RADICAL CONSERVATION AND THE POLITICS OF PLANNING:

A HISTORICAL STUDY, 1917-1945

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a historical, sociological case-study of the movement for public control and land-use planning prior to WWII. The impetus for this movement came from a radicalized faction of the forestry profession. Radicalism in forestry centered around a group of professional foresters who were followers of Gifford Pinchot, the nation's Chief Forester from 1898-1910. Pinchot commenced the movement for public control over cutting on private forestlands in in the nineteen-teens.

The emphasis in this case-study is on identifying social factors responsible for giving impetus to a movement for collective environmental planning, and the social and environmental possibilities of this subject. Three specific areas are studied: first radicalism in the forestry profession; second the vision of sustainability that emerged from radical forestry; and finally the relationship between the radical foresters and organized currents of the political Left.

Findings: The understanding of the scientific conservation and land-use planning movement that has developed in scholarly literature does not provide an accurate characterization of this movement. The neglected vision of sustainability through public ownership and planning associated with radical forestry might be reconsidered in light of the present environmental problems. Despite the fact there was a radical presence

in the forestry profession, norms of professional behavior are significant obstacles to radicalization, hence why Pinchotist conservation is anomalous in environmental history. Even though leading personalities in forestry took up the cause of public control, the institutional environmental movement remained aloof, giving indication that there are barriers to the development of an organized movement for environmental planning. Various radical political currents, however, demonstrated signs of receptivity to the scientific conservation movement.

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When I began work on this dissertation, I encountered some skepticism. The topic, the historical conservation movement, is atypical for a sociology dissertation, and people with some cursory knowledge of the historical literature on this subject, doubted my perspective—that there was something radical about land-use planning—had validity. This was understandable, because until I actually got into the archives and started piecing things together, I, myself, didn't know how this project would unfold. It is the nature of real historical research that you don't entirely know what you are examining during the initial stage of work. For this reason, I want to thank my committee—John Bellamy Foster, Val Burris, Richard York, and Joe Fracchia—for their understanding and for having confidence in my ability to undertake this project. With another committee, I am not sure I would have gotten off the ground floor. In particular, I thank John for providing encouragement, guidance, and suggestions on how to approach the topic. Val also deserves special thanks for his helpful support, and for giving me practical advice on how to work with archival material—something I was completely ignorant of when I began.

I regard what follows as somewhat incomplete. I did not have the resources to visit all the archives I wanted to visit. One of the shortcomings of this dissertation is that, while it deals largely with Pinchotist conservation, I did not have the opportunity of to examine Gifford Pinchot's papers in the Library of Congress. This was because I initially accepted the conventional historical perspective on Pinchot's approach to conservation (disputed herein), and decided to focus my attention elsewhere. By the time I had examined the Robert Marshall Papers at the Bancroft Library, in the University of California, Berkeley (the last archive I visited), I realized that this was a serious error.

This is not to say that I am not confident in my conclusions. I mention this, to point out that this would be better study, if I had had the resources to properly carry it out. With the exception of a small grant from the Department of Sociology, this research was self-funded by my own household. So it is my immediate family that deserves thanks for what I accomplished.

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“Conservation was universally accepted until it began to be applied.”

—Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 1868 Karl Marx wrote Frederich Engels—half seriously—that he had discovered "an unconscious socialist tendency" in a book of a German botanist and agronomist. The book, *Climate and the Plantworld* by Carl Nikolaus Fraas, was an important contribution to an emerging scientific awareness of humanity's capability of inflicting lasting environmental damage upon the planet (Foster 2011). Marx (1981 [1867]:638) at the time was familiarizing himself with soil science in order to develop a critical understanding of the "destructive side of modern agriculture"—an undertaking that made him increasingly aware of significance of metabolic interchanges between humankind and nature (Foster 2000; Saito 2016). Fraas's work examined how the spread of agriculture and deforestation in the Mediterranean region and Western Asia, left behind a dryer climate and a barren, dessert-like landscape. Fraas's "conclusion," Marx wrote Engels, "is that cultivation—when it proceeds in natural growth and is not *consciously controlled* (as a bourgeois he naturally does not reach this point)—leaves deserts behind it. Persia, Mesopotamia, etc., Greece." (Saito 2016:35).

On the other side of the Atlantic by this time a handful of people had read a similar scientific work, George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature*. Like Fraas, Marsh warned of humanity's capacity to change the environment in unforeseen and disastrous ways. Marsh (1864:9) concurred with Fraas on the effects of deforestation on climate, and cited the German scientist's findings. A decade or so after Marsh's book was published, there were signs of the stirrings of a new social movement, the conservation movement—comprising the first wave of what we now know as environmentalism. In the US the origins of

conservation can be traced directly back to George Perkins Marsh and the awareness he raised of humanity's destructive influence.

