envisioned by the founders to create not a town on a mountain, but a city of refinement in the woods of the plateau.[19]

Figure 1 Nixon-McBee Quadrangle Plan-http://hcap.artstor.org/cgi-bin/library?a=d&d=i641.6

Even fifteen years later, when Fairbanks published his *History of the University of the South*, Fairbanks derided the "Oxford quadrangle" as "the importation of an exotic idea."[20] What Fairbanks failed to realize was that by 1890 the Oxford quadrangle

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[19] Ibid., 252–61.
[20] Ibid., 284.

was not an exotic import, but a central feature of a new form of Gothic revival architecture, collegiate Gothic.

Glenn Patton, an art historian, saw collegiate Gothic as a way for American colleges and universities to express a commonality with and an academic heritage from Oxford and Cambridge (matching contemporary fascination with Britain), as well as a way for universities to flexibly build "cities of learning" that could grow as the college or university grew.[21] He did not consider, however, the racial messages that such an emphatic focus on English heritage implies.

Gothic architecture was one of the many "collective symbols-- often with Anglophile overtones-- for an emerging national bourgeoisie."[22] At this time, antimodernists saw architecture as a source of morality, rather than a reflection of a society's ideals. Seeing Gothic architecture as the best embodiment of the Christian faith, architects of schools and churches quickly adopted Gothic architecture even before the development of collegiate Gothic in the 1880s. Collegiate Gothic was an American architectural style born from an antimodernist desire to educate and inspire the students living and studying at these colleges by promoting their view of Anglo-Saxon morality through architecture.

Collegiate Gothic drew its inspiration from Oxford and Cambridge Universities, but did not truly mimic the looks of either university town. Collegiate Gothic architecture aesthetically differed from earlier Gothic revivals due to its reduction of the Gothic ornamentation found in earlier subgenres. It focused on long, horizontal walls,

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[21] Glenn Patton, "American Collegiate Gothic: A Phase of University Architectural Development," *The Journal of Higher Education* 38, no. 1 (January 1967): 4,7, doi:10.2307/1980176.
[22] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 301.

with regular windows that are tall, narrow, and have pointed arches. Likewise, doors were built under recessed pointed arches. Flat buttresses decorated the exteriors, and battlements and crenulations were the principle decoration for rooflines. Most roofs were steep gabled, but lacked both the height and the flourishes of earlier Gothic revival styles. Finally, and importantly, rough-cut stones were used to construct the exteriors of collegiate Gothic buildings.[23] Rough-cut stones were meant to bear the marks of the individual stonemasons who carved them.

This desire to see the marks of the stonemasons was most influentially advocated by John Ruskin, a mid-Victorian British cultural and art critic. Martha Carey Thomas, the president of Bryn Mawr College, who helped spawn the birth of the collegiate Gothic style at her college, described herself as a "Ruskinian."[24] Collegiate Gothic embraced Ruskin's views that Gothic architecture is the most fully Christian architecture, and that architecture teaches morality. Additionally, Ruskin saw earlier Gothic as more appealing (though writing more about Venice than London), because the stones bore the marks of the nameless, individual stonemasons.[25] The desire to reflect the nameless artisan whose work glorified God instead of himself was the motivation behind collegiate Gothic's use of rough-cut stones. Following the vision of architecture instructing morals, architects designing in collegiate Gothic sought to evoke early English gothic and the morals of the Anglo-Saxon race.

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[23] Department of History, "Characteristics of the Collegiate Gothic Style," .edu, *Loyola University Maryland*, accessed November 10, 2015, http://www.loyola.edu/academic/history/architecture/glossary.
[24] Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (Univ of Massachusetts Press, 1985), 133.
[25] John Ruskin and Joseph William Zaehnsdorf, *The Stones of Venice* (London: Smith, Elder, and co, 1851). See especially Volume II.

Collegiate Gothic cannot be dismissed as merely imitations of Oxford and Cambridge because it is not. Both of those schools contain different architecture from all periods of their development, and the stones tend to be polished smooth. While collegiate Gothic took its cues from these schools, collegiate Gothic sought to echo a rougher and older medieval world than either Oxford or Cambridge. Unlike earlier Gothic revivals, which took influences from the Ottoman and Byzantine Empires, as well as many varied European Gothic traditions, collegiate Gothic was an attempt to take the models of Oxford and Cambridge to an even earlier form of English Gothic architecture. Johanna Seasonwein stated in *The Atlantic* that Victorian Gothic was "something Islamic, something Byzantine;" collegiate Gothic, on the other hand, was, "just as much saying who was accepted in this atmosphere [of the college] as who was not."[26] Specifically, these colleges were the domains of mostly white male students. Ironically, Bryn Mawr College, the birthplace of collegiate Gothic, was all female. Historian Helen Horowitz saw the Gothic impulse at Bryn Mawr as an attempt to un-sex the scholarship of the all-female college, but the implication that architecture can define the school's message quickly found its way to male institutions.[27]

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[26] Johanna Seasonwein, qtd. in Robinson Meyer, "How Gothic Architecture Took Over the American College Campus," *The Atlantic*, September 11, 2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/09/how-gothic-architecture-took-over-the-american-college-campus/279287/.

[27] Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 133.

Figure 2 Radnor Hall Radnor Hall at Bryn Mawr College
http://i.huffpost.com/gen/1028646/images/o-BRYN-MAWR-HELL-WEEK-facebook.jpg

And what Sewanee would look like mattered to the men making those decisions. The best evidence of this is that Vice-Chancellor Hodgson resigned his position the same day that the trustees voted in favor of the Nixon-McBee plan. His resignation was sudden, coming through a letter he left for the board when they returned for their afternoon session, and reflected his sense of frustration and betrayal that the board had voted against his own vision for the University and failed to recognize how much of his own personal fortune he had spent building Hodgson Library and Convocation Hall. Samuel Williamson saw the moment that Fairbanks and Hodgson were voted down as the signal that leadership had transitioned from the re-founders to the first generation of graduates, who were part of the emerging New South.[28]

[28] Williamson et al., *Sewanee Sesquicentennial History*, 60.

Southern colleges, like Sewanee, were torn between the "weight of the past and pull of the present."[29] The architectural debate underscored this. The Board of Trustees was deaf to arguments about the founder's vision, and instead listened to McBee's proposal to build a modern university following the latest architectural trends. When McBee drew his plans in 1890, the collegiate Gothic style was only four years old and practically non-existent anywhere outside of Bryn Mawr, but there is no question that his plans were in the collegiate Gothic style. The two largest clues were the battlements and steep-gabled roof of Walsh Memorial Hall. Such quick adoption of the style by a small firm in Atlanta well before any other institution in the South, and almost any in the country, showed a consciousness of modern academic architectural trends (possibly from McBee's involvement with the Institute of American Architects) even before architectural criticism recognized the lasting nature of collegiate Gothic. This consciousness of modern styles was an aspect of the New South as Southerners sought ways to regain authority from the North. One of the ways many Southerners sought to achieve this was by taking Northern ideas, such as football, and making them fit Southern beliefs, or as historian Edward L, Ayers wrote, "as in so much else, modern innovations did not so much dilute Southern identity as give it new, sharper, focus."[30]

It is no surprise that this period saw the birth and rapid popularity of Sewanee's football program. Like collegiate Gothic architecture, many saw football as "the perfect antidote to over-civilized, effete, and lazy college life."[31] Football expressed that martial Anglo-Saxon ideal that Lears found central to antimodernism, just as collegiate Gothic

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[29] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 426.
[30] Ibid., 315.
[31] Ibid., 314.

architecture emphasized the hard labor and skill of the craftsmen building it. Many years later, McBee reflected on the martial nature of Sewanee as a "battle" on the fields of sport and philosophy, which created, "a noble line of heroes in character and circumstance" for Sewanee men to revere.[32] As shown by Lears, these martial Anglo-Saxon ideals were ideas born in the Northeast, and the import of them to the University of the South was part of a larger, national dialogue on race that McBee and others would enter more vocally in the years to come.