Environmentalism is a somewhat unique type of social movement in that it developed primarily as a result of the implications of science. Marx's comments to Engels, written at the dawn of conservation's origin, though brief, provide an interesting assessment of this circumstance. First there is the insinuation that the emerging environmental science contained an "unconscious socialist tendency." This was due to the fact that it revealed the need for "conscious control" of the Earth's utilization—or planning—by implication of the disastrous consequences of production carried out otherwise. Next is Marx's explanation of why this tendency is submerged: Fraas "as a bourgeois" is "naturally" unable to understand the full implications of his discovery.

The developments of a century and a half have produced an interesting spin on Marx's observation. Today it is the political Right who sense there is a socialist quality about environmental science. Recognizing that the findings of climate science are antithetical to capitalism (if they were to be acted upon), and being unable to accept this, they reject climate science as a Trojan horse for socialism. Except for the idea that science is a socialist conspiracy, they are right. Reducing greenhouse emissions to a safe level with our present industrial infrastructure would prove challenging even under a political-economic system organized around planning. But this is rarely admitted. Not even by those who study climate change. In an editorial published in *Nature Climate Change*, Kevin Anderson and Alice Bows (2012:639) accuse scientists of contributing to the "misguided belief" that the more disastrous consequences of climate change can be avoided through "incremental adjustments to economic incentives"—or in other words, bourgeois reforms—when such measures are clearly insufficient.

The situation speaks to a general failing noted by Robert Brulle (2000:191). Environmental science has provided a "strong critique of the ecological effects of our current institutional structure." But the same science has done little to suggest "an alternative vision on which an ecological sustainable society can be based." The reasons for this situation should be plain. One is the ideological constraint Marx's letter intimates at. Conversely there is the real concern scientists face in advocating social heresies—that their scientific findings will be more easily dismissed. In either case it demonstrates a failure of science to fulfill its social function in the contemporary crisis.

Radical Conservation and Pinchotist Forestry

The development of conservation in the US provides an illuminating working out of the contradiction Marx identified in his letter on Fraas. In the eighteen-seventies—stirred into action by Marsh's observation that deforestation comprised "the most destructive among the many causes of the physical deterioration of the earth"—the scientific community commenced the campaign to save America's forests. At the time the original forests of the US were being destroyed just as rapidly they could be disposed from the public domain. And yet this movement found it hard to admit what was the logical course of action—that the government should retain the forestland as public property. When one looks back at the forestry movement's written output from the eighteen-seventies, a sense of repression comes through. Constant note is made of the successes of public ownership and management in other nations, but the advocates of forestry demur from recommending such an approach for the US (Ise 1920), and for no other reason than that they feared its radical implications, or feared to be seen as radical themselves.

By 1890 the forestry movement had gotten over this first stumbling block. The law establishing the Presidential authority to reserve forestland as public property was only a

year away from enactment, and the principle scientific bodies and forestry organizations were behind it. But the movement would continue to face another obstacle for the foreseeable future: What to do about the forests in private possession? Once again there was a timidity concerning private property and private enterprise. At a forum on forestry held by the American Economic Association that year, Bernard Fernow, the chief of the government's Division of Forestry, gave his opinion about the idea of the government regulation of forest cutting in private land: "Distasteful," he called it, "and as it means a reduction of private gain, unjust."

Gifford Pinchot, just back from Europe where he had been studying forestry, was a participant at this forum. He considered Fernow's take on the matter, "as wrong as it could be" (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:34). Pinchot would become the leading figure in the movement for public control over forests, and beyond this, a more expansive program of conservation. As the nation's Forester (the chief of the Division of Forestry and then of a newly founded Forest Service) under Theodore Roosevelt, Pinchot played a leading role defining what conservation entailed and bringing it to the public's attention.

Pinchot's stance on forest policy over time developed in a radical direction (Miller 2013). Initially he sought cooperative relations with private industry to get them to practice forestry (meaning permanent management of forests under the principles of silviculture). He did this despite believing that public control would ultimately be necessary. By the nineteen-teens he took a more forceful stance, promoting the view that forestland owners and lumber companies must be made to practice forestry through legislative compulsion. By 1933 he was of the opinion that regulation would not work, because the "timber land owners" would end up with control of "the agency that regulates them" (Nixon 1957:130). It would be necessary to progressively nationalize forestland. By the time Pinchot had come to this position, his allies in the forestry movement were

individuals who could be safely classified radical and in some instances considered themselves socialists.

It is with Pinchotist conservation that the environmental movement came closest to developing an actual socialist politics. There are other manifestations of socialist environmentalism—some much more explicitly socialist—but Pinchotism came the closest to translating this tendency into a real political program. What was this program? Pinchot (1998 [1947]:506) defined it as "the ownership, control, development, processing, distribution, and use of the natural resources for the benefit of the people." In other words it entailed an expansive program of public ownership and management. Although Pinchot was not himself a socialist (he referred to himself as a "Theodore Roosevelt Progressive") (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:4), the program he advocated had an underlying socialistic substance. This was more fully realized by Pinchot's radical followers, and it was not lost on his critics, such as a pro-industry forester who complained of Pinchot's "determined effort to socialize the forest industries" (Maunder and Fry 1972:28). Under Pinchot's influence conservation was something more than a technical program of resource management. Pinchot believed that, "The earth. . . belongs of right to all its people, and not to a minority, insignificant in number but tremendous in wealth and power." He thought that resources should be utilized in accordance with this principle. This meant for him that "the principles of Conservation must apply to human beings as well as to natural resource" (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:506,509).

Pinchot was an unlikely standard bearer for such a program. This is perhaps why the substance of his conservation approach is presently obscure. A socialist, who was one of Pinchot's closest allies on forestry matters, commented on this: "Gifford Pinchot's evolution was really remarkable. The son of a wealthy, conservative family, a graduate of Yale, by every rule of the game he should have been found on the side of the vested

interests" (Zon 1946:545). It was Pinchot's elite background and family connections that explain his rise within government (Pinchot 1998 [1947]; Miller 2013). That conservation arose from the top of the political and social hierarchy, as the historian Samual Hays (1959) pointed out, is undeniable. In radical scholarship (Kolko 1963; Weinstein 1968) the close association between conservation and Theodore Roosevelt's policies, has contributed to skepticism about Pinchot's populist rhetoric.

The conventional view in historical scholarship is that Pinchot's anti-corporate rhetoric and self-identification of conservation and the "common good" was inconsistent with the movement's actual program. This was the interpretation of Hays (1959:262), who proposed that the scientists and technicians (foresters, geologists and others) who led the push for conservation policies in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century were animated by the spirit of efficiency, which was an outgrowth of the technical concerns of their respective professions. This same ideal of efficiency, Hays argued, was shared by the large corporations then emerging, and this led to a natural alliance. Based on an analysis of the conservation programs under Theodore Roosevelt, Hays concluded, that "when the conservation movement arose, it became clear that larger corporations could more readily afford to undertake conservation practices, that they alone could provide the efficiency, stability of operations, and long-range planning inherent in the conservation idea."

Although Hays's emphasized the professional ideals of resource managers as a determinant of their actions, he did not bother to examine if his characterization fit with the actual forestry profession. There is but one mention in his book of the forester's professional society, for instance, the Society of American Foresters. This is significant, because it was in the forestry profession that a more clear realization of a radical approach to conservation emerged. There were actually two antagonistic conceptions of forestry. One was the view that forestry should serve a public function. This was the Pinchotist

ideal. And as we shall see, this was something that appeared to bring out the radical implications of conservation, as manifested in a movement for public control of privately owned forests. The other conception was a more conventional professional attitude that sought to extricate forestry from its "crusading" or activist spirit. This was the view of industrial forestry (meaning forestry associated with the lumber industry). This second approach and the political positions with which it was associated corresponds closely with the corporate-friendly politics Hays erroneously attributed to Pinchot.

Study Design

The form of conservation that arose from radical forestry therefore appears to be something exceptional. Whereas usually the radical implications of environmental science are submerged, here they were brought to the surface. This thesis therefore examines the characteristics of this framework of conservation, including the factors that account for its radicalism, the reasons for its decline, and the possibility that it might have contributed to a more genuinely radical conservation movement. The singular nature of the case examined and the misconceptions about Pinchotism in the historical literature justify an in-depth, descriptive, historical case-study analysis.

To provide a partial re-interpretation of conservation history, I utilize archival collections that offer a window into the life of some of Pinchot's radical followers and others in their milieu. Four archival collections were examined: the Robert Marshall Papers, the Benton MacKaye Papers, the Gardner Jackson Papers, and the Aldo Leopold Archives (*henceforth* cited as RMP, BMP, GJP and ALA respectively in footnotes). A few oral histories from the Forest History Society have also been incorporated. These are first hand accounts of foresters who worked through the period under examination (Fry and Maunder 1965; Maunder and Fry 1972; Fry et al. 1974; Fry 1975). The debates over

forestry and conservation that appeared in the *Journal of Forestry*, which is the journal of the Society of American Foresters, have also provided an invaluable record of the times. Finally, I have made extensive use of secondary sources, in particular recent histories (Miller 2013; Anderson 2002; Sutter 2009), that have begun to provide an alternative perspective to the conventional account of Pinchotism.

Three chapters comprise the body of this thesis. The first chapter examines the rival approaches to conservation that developed in forestry, and how and why the Pinchotist faction came to a radical position. Next it seeks to account for the decline of Pinchotism, first in the Society of American Foresters, and second, in their failure to establish a foothold in conservation movement organizations.