Nevertheless, there was a gap between where McBee and others wanted to take Sewanee and where Sewanee was. *The Photographic Journal of America* did a brief piece on Sewanee in 1894 that highlighted how the University appeared to a writer from New York City. It read:

> Sewanee is a quaint and curious village with an individuality all its own, where is located the famous University of the South. You will doubtless be surprised, however, if fortune should ever lead you there, because you will find no great group of structures there as at Princeton and Cornell, or at Harvard, or at Yale. Instead, you will discover a certain atmosphere (or feeling, as we say in art), which you may not find revealed at any of the other college towns. The populace--the major portion- or (to speak with less military sternness) the spiritual portion thereof- -is made up of genial scholars and sympathetic co-operative clergymen and cap and gowned students (all kept in one spirit by patient and tolerant proctors), who on first acquaintance make you think that you are breathing the ecclesiastic air and elevating ozone of Oxford or Cambridge. Moreover you feel as you do after being wound up outside the lofty wall of the convent at Mt. Sinai by the windlass-power of the Arab serfs, [...] You look for grand structures endowed by defunct millionaires (the head of all such places), and gaze about for the long lines of dormitories where "the boys" wriggle through the tadpole period but you don't find them; they are not "present".[33]

[32] McBee, "William Porcher DuBose : Born April 11, 1836, Died August 18, 1918 : Address at the Unveiling of a Monument to His Memory at Sewanee."
[33] Wilson, ed., *The Photographic Journal of America* ... (Benerman & Wilson, 1894), 534.

This was the Sewanee that Wiggins began to lead in 1893 when he was elected to replace Thomas Frank Gailor as Vice Chancellor, after Thomas Frank Gailor was elected as the Bishop Coadjutor of Tennessee to succeed Bishop Quintard.

Wiggins was the first alumnus elected as vice-chancellor. He graduated from the University in 1880, took a masters in Greek in 1882, and after two years at The Johns Hopkins University, he returned to Sewanee as Professor of Greek.[34] In 1888, another Johns Hopkin's educated professor, William P. Trent, came to Sewanee as a professor of English. Both men fit Edward L. Ayers' description of the Southern intellectual: born in the South, schooled in the North, primarily at Johns Hopkins, and returned back to the South to teach.[35] Both Trent and Wiggins sought to increase Sewanee's national recognition. One way they tried to broaden Sewanee's influence was the creation of *The Sewanee Review* in 1892 with Trent as Editor and Wiggins as the financial backer. In a ten-year retrospective, John Bell Henneman, the editor of the journal, quoted Trent saying, "'the Review owes as much to Wiggins as it does to me or anyone else. […] Of course neither he nor myself were thinking primarily of anything but the good of the University […]'".[36] Historian C. Vann Woodward considered the *Sewanee Review* as "the first journal with reasonably high critical standards," anywhere in the South.[37] Unsurprisingly, The Johns Hopkins University Press published *The Sewanee Review*. *The Review* would become an important medium for McBee, DuBose, Wiggins and

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[34] Silas McBee, ed., *The Churchman* (Churchman Company, 1909), 917.
[35] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 426.
[36] Trent, William P. qtd. in. John Bell Henneman, "Ten Years of the Sewanee Review," *The Sewanee Review* 10, no. 4 (October 1902): 477.
[37] Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, 498.

others to express their ideas beyond the South over the first two decades of the journal's existence.

Meanwhile, in 1893, McBee and DuBose traveled to England and continental Europe to study cathedral architecture, a trip which deepened McBee's belief in the purpose of Gothic architecture, and led directly to the next period in his career, that of architectural critic and lecturer.[38]

McBee the Architectural Critic

McBee became a prominent voice concerning Episcopal church architecture when, in March 1895, Duff Green Maynard began asking Episcopal bishops and priests whether McBee should deliver a lecture series on church architecture that he had written after his tour of Europe with DuBose. Maynard lived in New York City, and at some point before 1899 had become the general agent of St. John's Guild, a formerly Episcopal service guild that constructed floating hospitals for the city.[39] Maynard was already familiar with the lectures and considered McBee "an exceedingly graceful and interesting speaker."[40] The recommendations Maynard solicited praised McBee even more highly.

The Rev. George W.F. Price wrote to Maynard expressing how McBee's "manual skill and dexterity as a carver in wood and stone," coupled with his background as an architect, enhanced his authority as an architectural theoretician, adding that McBee

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[38] John W. Wood, "Dr. Silas McBee, Former Editor of The Churchman, Dies in His 71st Year," *The Churchman*, September 13, 1924, Silas McBee Papers, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[39] Silas McBee, ed., *The Churchman* (George S. Mallory, 1899), 702.
[40] Duff Green Maynard, "D.G. Maynard to Rt. Rev. Joseph Blount Cheshire," March 22, 1895, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

had “an agreeable presence, a graceful manner, and an attractive literary style.” Price’s letter also introduced the first of many references to McBee’s lectures as “missionary.” [41] The Rt. Rev. Ellison Capers, who would become the Chancellor of The University of the South in 1904, the Rt. Rev. Davis Sessums, Bishop of Louisiana, and DuBose wrote letters endorsing McBee just as highly. When Grace Church in New York City asked the Rt. Rev. T.U. Dudley about McBee, Dudley cited McBee’s plans and personal supervision of the “much admired” Walsh Memorial Hall.[42] McBee’s hands-on experience as a carpenter and stonemason were crucial criteria for his expertise as an architectural theoretician.

The lectures made a direct impact on the direction of ecclesiastical architecture. The first talk was given in April in New York City, and at least two other talks were given later in 1895 in Washington, D.C. and an unidentified city. The lectures influenced both the National Cathedral being planned in Washington, D.C. and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, which was already under construction in New York City. On April 26, Alfred Harding, a priest in D.C., wrote his “candid opinions of the lecture” to Maynard. In his opinion, Mr. McBee had found “sermons in stone, unsuspected by the majority of us I am sure.”[43] But Harding didn’t stop there. He continued:

> They are the outpourings of the settled convictions of a gifted and more than ordinarily cultivated mind, full of enthusiasm for truths in art, and full of the belief that architecture has a mission to perform in the uplifting of humanity, and that it’s [sic] last word is not yet spoken, but, on the contrary, there are grand possibilities and opportunities for it in the Western World. Mr. Mc.Bee [sic] is leading a crusade.

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[41] George W.F. Price, “Rev. George W.F. Price to D.G. Maynard,” March 22, 1895, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[42] Thomas Underwood Dudley, “T.U. Dudley to Grace Church New York City,” March 22, 1895, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[43] Alfred Harding, “Alfred Harding to D.G. Maynard,” April 26, 1895, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

> May his efforts be successful. [… and I] would even dream that here in Washington, in our cathedral, that is to be, some of his visions may be realized.[44]

McBee clearly articulated his belief that architecture instructs morals, and Rev. Harding's description of McBee's lectures as part of a crusade reinforced the view that ecclesiastical architecture was a spiritual mission, while also describing this mission as war. In 1909, Harding succeeded the Rt. Rev. Henry Yates Satterlee as Bishop of Washington, D.C. and Dean of the National Cathedral. Before this, in 1898, Bishop Satterlee had invited McBee to speak before The Churchman's League in Washington because their ideas about architecture "are in agreement" although members of the Cathedral's board preferred other styles at the moment.[45]

Sophia A.M. wrote to Maynard about the wider impact of McBee's lectures in New York City and Washington, D.C. She wrote, "The criticisms of the plans for the proposed cathedrals in Washington and New York […] before influential and sympathetic audiences, has awakened public attention to marked incongruities in both designs."[46] Calling McBee "bold" for attacking plans that were, "irrevocably adopted," she noted, "Mr. McBee is one of the rare persons who has the courage of their convictions. […] [H]e feels that Church architecture should be essentially Christian. […] which inclines many of us to feel that the gothic is the only style permissible for the new cathedrals."[47] The initial design was chosen in 1891, but McBee's lecture began a shift in public opinion that led to a complete redesign of the cathedral. Even more, Bishop

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Henry Yates Satterlee, "H.Y. Satterlee to Silas McBee," November 16, 1898, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[46] Sophia A.M., "Sophia A.M. to D.G. Maynard," 1895, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[47] Ibid.