What kind of world did the Pinchotists' envision taking shaping if their objectives were realized? Chapter two provides an elaboration of the more radical Pinchotist foresters' vision of a sustainable and just social order. To provide a comprehensive depiction of the world they envisioned, I extrapolate it from the writing of five notable individuals representing the tradition. The writings used mainly date to the nineteen-thirties when a more radical and clear conception of planning had developed. This chapter provides an indication of the radical Pinchotists' views on capitalist development, reform, economic justice and sustainability.

The more radical approach to conservation was not fully realized outside of Pinchotist forestry. Chapter three examines the relation between conservation and American radicalism to account for this. A historical review of the various manifestations of a radical undercurrent is provided to make clear which political variants could had affinities with the conservation movement. Specifically, I examine populism, land reform and socialism. This chapter provides an indication of the type of radical conservation

that was developing, and which could have developed more fully under more favorable circumstances.

CHAPTER II

PINCHOTIST FORESTRY AND PRIVATE PROPERTY, 1919-1945

In October 1933 the *Journal of Forestry* published an article by a prominent conservationist—whose name I withhold—calling for a reformulation of, "man's relationship to land and to the non-human animals and plants which grow upon it." The author expounded a critical view of the economic system's effect on the environment. "[T]he interactions between man and land," he wrote, "are too important to be left to chance, even that sacred variety of chance known as economic law."

The case of forestry provided clear support for this contention. The owners of private forestland had failed to adopt the methods of forestry practiced by the Forest Service in the National Forests. "Why?," asked the author, "Economics won't let them." The circumstances he summarized would have been familiar to any forester: The continental market in timber made tree cropping unprofitable until virgin stands had first been exhausted. High costs associated with protecting forests compelled forest owners to liquidate their stands even when prices were low. The lack of confidence in the industry was further undermined by competition from substitutes.

The manner in which the lumber industry and other land-based industries functioned contradicted expectations that conservation might be instated through economic self-interest. For some areas of conservation this was never a realistic hope. The prospects for migratory game fowl—subject to both habitat loss and overshooting—were not good, the author wrote, "because motives of self-interest do not apply to the private cropping of birds so mobile that they 'belong' to everybody, and hence nobody."

But while the author issued this stinging indictment of the economic system, he would not leave his readers with the impression of his support for any controversial political program. The article included a section on "Economic Isms" denouncing, "Socialism, Communism, Fascism, and especially the late but not lamented Technocracy" in like measure. All were, "competitive apostles of a single creed: *salvation by machinery*." To the conservationist they offered, "familiar palliatives: Public ownership and private compulsion." The author hoped that a harmonious relationship between humanity and the environment could be achieved without any form of legislative compulsion. In fact the article's purpose was to elaborate the author's proposal that a "conservation ethic" might function as an alternative to increased government intervention.

The complex problems associated with the human economy's exploitation of the environment, he argued, could best be mitigated through an enlightened understanding of nonhuman life as worthy of ethical consideration. If such an ethic arose, he believed, good land practices would be implemented through social sanction. "Granted a community in which the combined beauty and utility of land determines the social status of its owner," he wrote, "and we will see a speedy dissolution of the economic obstacles which now beset conservation."

Similar ethical standards had led consumers to boycott the products of child labor, he observed. The Audubon Society's boycott killed the millinery feather. Following this line of thinking, the author foresaw the contemporary trend of environmental marketing:

> the lumberman who is now unable to practice forestry because the public is turning to synthetic boards may then be able to sell man-grown lumber 'to keep the mountains green.'... [C]ertain wools are produced by gutting the public domain; couldn't their competitors, who lead their sheep in greener pastures, so label their products?... Would not many people pay an extra penny for a 'clean' newspaper?

The author allowed that it would be wise for the government to establish standards and verify the legitimacy of products labeled for conservation. This was one area he believed it right for the government to expand its role.

The Land Ethic and the Specter of Public Control

The author is Aldo Leopold, and this *Journal of Forestry* article was his first published proposal for a "land ethic" (Leopold 1933:635,637-640,642). It would reappear in edited form as the defining chapter of his classic book *A Sand County Almanac* (Leopold 1966 [1949]:237-64).

Today Leopold's promulgation of a "land ethic" is recognized as an essential event in the development of an environmental worldview. In the more eloquent presentation of the idea that appeared in the book, Leopold (1966 [1949]:258) employed an ecological concept of "land health" ("the capacity of the land for self-renewal") as part of his ethical criteria. "A thing is right," the book reads, "when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Leopold 1966 [1949]:263). The environmental discourse of the post-WWII period is based heavily on ecological conceptions, and Leopold's normative understanding of ecology has become a foundational part of it (Brulle 2000).

But the historical context in which the "land ethic" was first proposed reveals that its conceptualization had as much to do with the political-economy of conservation as with an emerging ecological conscience. The subject of private property was both a pressing concern and a controversial topic in conservation. Leopold, and others in his circle, were uneasy about the problem of privately owned land and the socialistic implications of its misuse. This unease is expressed in Leopold's published writing of the 'thirties and 'forties, and in his correspondence (Meine 1991).

Jay "Ding" Darling—the famous cartoonist Franklin Roosevelt selected to head the United States Bureau of Biological Survey (later renamed the Fish and Wildlife Service)—for instance, shared these concerns in a 1935 letter to Leopold. Darling recognized in Leopold's philosophy an attempt to devise an individualist foundation for conservation. He shared Leopold's concerns about government control. Darling estimated that he had attended 150 conservation conferences in his capacity as Bureau Chief. Rarely had land owners been present at these conferences, and, as far as he was able to tell, owners were "unimpressed" with their content. "As I look back upon those meetings," he wrote Leopold, "I have a feeling that we have been theorizing about the use of lands to which we had no title. . . . [W]e have been planning dresses for another man's wife. . . . The end of that roads leads to socialization of property."[1] Such was an eventuality Darling hoped to avoid.

Douglas Wade, another correspondent, sent a similar letter to Leopold in 1944. The subjects of "many" of Leopold's essays, he observed, "point in the direction of socialism or national planning." Wade believed that impatience for change made, "many of us who are working in the conservation arts. . . fall easy victims to national planning and socialism." Conservationists, he suggested, required philosophies to guide away from these apparent dangers. Wade praised Leopold as, "one of the few wildlife men who has attempted to give us some guideposts." The letter referenced Friedrich von Hayek's recently published *The Road to Serfdom*, a book which warned that national planning leads to tyranny.[2]

What gave rise to these individuals' unease? Hayek (2006 [1960]:320) observed that one of the "chief arguments" which has, "persuaded people of the necessity of central

[1]Darling to Leopold 12/20/1935, series 1, box 1, folder 9, ALA. The letter is also quoted in Meine (1991:363).

[2]Wade to Leopold 9/30/44, series 8, box 1, folder 3 ALA.

direction of the conservation of natural resources" is the idea that "the community has a greater interest in and a greater foreknowledge of the future than the individuals." Theoretically there is a strong case that broader social units like communities or nations have a greater interest in conservation than the individual firms who dictate the manner in which resources are utilized. K. William Kapp (1971:xiii,xxvi) theorized that there is a, "built-in tendency to disregard those negative effects on the environment," that are "external" to the accounting process of firms in a system of private enterprise. For Kapp this dynamic revealed a fundamental defect of capitalism that would necessitate a replacement of "individual investment decision[s]" with "public assessment and measures of control."

In a proposed study of conservation and economics Leopold recognized that such disproportions between social costs and private profit are prevalent in land-usage (Meine 1991:387-8). "Economics have sought a profit motivation for conservation practice," wrote Leopold, "There are profits, but they usually *accrue to the community* rather than to the individual." The proposal referenced the content of Darling's comics, and the writing of Paul Sears and Stuart Chase, as highlighting disproportions between social costs and private profit in land-usage that gave impetus to what he considered governmental over-reach: "Hence, men like Paul Sears, Stuart Chase, and Jay Darling, are able to compile impressive lists of malpractices, i.e., practices obviously damaging to the community, but no landowner lifts a finger to remedy them. The only action resulting is more government intervention" (Meine 1991:387).

A great deal of public intervention in land-usage, and other areas, was taking place during the New Deal. Leopold was critical of much of it.[3] The New Deal had certainly

[3] 'I have probably written more criticisms of the New Deal ventures in conservation than any other person in North America" (Leopold to C.G. Littell 12/5/1947, series 8, box 1, folder 3 ALA). See the original version of "The Conservation Esthetic" for Leopold's (1938) most incisive criticism of the New

raised the prospect of planning and in some cases, like the TVA, public enterprise. But for the most part the New Deal's land and resource utilization programs were haphazard. The more adventurous programs in this regard, like the Soil Conservation Service and the Submarginal Land Program of the Resettlement Administration, were not given adequate backing (McConnell 1953; Wooten 1965). The more consequential programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Agriculture Adjustment Act had more to do with providing emergency relief than with any clear vision of modifying dysfunctional land-usage—and this is precisely why these programs were problematic from the viewpoint of conservation. Only an extreme individualist like Hayek could see in these developments a trend towards socialism in land-use.

The principal concerns of the organized conservation movement of the inter-War period—as represented by such organizations as the Izaak Walton League, the National Parks Association, and later the Wilderness Society and the Emergency Conservation Committee—was for wildlife and nature conservation (Fox 1981; Mitchell 1989; Gottlieb 2005). Organizations like these put politics aside and worked towards defensive ends. This wing of the conservation movement was in no position to propound the sort of political views that made Leopold and some of his associates anxious.