Henry Codman Potter, the Bishop of New York, was an early and vocal critic of Heins and LaFarge, the original architects for St. John the Divine, as well as Silas McBee's most frequent correspondent until his death in 1908.[48]

As it turned out, the plans for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine were not irrevocably adopted. In 1907, the architect, George Heins, passed away, his "eclectic design" featuring a mix of gothic, Byzantine, and Romanesque elements was abandoned. In 1911 after finishing only the first section of Heins' plan, the Cathedral's trustees hired Ralph Adams Cram to replace LaFarge and redesign the cathedral along "English precedents."[49] Cram's intent was to design a cathedral from the ideas of architects who "recognize the Gothic style as representing in principle and form the best possible expression of Christianity by the Anglo-Saxon people."[50] Interestingly, Cram, as well as William Halsey Woods, had been rejected by the trustees in the initial competition, but by 1911, opinions for ecclesiastical architects strongly favored the English Gothic.[51]

In the *Architectural Review*, Montgomery Schuyler noted that Gothic revival had once again become permissible to talk about, thanks to the Boston architecture firm Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson's 1902 plans for a Gothic expansion of The United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.[52] Sewanee's Board of Trustees selected

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[48] "Chapter Two Building for the Spirit: The Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Riverside Church," in *Morningside Heghts: A History of Its Architecture and Development*, Columbia History of Urban Life (New York, N.Y: Columbia University Press, 1998), 46, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/dolk07850.8.
[49] Ibid., 57.
[50] "Cram Will Build Gothic Cathedral," *The New York Times*, June 21, 1911, 1, New York Times, http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9A06E4D81431E233A25751C2A9609C946096D6CF.
[51] "Chapter Two Building for the Spirit: The Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Riverside Church," 43, 59.
[52] Schuyler, "The Work of Barney and Chapman," 209.

Ralph Adams Cram to design All Saints' Chapel as part of the Nixon-McBee Quadrangle Plan on October 18, 1904.[53]

Ralph Adams Cram and Silas McBee maintained a professional relationship from as early as 1902, when McBee hired Cram's firm to partner with him as architects to design and build a new chancel for All Saints' Church in Great Neck, New York, where McBee was a parishioner.[54]

Cram was one of the most prolific proponents of Gothic revival, and one of the key antimodernists identified by Lears.[55] Cram was a religious doubter until a trip to Europe in 1886, after which he became an ardent High Church Anglican, or Anglo-Catholic, because despite his conversion experience in a Catholic church in Rome, Roman Catholicism was the "church of the immigrant."[56] Through his architecture and his art and cultural criticism, Cram advocated for Gothic architecture for churches and schools to teach Anglican Christian morality. Lears summarized Cram's ideology as a mix of "aestheticism, Ruskinian moralism, and Platonic idealism with Anglo-Catholic theology." Cram saw Gothic architecture as a protest against architects advocating an American national architecture style, but also as only appropriate for morally charged institutions such as churches and traditional schools.[57]

In 1907, Cram wrote in his book, *The Gothic Quest*, that "architecture is a language, not a sequence of fads, and that style is nonsense unless it develops from

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[53] University of the South, ed., *Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the University of the South*, vol. 1889–92, Bulletin of the University of the South (Sewanee: The University of the South, 1892), 20.
[54] *American Architect and Architecture* (J. R. Osgood & Company, 1902), 32.
[55] Lears, *No Place of Grace,* 203–15.
[56] Ibid., 204.
[57] Ibid., 205–6.

historical and racial associations."[58] This reflects a similar sentiment that Cram earlier expressed in his review of the work of Cope & Sewardson at Bryn Mawr College, which celebrated the Anglo-Saxon origins of the style. For Cram, Cope & Stewardson's buildings at Bryn Mawr College and Princeton University represented the "subtle obsession of the ivied Old World, the call of inextinguishable race-memory enters in and blots out reason & analysis."[59] Cram expressed a belief that the superiority and "poetry" of English-inspired collegiate Gothic came not only from its Christian origins, but also came from the "ethnic continuity" of Oxford and Cambridge's scholastic architecture. Cram viewed collegiate Gothic as the inheritance of the Anglo-Saxon race, and expressly contrasted it with Padua, Paris, and Wittenberg. In fact, Cram claimed that Cope & Stewardson's earlier design of dormitories at the University of Pennsylvania failed because it was "Germanized."[60] For Cram, only English Gothic could reflect the racial superiority of Anglo-Saxons, and by extension Americans, because American heroism came from British roots, and Cram desired that America have at least one more "manifestation of national racial past," specifically the British past.[61] Cram even ended with one last lamentation that Cope and Stewardson had tragically passed away before constructing a church, though he would continue their Gothic legacy designing the chapel at Princeton along English Gothic ideals.

The Architectural Record published Cram's article in their November issue, just one month after Sewanee's Executive Committee approved Cram's plans for All Saints'

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[58] Ralph Adams Cram, *The Gothic Quest* (Baker and Taylor Company, 1907), 157.
[59] Ralph Adams Cram, "The Work of Messers. Cope & Stewardson," *The Architectural Record* XVI, no. 5 (November 1904): 411.
[60] Ibid., 413,15–6.
[61] Ibid., 427.

Chapel. These ideas of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and racial architecture were most likely influencing Cram as he sketched out the collegiate Gothic design of All Saints'. In this article, Cram praised the quad and the Gothic arch as essential to experience, claiming that anyone who does not become inspired by walking under a Gothic arch into a quad is deficient. Cram found in the collegiate Gothic of Bryn Mawr and Princeton, where he would later preside as chief architect, ideals of architecture that were "sufficiently British, sufficiently American, a perfect model of sound design and impeccable theories."[62] He likely found a similar attraction of Anglophilism in the Nixon-McBee plan, which featured a central quadrangle separating academics from the broader world entered into underneath arches.

Cram's views were not universally accepted, however, and in 1906, M.S., in the "Notes and Comments" of *The Architectural Record*, broke down Cram's "enthusiasm" for English Gothic.[63] M.S. noted that Cram confused his history and mixed his architecture with religion, art, and politics. M.S.'s chief issue with Cram was Cram's insistence that English Gothic is more Gothic than French Gothic, especially considering that France was the birthplace of Gothic architecture. Because Cram could not divorce his religious biases from his architectural writing, Cram idealized English Gothic as individualistic and monastic.[64] Despite Cram's baseless biases, the view of English Gothic as monastic greatly influenced its repurposing as collegiate Gothic in the United States. M.S. even promoted Gothic as the best cornerstone for modern architecture because, unlike the classical base of neo-classical and Beaux Arts architecture, Gothic

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[62] Ibid., 423.
[63] M. S., "Is Gothic Dead," *The Architectural Record* XIX, no. 1 (January 1906): 66.
[64] Ibid., 96–7.

had no fixed proportions and no ideal models to follow. Where M.S. faulted Cram was his insistence that Gothic should follow the forms of historic Gothic instead of becoming a base for modern architecture reflecting the needs of the twentieth century. Yet, M.S. also believed Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson's plan for West Point was the best hope for a revival of Gothic revival architecture.[65]

One of the periodicals that published Cram's writings was *The Churchman*, an Episcopal paper edited by Silas McBee from 1896 until 1912. McBee and Cram had been collaborating on church architecture since at least 1899,[66] and through their association, McBee and Cram developed a relationship which led to Cram spending at least a few days at McBee's home in Great Neck, New York to discuss both a series of articles on English Abbeys and Cram's ideas for All Saints' Chapel as the next phase of the Nixon-McBee plan two months before Cram was given the commission.[67] Clearly Silas McBee had not been content to let his plan sit since 1890, and he had actively pursued further plans to have his architectural vision for Sewanee realized.