The Source of Leopold's Unease: Pinchotist Forestry in 1933 and the "Stampede for Nationalization"

There was one community within the conservation establishment whose politics were such to warrant Leopold's unease, and it was within the forestry profession. It is no coincidence that Leopold's land ethic idea was first published in the *Journal of Forestry*,

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Deal land's programs. Like the "The Conservation Ethic," this essay would also be edited into *Sand County Almanac*.

a publication of the Society of American Foresters (SAF)—the professional organization representing foresters. That there were foresters who strongly favored public control had much to do with the influence of Gifford Pinchot, the nation's Chief Forester from 1889-1910, and an originator of conservationist ideology (Miller 2013). Of all the elements in conservation Pinchotist foresters were the ones with the most definite notions of the needs for social control over natural resources and for national planning. To the extent that conservation was associated with such a political position, it was largely due to the Pinchotist influence.

When Leopold's essay on the land ethic was published, a long-smoldering debate on the devastation of privately owned forestland had been recently reignited (Steen 2004 [1976]; Miller 2013; Montgomery 1962). An editorial in the October 1933 issue of the *Journal of Forestry*—the same issue in which Leopold's article appeared—made reference to a, "stampede for nationalization during the past year or two" (Shepard 1933:632)—a reference to the position of the Pinchotist faction who, by the nineteen-thirties, had come to the conclusion that forestland must be publicly owned. Conservatives within the profession resented Pinchot's "determined effort to socialize the forest industries," as a forester critical of Pinchot put it (Maunder and Fry 1972:28). The subject was a source of controversy in the SAF, and Leopold's *Journal of Forestry* article was most certainly devised as an intervention in this debate.

1933 saw Pinchotist foresters at their most bold and radical. Over the previous year, the Forest Service had been engaged in the composition of *A Plan for American Forestry*—known as the "Copeland Report" after its Senate sponsor Royal Copeland of New York. This was an exhaustive study of the status of forests in the nation (Steen 2004 [1976]). Both the findings of the Report and their interpretation bolstered the radical foresters' stance.

The Copeland Report was the first major report by the Forest Service since 1920. The scope of the Report made it necessary to evaluate the progress of forestry on private land and ascertain whether the Forest Service's cooperative programs with industry were making a difference. Assistant Forester Earle Clapp, who supervised the Report's composition, hoped it could show the various ways forestry could be conducted to serve the public interest (Steen 2004 [1976]). The resulting study was a massive, two volume tome, which detailed the major problems of the nation's forestland, and outlined a sweeping plan to address them.

The Report's findings were uniformly unfavorable to private industry. "[P]ractically all of the major problems of American forestry center in, or have grown out of, private ownership," it stated (Steen 2004 [1976]:202). The problems it identified included both environmental problems associated with the mistreatment of forestland and resulting damage to soils and watersheds, and the social consequences of transient forest exploitation, including land abandonment, tax delinquency and unemployment. Summing up the problems of private exploitation, the Report stated:

> Laissez-faire private effort, upon which the United States has largely depended up to the present time and which is avowedly planless from the national standpoint, has seriously deteriorated or destroyed the basic resources of timber, forage, and land almost universally. It has not concerned itself with the public welfare in protection of watersheds. It has felt little or no responsibility for the renewal of the resources on which its own industries must depend for continued existence and much less for the economic and social benefits growing out of the perpetuity of resources and industry (U.S. Forest Service 1934:41).

These issues were ultimately a result of forest industries' cut-out-and-get-out practices and disinterest in the public welfare (Clapp 1934).

One of the factors that shaped the Report's policy proposals was its finding that there was, "a serious lack of balance in the constructive efforts to solve the forest

problem." Clapp discussed the issue at Society of American Foresters Convention in December of 1933. Nearly all the actual forestry that was taking place occurred under government auspices, he reported. "[I]t is unnecessary to go very much beyond the fact that nearly 90 per cent of the constructive effort as measured by recent expenditures has been made by the federal and other public agencies." Public expenditures on private lands in the form of subsidies for such things as fire protection, "exceeded private expenditures on the same lands." If the case of the management of forests on private and public lands was viewed as, "a trial. . . of the relative effectiveness of public and private ownership," then Clapp concluded, "private ownership has so far failed, and failed conspicuously."

The situation warranted a reevaluation of the public-private system of forest management that had developed in the US. Regulation should be established to control the destructive practices of private timber owners, the Report proposed, but its major emphasis was on the need for a massive, multi-year acquisition program to expand government ownership of forestland (U.S. Forest Service 1934; Clapp 1934; Steen 2004 [1976]).