The pursuit of his vision had one major problem, George Fairbanks, who successfully petitioned the Board of Trustees to remove McBee from the special committee for All Saint's Chapel because McBee was "practically committed" to his own plan and vision for the University.[68] Interestingly, that is the same phrase that Wiggins used to criticize Fairbanks' continued efforts to place the chapel elsewhere when he

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[65] M. S., "Gothic Revivals," *The Architectural Record* XIX, no. 1 (January 1906): 67.
[66] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Rev. Wm. M. Grosvenor," August 10, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[67] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to B.L. Wiggins," August 1, 1904, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[68] Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, "B.L. Wiggins to Silas McBee," July 4, 1904, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.

wrote, “I cannot hope to get Major Fairbanks in line, because he has practically committed himself and is therefore not open to reason.”[69] Rather than fight the decision, McBee, with William Porcher DuBose’s help, worked around the decision. Not only did they solicit plans from and have meetings with Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson, they also asked the firm to be the architects for All Saints’ Chapel with only Wiggins’ approval.[70]

It would not be a stretch to say many involved with the Chapel were practically committed to their own visions. When Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson finished their initial draft of plans for All Saints’ Chapel, they told McBee, “If you do not like this plan, we might just as well give up Architecture [sic].”[71] After requesting architectural license to design the Chapel without interference beyond funding and location requirements, they also told McBee, “If you insist on ‘rustic effects’ for a church of this nature and dimension, you will have to get them from some other architect.”[72] Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson appear to have balked at the idea of artificially aging a building, and given McBee’s insistence on the handcrafted nature of Gothic architecture, it was surprising that he would request this since the appearance of age was also a motivator behind rough-cut stones.

Soon another voice entered the arguments. William Aiken was an architect and Sewanee alumnus from New York City, who took McBee’s place on the supervising committee for the Chapel. As it turned out, Aiken did not just want to supervise this

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[69] Ibid.
[70] Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, “Benjamin Lawton Wiggins to Silas McBee,” September 21, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[71] Ralph Adams Cram, Bertram Goodhue, and Frank Ferguson, “Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson to Silas McBee,” September 12, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[72] Ibid.

project, but to become the permanent architect for Sewanee's campus, and he was very "sensitive" about being subordinated to Cram.[73] McBee silently forced a compromise between the two, as well as demanding that Cram include a bell tower in the plans. Although Cram was under the impression that he was hired to complete and expand on the Nixon-McBee plan, suddenly three men were all vying for Sewanee's architectural future. The failure of the Bank of Winchester in 1907 and Aiken's untimely death in 1908 ended the bickering, but the result was a plan for All Saints' Chapel that was truly the product of three different visions.[74]

McBee maintained an interest and influence on architecture for the rest of his life. In 1897, William A. Leonard, the Bishop of Ohio ,invited McBee to lecture in Cleveland before the congregation accepted the plans of architect Charles F. Schwienfurth for a cathedral. [75] By 1901, when construction began, Schwienfurth had revised his 1890 plans from Romanesque Gothic revival to perpendicular English Gothic revival.[76] Even as late as 1905, McBee was still delivering his lecture to the Virginia Episcopal Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. While in Alexandria, McBee also brought the seminarians to the White House for a picture with his friend Theodore Roosevelt. [77] This episode illustrated a point M.R. Huntington made to McBee in 1898. He wrote

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[73] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Benjamin Lawton Wiggins," March 18, 1905, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[74] Edward McCrady, "All Saint's Chapel," n.d., All Saint's Chapel- General Historical: veritcal file, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[75] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," November 8, 1905, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[76] "History," *Trinity Cathedral*, accessed April 11, 2016, http://trinitycleveland.org/about/history/.
[77] McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," November 8, 1905.

McBee that "the ecumenical is to be reached only through the national."[78] For Huntington, McBee and others, the church and the nation were connected, and so was Christianity and nationalism. Of course, this was not just Christianity, it was Episcopalian Christianity, and McBee became a prominent voice in the Episcopal Church when he was hired as the editor of *The Churchman*.

McBee, *The Churchman*, and Theodore Roosevelt

In 1896, without any prior editorial experience, McBee became the editor of *The Churchman*, a leading Episcopal periodical that had been steadily losing popularity. In this role, McBee would attain a level of influence among Episcopalians that reached as high as the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. McBee used *The Churchman* as a medium not only to promote his own views, but to publish writings by DuBose, Roosevelt, then Secretary of War Taft, and Alfred Thayer Mahan, among others, who were on some level engaged in these debates. As editor of the periodical, McBee remained in correspondence with these men throughout his career at *The Churchman*. These letters reveal many of the ideas expressed by McBee and others not just about the Episcopal Church, but also about the role of the Anglo-Saxon race in national and international spheres.

When McBee assumed the editorship of *The Churchman*, the periodical began to see new levels of success. A. W. Whitaker wrote McBee in 1897 that McBee's editorials were likely the cause of *The Churchman*'s rising popularity compared to *The Church Standard*, a competing periodical. McBee also moved to Great Neck, New York, where

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[78] M.R. Huntington, "M.R. Huntington to Silas McBee," March 19, 1898, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

Bishop Potter introduced him to Theodore Roosevelt, launching a political and personal friendship between the two men. When Roosevelt became Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897, he and McBee began corresponding, beginning with Roosevelt's news that William P. Trent was reviewing Roosevelt's latest book.[79] Interestingly, Roosevelt had submitted his own review of Trent's work to *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1892.[80]

One of the main issues discussed between Roosevelt, McBee, and others was American imperialism, especially after the Spanish-American War. Mr. Parchim of Upper Canada College wrote McBee to warn against America's overseas ambitions:

> The whole national destiny is being changed without that popular consent which is considered necessary under our British System. I think very few of your people have yet begun to realize the enormous responsibility involved in assuming territorial authority in various parts of the world, and involving more or less arbitrary rule of weaker races.[81]

Clearly Parchim believed that there were stronger and weaker races, but disagreed with American ambitions to rule over other peoples. He later wrote to McBee again, expressing his concern that "The United States are entering upon a very difficult and doubtful experiment" when pursuing "an Imperial course."[82] McBee felt differently.

On May 26, 1899, McBee wrote Talcott Williams about the importance of the Spanish-American War. The "heroes of the Spanish War," he wrote, "[were] embodying the idea of the dignity of the cause for which we are fighting and the sacrifice that we are

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[79] Theodore Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt to Silas McBee," November 26, 1897, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

[80] Theodore Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt to Horace Elisha Scudder," March 22, 1892, Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University, Harvard College Library, http://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/en/Research/Digital-Library/Record.aspx?libID=o282994.