Clapp (1934) described the reasoning for this proposal in the discussion that followed a 1933 address to a convention of the SAF. As it happened Aldo Leopold was assigned as a discussant and directed discussion to the broad needs for conservation (Society of American Foresters 1934a). Clapp responded that conservation issues were among the concerns that persuaded the Forest Service to favor an expansion of public ownership. "The whole broad field for forest lands that Mr. Leopold calls conservation," stated Clapp, "I would call forestry. There was a feeling among those of us who prepared that report that the job should be done in the best interest of the general public and to do so a larger share should go into public ownership." Under public ownership the Forest Service could practice, "management in a broader sense than for growing timber alone"

(Society of American Foresters 1934a:183). It also was a prerequisite to carry out the sort of planning that a broader program of forestry involved. "Public ownership" is required, the Report stated, "to make it feasible to carry out anything approaching the national planning necessary" (U.S. Forest Service 1934:468).

In January 1933, a couple months prior to the release of the Copeland Report, Franklin Roosevelt requested Gifford Pinchot's input on the forest situation (Sutter 2009). Pinchot, who had not been working directly in forestry for some time, sought out the opinions of associates (Miller 2013; Sutter 2009; Nixon 1957). The men he turned to were Robert Marshall and Raphael Zon—well known in the profession for their socialist leanings. Zon, a colleague from Pinchot's days in the Forest Service, had been close with Pinchot for decades (Steen 2004 [1976]). He was regarded as one of the leading figures in forestry research (Schmaltz 1980a,b). Marshall, a younger man, and Pinchot had been acquainted for three years. They first met when Marshall, Pinchot, Zon and other foresters collaborated on an open "Letter to Foresters" (Sutter 2009). This letter published in the *Journal of Forestry* rebuked foresters for complacency in the face of forest devastation, and urged them to embrace a commitment to the public interest as a professional ideal (Ahern et al. 1930). In the 1933 letter to Roosevelt Pinchot, Zon and Marshall agreed on two points that should be emphasized. One of these points would become a notable New Deal policy: that forest work could supply emergency relief employment for large numbers of people. The other anticipated the recommendation of the Copeland Report. "Private forestry in America. . . is no longer even a hope," read the draft sent to Roosevelt, "The solution of the private forest problem lies chiefly in large scale public acquisition of private forest lands" (Nixon 1957:v.i:130).

When the letter to Roosevelt was written Marshall might have had prior knowledge about the Copeland Report's conclusions. Many foresters had been engaged in the

Copeland Report's composition since work began in the Spring of 1932 (Steen 2004 [1976]). Marshall, in fact, was the author of the section dealing with recreational-use of forests (Sutter 2009). In any case the Pinchotist faction saw in the Copeland Report a vindication of their views. When the Report was made available Marshall wrote Pinchot that, "the forest service has at last taken that lead in pushing a progressive forestry policy that you have so justly criticized them in the past for not taking." The views taken were views Pinchot had been "preaching ten, twenty, and even thirty years ago."[4]

These are remarks that get at the substance of Pinchotist forestry. Pinchot, first of all, preached the responsibility of resource administrators to serve the public interest. This was in contrast to the view of many foresters that resource management should be a disinterested, technical endeavor (Miller 2013). The next aspect of Pinchotism was belief that resources should be under public control. Marshall credited Pinchot for establishing the principle that, "natural resources properly belong in public ownership."[5]. Zon (1946:544) concurred. After Pinchot's death, he wrote that Pinchot believed, "that all natural resources should be publicly owned or under public control." One of Pinchot's great achievements, he argued, was his recognition of the "social implications of conservation."

In the Fall of 1933 Marshall published a book that stands as the most radical statement on conservation. The book titled *The People's Forests* advanced a perspective on conservation that was unambiguously socialist. Marshall argued that conserving the economic, environmental and aesthetic values of forests required public ownership, national planning and—going a step further than the Copeland Report—the nationalization of logging and milling operations. For Marshall (1933:100,123) the

[4]Marshall to Pinchot 2/28/1933 and 3/28/1933, box 9, folder 5, RMP.

[5]Marshall to Pinchot 3/29/1939, box 9, folder 5, RMP.

socialization of forests was a matter of the disparity between individual and social values. An individual lumber operator, he wrote, "does not consider what is best for the nation as a whole, but instead only takes into account what is conducive to his immediate profit." But under public direction, he argued, "social welfare is substituted for private gain as the major objective of management." This is what explains Leopold's concerns about the socialist direction of conservation.