[81] George R. Parchim, "George R. Parchim to Silas McBee," December 6, 1898, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

[82] George. R. Parchim, "George R. Parchim to Silas McBee," June 29, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

making for the extension of Christian Civilization."[83] Similar to the language describing architecture, McBee viewed this war as another crusade of sorts to further his idea of "Christian Civilization." Interestingly, McBee and Cram would shortly design a cathedral at Manila in the Philippines, but it was never built.[84] McBee later expressed to Williams that Williams "presents so strongly the difficulties and yet distinctly stands for the principle of expansion as the only ideal principle."[85] These strong words speak to how firmly McBee believed that America needed to build an empire.

McBee also corresponded about American imperialism with Alfred Thayer Mahan, the former naval officer famous for his book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660- 1783*, which promoted imperialism and a strong navy.[86] In August of 1899, McBee wrote Mahan that the recent peace conference should be noted for "the epoch that it marks in international history."[87]

Later that year, the Second Boer War broke out in South Africa, and McBee broadened his view of imperialism to include the English-speaking peoples. Though McBee did not support the "unhappy War in South Africa,"[88] he and his colleagues "profoundly feel the necessity for English supremacy in South Africa and feel also that the progress of civilization depends much upon a proper and cordial understanding

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[83] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Talcott Williams," May 26, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[84] Stokes, Jr., "McBee, Silas."
[85] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Talcott Williams," August 26, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[86] "Milestones 1866-1898: Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power upon History: Securing International Markets in the 1890s," *U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian*, accessed April 18, 2016, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/mahan.
[87] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Alfred Thayer Mahan," August 24, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[88] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to John V. L. Pruyn," November 9, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

between the two English-speaking nations."[89] McBee similarly said to Mahan, "I feel more than ever the vital necessity of the two nations standing together in the great battle for the Christianization and civilization of the world."[90] The martial idealism that McBee expressed about Sewanee also came across in his view of international affairs.

This belief that the English-speaking nations should rule over the lesser races was rooted in the Anglo-Saxon myth that existed at this time. This myth argued that the ideals of democracy were cultivated and protected by the classical education and tutorial system practiced by Oxford and Cambridge Universities. Additionally, they believed that freedom originated in the woods of Germany on the border of the Roman Empire, and the superior martial ability of these Saxons brought freedom to England, and, eventually to America. This myth reached Sewanee's students as well. In 1906, the Dean of the Law School at the University asked The Rt. Rev. Thomas Frank Gailor to deliver a lecture to the entire student body on "Patriotism for Americans, and the duty to inculcate and uphold and advance the traditional views of civilization and society, which we have inherited from our Anglo-Saxon blood."[91]

In the South, this belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority was directed towards the black population as white southerners sought to reassert control after black men won sovereignty in the Fifteenth Amendment. McBee, Wiggins, and Roosevelt engaged in this discussion of how the South should deal with the "Negro Question" when Roosevelt invited Booker T. Washington to the White House.

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[89] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to F.S. Lymen," November 9, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[90] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Alfred Thayer Mahan," December 21, 1899, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[91] L. C., "L.C. to Thomas Frank Gailor," September 25, 1906, Gailor Collection: Correspondance Incoming 1890, Sewanee: The University of the South.

The Churchman Years- White Paternalism and Anglo-Saxon Myth in the South

In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt, invited Booker T. Washington, the prominent African-American educator, to the White House, which brought the "Negro Question" to the forefront of many southern minds, including McBee and Wiggins. In letters and writings, the debate over whether blacks were capable of being full citizens split the views of the usually very close McBee and Wiggins. While both men thought that the South needed to solve the problem for itself, Booker T. Washington divided the two over the intellectual potential of blacks.

McBee had met Booker T. Washington thanks to Roosevelt, and fully supported Roosevelt's decision to invite him to the White House. McBee wrote, "I let Booker Washington see a long letter that I wrote [...] about you having him at the White house, and I shall not soon forget his hearty endorsement of what I wrote."[92] The rest of the South did not agree. In January 1903, George B. Cortelyou, the President's secretary, delivered a message from Roosevelt to McBee that said, "The President requests me to say to you, confidentially, that some of the Southern press seems to have gone literally crazy on the colored question" following another White House visit by colored men, this time recently appointed officials of the Justice Department.[93] For not the last time, McBee pointed out to Roosevelt that he fully trusted the President's desire to help the South, and wished to help communicate the President's true intentions to the South. After meeting again with Booker T. Washington, McBee sent Roosevelt a letter saying,

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[92] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," June 6, 1902, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[93] George B. Cortelyou, "George B. Cortelyou to Silas McBee," January 29, 1903, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

"Washington and I agreed that there not only had been but there was for you more promise of helping the Southern people, both white or Black [sic], than for any other President since the war."[94] Though he was a lifelong Democrat, McBee whole-heartedly supported his friend's tenure in office and later.

Roosevelt followed this message up with a letter of his own. In the letter, he defended his appointments to McBee for McBee to tell his friends in the South:

> The immense majority of these appointments have been white and in some States, in fact, I think in most of the States in question, the majority have been Democrats. In half a dozen instances or more I have refused to appoint negroes whom I did not think good officers and have appointed white men in their place. In but three instances have I appointed negros to succeed white men. I believe you will find that my colored appointments instead of being of the old colored politicians stripe are men of a high grade of excellence. They were all recommended to me by Booker T. Washington.[95]

Washington's endorsement was the most important factor to McBee. Beyond just his association with Washington, Washington's intelligence and reputation were evidence that with education, blacks were fully capable to become the full citizens that Wiggins and other white supremacists thought impossible.

This debate was not simply racism, but scientifically backed racism. George M. Frederickson's two books, *Racism: A Short History* and *The Black Image in the White Mind*, expound ways to understand and approach race at the turn-of-the-century. Fredrickson proposed that Anglo-Saxonism separated from whiteness when immigration, war, and class conflict in the mid-to-late 19th Century began to cause upper class white protestants to seek distinctions from other white ethnic groups such as the

[94] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," January 31, 1903, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[95] Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt to Silas McBee," November 26, 1897.

Spanish and Irish.[96] Frederickson argued that in the New South, Social Darwinism and a growing belief in the paternalistic relationship between whites and blacks led to the advancement of white racial supremacy as a legitimate observable justification for the treatment of blacks as second-class citizens following Reconstruction. Southern belief in biracialism prevented the South from embracing better race relations, and justified the quick disenfranchisement of blacks following Reconstruction.[97]

Similarly, in *Making Whiteness*, Grace Elizabeth Hale tracked the creation of whiteness as a racial identity in 19th and 20th century America until the Second World War. She argued that although the concept of whiteness existed in the Antebellum South as a tool of collectivism across class and gender differences among white southerners, the Civil War and Reconstruction enhanced the importance of whiteness as a new collective identity among southerners who could no longer rely on a slave versus citizen distinction.[98] New forms of reducing blacks' status could solve the crisis of authority caused by the enfranchisement of former slaves. One of these forms was seeing a paternal relationship of whites over blacks.

Men such as Reverend Atticus G. Haygood and Henry W. Grady advocated for a paternalistic relationship between whites and blacks to Wiggins. Promoting the idea of the New South, these two men both rejoiced in the abolition of slavery while nevertheless seeing the master-slave relationship as mutually beneficial.[99] This changing view of the relationship between whites and blacks reflected "bourgeois paternalism of a

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[96] George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 73–4.
[97] George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, First (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 198–227.
[98] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2010), 6.
[99] Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, 204–6.

Northern elite more than the aristocratic paternalism of the Old South."[100] The southern white upper class tried to more closely align itself with Northern elite views while simultaneously maintaining its social superiority over African-Americans. To quote Edward L. Ayers again, "as in so much else, modern innovations did not so much dilute Southern identity as give it new, sharper, focus."[101] This new focus was on modernizing the South instead of mimicking the North, but, at the same time, the southern elite took northern bourgeois paternalistic views in order to convince the rest of the nation that they could solve the "Negro Question" themselves.

In 1904, Frank T. Carlton wrote a brief account of the preceding decade in *The Sewanee Review*, in which he expressed concern at the growing black population in the South.[102] He also praised Booker T. Washington for emphasizing that the Negro should be a good laborer with technical education to advance beyond "the low plane of life" in which he exists. Furthermore, Carlton stressed that the South could solve this problem, and Northern thinkers should not solve the "problem" of black Americans' education.[103] Wiggins fell on this side of the "Negro Question." Despite Carlton's support of Washington's public assertions, Washington represented a foil to claims that blacks could not advance to the same level of education as whites. J.S. Bassett, a professor at Trinity College (now Duke University) and editor of *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, articulated this in 1903. Yet another Johns Hopkins educated Southern professor, he wrote very controversially about white paternalism in America:

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[100] Ibid., 213.
[101] Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 315.
[102] Frank T. Carlton, "The South During the Last Decade," *The Sewanee Review* 12, no. 2 (April 1904): 176.
[103] Ibid., 181.

> With most white Americans, there is a very definite notion that the negro has his "place." In their minds, this notion is a caste feeling. It is an inherited feeling; and it is not difficult to find facts in the negro's life which seem to give it the support of expediency. To make him know his "place," and to make him keep his "place" sum up the philosophy of many people in reference to this intricate and perplexing problem. But we ought to remember that such an idea is neither scientific nor charitable. The "place" of every man in our American life is such one as his virtues and his capacities may enable him to take. Not even a black skin and a flat nose can justify caste in this country.[104]

This scathing critique railed against the new forms of racism exploited by the Southern Democratic Party, and any notion that before the Civil War, "the ante-bellum negro was a benign old man or a gracious old 'mammy.'"[105] However, the writer still saw a problem with African-Americans, dividing them into two classes: those who have flourished with freedom and those who have lapsed. He tried to not take Booker T. Washington as an example of the promise of the Negro, but saw him as an exception on every level:

> A man whose mind runs away into baseless optimism is apt to point to Booker T Washington as a product of the negro race. Now Washington is a great and good man, a Christian statesman, and take him all in all the greatest man, save General Lee, born in the South in a hundred years; but he is not a typical negro. He does not even represent the better class of negroes. He is an exceptional man; and, endowed as he is, it is probable that he would have remained uneducated but for the philanthropic intervention of white men. The race, even the best of them, are so far behind him that we cannot in reason look for his reproduction in the present generation. It is, therefore, too much to hope for a continued appearance of such men in the near future. It is also too much to set his development up as a standard for his race. To expect it is to insure disappointment.[106]

Despite what he actually said, the damage was done. Calling Washington the greatest southerner since Robert E. Lee was too much for many in the South, including Wiggins.

These ideas conflicted with the Anglo-Saxon racial superiority Wiggins and others advocated. In *Manliness and Civilization*, Gail Bederman showed that race and

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[104] John Spencer Bassett, "Stirring Up the Fires of Race Antipathy," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (October 1903): 301.
[105] Ibid., 300.
[106] Ibid., 299.

gender became explicitly connected during the Progressive Era. Bederman argued that white, middle-class males, used white supremacy to produce an ideology of male power rooted in race.[107] Based on the argument that manliness and manhood are not inherent traits, but a shifting ideological process, Bederman looked at how at the dawn of the 20th Century, bodily strength and public authority were identical in the minds of many men. Bederman saw the intense focus on manhood as a result of political, economic, and social factors converging by the 1890s. Namely, shifts in class and means of employment rendered older middle class ideas about masculinity defunct as the self-made man became an increasingly harder ideal to achieve. Politics and masculinity were linked because the public sphere became the arena in which to prove manliness. Immigration and women's suffrage movements challenged the white male's ability to control politics, and white men thus began promoting white manliness as an ideal to secure their power in a changing political landscape.[108] Consequently, other races and women were excluded.

Wiggins wrote a letter to Bassett arguing fiercely against his article, and Bassett replied. In it he revealed that not only had he been bombarded by calls to defend his work, but his relationship with the Board of Trustees at Trinity was "entirely voluntary" and he expected to be asked to resign. He then noted, "As to the opinion I gave of Booker Washington it was a mere incident of my argument--thrown in while I was trying to overcome the optimism of Northern people [...] He is not a typical negro [...]

[107] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 20.
[108] Ibid., 11.

But his element of greatness seem to me to be there."[109] And after a page-long assessment of the seven reasons why Washington is a great man, Basset concluded his letter by asking Wiggins to keep this stronger assessment of Washington secret out of friendship, and not to think that he had written about Washington's greatness without careful consideration.

Wiggins did not see the same greatness. In 1903, he wrote Bolton Smith about a conversation he had with President Roosevelt. In it he articulated that although Roosevelt was distressed that the South did not recognize his views, Roosevelt did not realize the cost of meeting with Booker T. Washington. Additionally, in reference to Bassett, Wiggins, still awaiting Bassett's response, criticized Bassett for lacking historical perspective.[110]

Wiggins viewed the "Southern Problem" (another name for the "Negro Question") as the result of Northern Emancipators' hypocrisy and blunders. In Wiggins' view, the North treated blacks as "wards," which insinuates that the entire race was not mature enough for the vote because if they were, then the North would treat them as citizens. Wiggins named black suffrage a "stupendous blunder" because "no amount of boosting will help the negro race." Even more, Wiggins argued, "that in the future of this country, the battle is to the strong, and that unless he is possessed of the moral and intellectual qualification, which will enable him to compete with the Anglo-Saxon race, then [African-Americans] must expect the Anglo-Saxon race to dominate." [111] This

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[109] John Spencer Bassett, "J.S. Bassett to Benjamin Lawton Wiggins," November 27, 1903, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[110] Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, "Benjamin Lawton Wiggins to Bolton Smith," November 11, 1903, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[111] Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, "B.L. Wiggins to R.G. Barrett," November 23, 1903, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.

statement was full of Anglo-Saxon martial racism. The chief trait of the Anglo-Saxon was his strength in battle, which the black race cannot match, even though African-Americans by rare exception may reach the moral and intellectual level of Anglo-Saxons.

But Wiggins' view of Anglo-Saxon martial, moral, and intellectual superiority manifests itself as racial paternalism when he and correspondents discussed the solution to the "Southern Problem." Wiggins wrote to the Rev. E. M. Joyner that the Episcopal Church needed to do more for blacks. However, Wiggins did not want any canon law addressing race because "there is no telling where it would stop."[112] John E. White told Wiggins, "there is a debt which the strong owe the weak." The strong being "the strong Anglo-Saxon of the South." The solution was to educate African-Americans "to what is peculiar in his situation." White's white supremacist views went even further. White desired for the "beginning of an organized public sentiment in the South protective of our Anglo-Saxon leadership, promotive of Christian Civilization, and reassuring the development and progress of the Southern States and people." [113] Similar to the author in the February 1903 issue of *American Architect and Building News*, White viewed the endurance of civilization as the endurance of Anglo-Saxonism. Wiggins agreed with this sentiment when he argued that Southern states were "safeguarding the interests of civilization" by evading the Constitution and especially the 15th Amendment.[114] This paternalism did not consider the possibility that blacks should ever be equal citizens to Anglo-Saxons.

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[112] Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, "B.L. Wiggins to Rev. E. M. Joyner," July 12, 1906, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[113] John E. White, "John E. White to B.L. Wiggins," February 16, 1907, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[114] Wiggins, "B.L. Wiggins to R.G. Barrett."

And despite Roosevelt and McBee's relationship with Booker T. Washington, and their apparent belief in the optimism that Bassett argued against, on many levels they agreed with Wiggins. McBee wrote, "there isn't a man in the South who is more opposed to the mixing of the races or to the social equality against which the South cries out than is the president."[115] One of the reasons both Wiggins and McBee identified for the South's hostility to the president was the rise of the one-party system in the South under the Southern Democrats.

Wiggins was most likely a Republican. In a letter to Bolton Smith, he expressed regret that the Republican Party was absent in the South, blaming the corrupt one-party system on ante-bellum conditions and the 15th Amendment.[116] McBee, on the other hand, was a lifelong Democrat despite his support for Roosevelt.[117] At the same time, he disliked the political realties in the South. He wrote to Roosevelt that the South had, "the same unrepresentative political partisanship in the Confederate Congress that now finds expression in many Southern members of both Halls of Congress, who are a dishonor to the South because of their unrepresentative character."[118] The largest obstacle both men faced in the South was the "Negro Question," and the struggle to balance white supremacy and anti-lynching. In seeking this balance, McBee became an advocate and resource for Roosevelt's efforts to win Southern votes in the 1904 election,

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[115] McBee, "Silas McBee to B.L. Wiggins," August 1, 1904.
[116] Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, "Benjamin Lawton Wiggins to Bolton Smith," November 18, 1905, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[117] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," September 20, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[118] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," May 31, 1902, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

primarily by convincing Southerners that the President was on the side of the anti-lynching Democrats.

These concerns started much earlier. In 1902, Roosevelt left a post-script in a letter to McBee explaining, "In what I said about lynching, I said not one word as to locality; it applies to Kansas or Colorado as much as to Tennese [sic]."[119] However, in 1904, efforts to win over elite Southerners increased. McBee published several editorials in *The Churchman* about Bishop Brown and lynching, which *City and State* cited as the Protestant Episcopal Church unequivocally rejecting Brown's apparent defense of lynching.[120] McBee saw Booker T. Washington's letter congratulating him for his efforts as "stronger and more valued" than any other.[121] McBee sent Roosevelt an article by C.H. Poe in *The Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "Lynching: A Southern View," which quoted the President regarding lynching of "the negro who had committed rape."[122] The article argued that lynching was undoubtedly a immoral crime, and even lynching for rape is not excusable because allowing it for one crime allows it for all crimes. Instead, the rule of law should govern all crimes instead of the rule of the mob. Poe argued, "We need to teach that, if Satan himself should commit a crime, we should try him in legal form, — not for Satan's sake, but for the sake of law and order and civilization."[123] Roosevelt was

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119 Theodore Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt to Silas McBee," June 3, 1902, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
120 Herbert Welsh, *City and State* (H. Welsh, 1904), 167.
121 McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," September 20, 1904.
122 Theodore Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt to Silas McBee," February 3, 1903, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
123 C. H. Poe, "'Lynching: A Southern View' by C.H. Poe, The Atlantic Monthly, February 1904," *UNZ.org*, 160, accessed April 19, 2016, http://www.unz.org/Pub/AtlanticMonthly-1904feb-00155.

clearly eager to hear of Southerners who wrote against lynching even in the most socially acceptable circumstances because it supported his own views.

The efforts Roosevelt and McBee made to win over some southerners worked. The December following the election, Roosevelt sent McBee the transcript from an article that ran in the *Biloxi Daily Herald* praising the president for not "playing politics" in Mississippi and instead nominating Democrats with experience to key roles, specifically citing the Hon. Edgar S. Wilson from Jackson, Mississippi. Yet, the paper noted, "both [Mr. Roosevelt] and Mr. Wilson have been systematically abused for their views by men who know even less of them than we do."[124] Knowing now that the South had the potential to shift to supporting him, Roosevelt and the White House planned his first official trip to the South.

Roosevelt did come South, but despite his connections to McBee, DuBose, Wiggins, and other Sewanee men, he never did visit The University of the South. The only reason was a conflict of travel itineraries. In 1905, McBee wrote William Loeb, Jr., the Secretary to the President, hoping that Roosevelt could stop by Sewanee during his trip to the South. McBee had reason for optimism. In January, Roosevelt had asked McBee to edit a draft of his speech to the Lincoln Dinner to help make it more acceptable to the South, and in February, McBee wrote Roosevelt about the reactions he had heard. Dr. Alderman called it "a 'corker'" that "has done great good throughout the South" and McBee reported that only "bitter" men disagreed.[125] Hot off the heels of such a success, McBee, who would later convince Roosevelt to drop an independent commission to

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[124] Theodore Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt to Silas McBee," December 17, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[125] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," February 27, 1905, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

investigate race riots in Atlanta to prevent the South from resenting federal encroachment, felt confident enough to see if the President could make a detour trip to Sewanee.[126] This idea was not new either. As early as 1900, McBee had been trying to convince Wiggins to invite then governor Roosevelt to Sewanee.[127] As luck would have it, William Loeb nixed the idea because the train schedule was already set.[128]

The idea that Roosevelt would visit Sewanee was not unprecedented; just the year before, the President had personally written Baron Speck von Sternburg asking the German Ambassador to accept an invitation to be the commencement speaker. Earlier that year, the ambassador had expressed an interest in "the South and our Southern people," and McBee leaped on the opportunity.[129] After soliciting the President, McBee also asked Gifford Pinchot from the Department of Forestry to both ask the Ambassador to accept the invitation and volunteer to travel south with the Ambassador since Pinchot was a personal friend of von Sternburg.[130] The Ambassador accepted the invitation and agreed to use Sewanee to represent the South.

When von Sternburg accepted, McBee worked to not only make Sewanee a representative of the South, but of the nation. He told the Ambassador, "You will speak to a representative body of students from all parts of the country, the majority of whom will be from the South. [...] what you say will be said directly to the Southern people

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[126] Horace Samuel Merrill and Marion Galbraith Merrill, *The Republican Command: 1897--1913* (University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 240.
[127] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to B.L. Wiggins," June 22, 1900, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[128] William Loeb, "William Loeb to Silas McBee," September 15, 1905, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[129] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Speck von Sternburg," April 16, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[130] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Gifford Pinchot," April 19, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

through their representatives."[131] These representatives were Sewanee's Board of Trustees.

From McBee's perspective, the event went very smoothly. He wrote a letter thanking Roosevelt for his help, explaining, "[von Sternburg] was deeply impressed with the independence—political as well as theological --which he found there."[132] The political independence was not surprising given the relationships previously described; the theological independence more so. It was surprising because McBee had made significant efforts to promote his best friend and mentor, the Rev. William Porcher DuBose. The most significant contribution was introducing DuBose to the Rev. Dr. William Sandy, a professor at Oxford University, who wrote rave reviews of DuBose's writings in *The Churchman* and helped spread them throughout Anglican academic circles. The two professors of theology met first time at Silas McBee's house in Great Neck in what was clearly an attempt by McBee to use his influence as editor of *The Churchman* to advocate for his former professor and lifelong mentor.[133] McBee also introduced Sandy and DuBose to Roosevelt when Sandy made his trip to the United States in October 1904. In his introduction of Dr. Sandy to the President, McBee called Sandy, "the greatest living scholar in the English Church today."[134]

While DuBose concerned himself with ideas of Christian theology, he also wrote about the idea of a university. In an article for the *Sewanee Review* entitled "The

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[131] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Speck von Sternburg," April 26, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[132] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," July 6, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[133] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to B.L. Wiggins," August 31, 1904, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.
[134] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," October 17, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.

Romance and Genius of a University," DuBose sought to establish firmly the difference between Sewanee's "ante-bellum purposes and post-bellum facts."[135] DuBose argued that Sewanee cannot "do everything and be everything" because Sewanee was not wealthy enough to. Instead, Sewanee should become a place of liberal learning.[136] But DuBose's essay also reflected an attitude of cultural elitism. He argued that Sewanee was designed to make men, who are well dressed (a Parisian tailor named Barbot made all the clothes for Sewanee students) and well mannered, and Sewanee was designed to attract the patronage of similar fellows. DuBose's vision was for Sewanee to become a center of social culture instead of supplier of industrial demands.[137]

DuBose envisioned a great future for Sewanee, but McBee saw greatness as he lived. In 1904, he wrote to Roosevelt explicitly stating how he saw Sewanee in a wider context:

> The South needs Sewanee, and I venture to believe that the Nation needs Sewanee. I know that the South needs the Nation and the Nation the South, and that the South has a contribution to make to the Nation that no other part of the Nation can make; and those of us who believe this must see to it that she fulfills her mission and her opportunity.[138]

While he did not explain what the contribution or mission was, his phrasing is similar to a later quote from the opening of McBee's, "The South and Mr. Taft," which was published in *The Sewanee Review* in 1908. He expanded the previous ideas about the role of the South, but also addressed problems he saw:

> The Nation needs the South; the South needs the Nation. Both are warped and maimed by the presence of a solid block of States incapable of assimilating, or being assimilated in, the National life for so long as they remain solid. The necessity for

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[135] William Porcher DuBose, "The Romance and Genius of a University," *The Sewanee Review* 13, no. 4 (October 1905): 498.
[136] Ibid., 498–501.
[137] Ibid., 499–500.
[138] McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," October 17, 1904.

> removing this bar to national unity is incalculably greater now that America is accepting its world relationships. These newer responsibilities from without but intensify and magnify responsibilities at home. To no part of the Nation is it of more vital concern that home problems should be settled and settled right than to the South. No part of the Nation more truly needs the commercial, industrial and trade relations that are developing in all parts of the world than does the South. No part offers finer natural resources, more congenial climate and a more hospitable people than the South. But if the South remains isolated politically, immigrant and enterprise, capital and labor, will pass it by for less favored fields. Isolation will have its blighting effect upon industrial, political, intellectual and religious freedom, without which no people can be great.[139]

From McBee's perspective, the Nation needed the South's resources and hospitable nature; in return, the South needed the modern economy that was developing in the larger nation. Several years earlier, McBee proposed a solution for southern isolation to Roosevelt:

> The South and New England will never understand each other in and by themselves. Not only does each dislike and distrust the fault of the other, but their very virtues are irritating each to the other. The way must be found by Southern men who know the North and Northern men who know the South, and above all, by men who are Americans first, last and all the time.[140]

And at least some of these men, to McBee, should be Sewanee men, such as his son, Silas McBee Jr,, who graduated from Sewanee before attending Harvard Law School.[141] McBee himself would later move beyond a national mission to an international, ecclesiastical one, when he began *The Constructive Quarterly* to advance positive Christian messages, as well as DuBose's belief in Christian Unity.

McBee was a Southern man who knew the North. Despite spending most of his life in New York City, he saw himself as a Southerner first. He was engaged in the emerging New South exemplifying a belief that the South should interact with the North

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[139] Silas McBee, "The South and Mr. Taft," *The Sewanee Review* 16, no. 4 (October 1908): 486.
[140] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Theodore Roosevelt," July 16, 1904, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library.
[141] Harvard Law School, *Law School of Harvard University. Announcements*, 1911, 60.

and vice versa to not only solve national problems, but also utilize the unique aspects of both areas of the country to mutual improvement. However, that improvement was seen through the lens of the Anglo-Saxon myth, promoting paternalistic white supremacy. In many ways, his focus on the Episcopal Church as an Anglican Church beginning with his self-training as an architect influenced him to adopt many antimodern beliefs. On one level, these led to his alma mater looking like the rough stone Gothic cathedrals that he and Cram designed; on another it led him to see Anglo-American imperialism as a promoter of civilization. His desire to see the world as a battlefield meant that in his mind there was always conflict, winners, and losers, and the strenuous life advanced by Theodore Roosevelt was one solution to a perceived need to combat the effeminizing effects of modernity.

And McBee found mediums in which to express these ideas to the larger nation. Not only did his lecture circuit and *The Churchman* give his voice a national audience, but his friendships and correspondences allowed him to advance himself, and Sewanee, in the national conversation. As a result, he encountered many of the issues facing Sewanee, the South, and America. From architecture to the “Negro Question,” these ideas were connected, primarily by the overarching belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority that connected McBee with other elite white men of his time. The new style of Gothic architecture, both collegiate Gothic and Anglophilic Neogothic cathedrals favored by McBee and Cram tried to influence parishioners and students to look up to the Anglo-Saxon past as a more Christian and vigorous time. Debates over Booker T. Washington tried to define the place of blacks in a society that saw the Anglo-Saxon race as not only the bearers of civilization to America, but to the world by force if necessary.

On April 26, 1907, Silas McBee wrote his friend Benjamin Lawton Wiggins, the fifth Vice-Chancellor of The University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, explaining his intention to resign as a member of the Board of Trustees. Rather than any fight or dispute, McBee resigned because his work had moved beyond Sewanee, and he no longer had time to regularly return to Tennessee since he was traveling to England and Scotland.[142] A few months later, the Bank of Winchester collapsed, halting the construction of All Saints' Chapel and leaving The University of the South incapable of finishing McBee's vision for a quadrangle. In many ways, this moment marks the beginning of the end for this critical period in Sewanee's history, as financial worries became the primary focus of Sewanee's leadership.

But this period, if temporary, was nonetheless important. For a brief moment, men associated with The University of the South were in the center of a national debate over race. Anglo-Saxon racial superiority was the cornerstone of a racial world view that advanced not only explicitly English Gothic architecture, but also justified segregation and the disfranchisement of blacks in the South by taking similar arguments advanced by white Protestant elites in the North and applying them to the "Negro Question" in the South. Through Silas McBee, Benjamin Lawton Wiggins and the Rev. William Porcher DuBose were able to connect with Theodore Roosevelt and Ralph Adams Cram. These men all shared a belief that the Anglo-Saxon race was an inherited superiority to other races, and that it was their duty to paternally rule over others because they were superior.

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[142] Silas McBee, "Silas McBee to Benjamin Lawton Wiggins," April 26, 1907, Box E08.04.06, Sewanee: The University of the South.

This common belief connected The University of the South to the larger nation. Elites in Sewanee and the South found a connection with elites from New York, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere that allowed them to enter and contribute to this national debate. Whether it was architecture, imperialism, or the separation of the races, this core assumption that the Anglo-Saxon myth was true provided a common thread linking culture and politics.

The story did not end there, and many questions remain. This work focused on just a few voices in the debate, and there are many more throughout the nation that contributed to this debate. Did other parts of the South agree with the voices at Sewanee? What did the New South mean to them? Additionally, how exactly did Sewanee change in the next decade following Wiggin's death beyond just the closure of the Law and Medical Schools? Finally, the 1912 election would be a fascinating time to study McBee's correspondences as Roosevelt rose to challenge Taft, allowing Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, to win the Presidency. Certainly the Anglo-Saxon myth endured, especially architecturally in the South through the 1920s and 1930s when many more colleges and universities, such as Southwestern College in Memphis, Tennessee and the new campus for Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, chose to build collegiate Gothic campuses.

In the end, this story was about a small group of men in the United States who advocated Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy in culture and politics because they genuinely believed that the Anglo-Saxon myth was true, and the key to combating and adapting the nation to the modern world. North and south, these antimoderns sought to influence the changing world around them by asserting control through racism in an increasingly diverse nation.

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