"*The People's Forests*, by Robert Marshall. . . not only attacks the abuses of private enterprise, but the institution itself," wrote a concerned Paul Sears (1988 [1935]:111,209), who had similar reservations about the political direction of conservation to Leopold. Sears, like Leopold, was one the individuals who educated Americans about ecological principles. The above quote is from his book, *Deserts on the March*. This was perhaps the first book for a popular audience in which the word "ecology" appears. "We are on the eve of a determined movement to increase greatly the property held and administered by government," Sears warned in the books final chapter—though he gave no indication of this "movement" besides Marshall's book. The movement that worried Sears never came into complete fruition, but the concerns of Leopold, Sears, Hayek and others were entirely justified by the trajectory of Pinchotist forestry.

Environmentalism and the Problem of Public Control

The period in which conservationists were forced to contend with problems of private property was also a transitional period before the emergence of environmentalism in the decades following WWII. The environmental movement would affirm the ecological and aesthetic concerns for wilderness and biological diversity illuminated by Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*. It defined itself according to environmental, not social,

concerns. The Pinchotist program of planning and social control of land and resource use did not inform post-WWII environmental politics.

The demise of Pinchotism is conventionally explained in environmental histories as a matter of Pinchot's utilitarian view of nature and the environmental movement's rejection of it (Miller 2013). In the version of the "land ethic" essay that appeared that in *Sand County Almanac*, Leopold (Leopold 1966 [1949]:258-6) argued that the "dissensions" among conservationists can be narrowed to a "single plane of cleavage." One group of conservationists, Leopold proclaimed, "regards the land as soil, and its function as commodity production," while the other, "regards the land as biota, and its function as something broader." Leopold could have been describing the differences between him and Pinchot in this passage. Pinchot (1910:42) ascribed to the doctrine of the "fullest necessary use" of resources, and in his view the doctrine premised that productive uses of resources precede other uses. This position put him at odds with proponents of wildlife and scenic preservation (Hays 1959; Fox 1981). The historian Samuel Hays argues that the environmental movement redefined the value of the natural environment in human life and in a way that was antithetical to Pinchot's Progressive Era understanding of nature as a store of productive resources (Hays 1989; Hays and Hays 1989). "[T]he older conservationists of the Pinchot vintage simply could not accept the change," he writes (Hays 1989:23)

The context in which Leopold's land ethic idea was first proposed problematizes this account. Although the land ethic idea would become synonymous with a new outlook on nature, when it was first proposed it was upheld as an alternative to government control over resources, as advocated by Pinchotists. Those who supported such a program were not all opposed to nature preservation. In fact Leopold was well acquainted with a Pinchotist who shared his views on wilderness preservation—Robert Marshall.

Leopold and Marshall may not have known each other in the Fall of 1933 when the *People's Forests* and Leopold's *Journal of Forestry* article were both published, but they knew *of* each other because both were well known voices in forestry and leading proponents of wilderness preservation. In fact Leopold wrote Marshall in 1930 to praise an article on wilderness preservation Marshall had published in *The Scientific Monthly* (Sutter 2009). The two became well acquainted after 1935 when they joined with others to found the Wilderness Society (Sutter 2009). Marshall was not the only Pinchotist among the Wilderness Society's founders. Benton MacKaye and Bernard Frank—who like Marshall and Leopold were trained foresters—were also proponents of public control and planning (Sutter 2009; Anderson 2002). An authoritative study of the Wilderness Society by Paul Sutter (2009) demonstrates inter-War wilderness activists saw no contradiction between wilderness preservation and Pinchotist resource administration. To the contrary Marshall believed that wilderness areas would be vulnerable to encroachment if other forestlands were not suitably managed. As Sutter (2009:225) writes, "Preservation and utilitarian forestry were, for Marshall, symbiotic commitments, not antithetical worldviews. The former required the latter, and both required a government willing to thwart the liquidation of old growth and the destruction of wilderness."

But while inter-War conservationists may not have perceived a contradiction between the two areas of conservation, later environmentalists did. It is easy to account for this perception. The post-WWII environmental movement had ideological and organizational connections with the preservationist wing of the conservation movement (Mitchell 1989; Dunlap and Mertig 1992).

In contrast Pinchotists failed to establish an organizational base that would persist into the environmental era and influence it. Grant McConnell (1954:463,467) described

the circumstances of organized conservation's decline at midcentury. A movement once, "hailed with some justice as the most democratic movement the country had seen in years" was by then, "small, divided and uncertain." The factions who espouse the cause, he wrote, "appear at times to represent the particular interests, some as selfish as the special interests which were so denounced in the Progressive era." By the time the environmental movement arose the democratic character of conservation—which was always a matter of the Pinchotist influence—was lost. Today what is called "conservation" is devoid of political substance. None of the groups categorized as conservation organizations in the appendix of a study of contemporary environmental politics espouse anything resembling the politics of Gifford Pinchot (Brulle 2000).

The purpose of this chapter is to ascertain the factors contributing to Pinchotism's emergence, radicalization and finally its dissolution. In the first of two sections that follow, I examine the political-economic context in which Pinchotism arose and review the characteristics of the political program with which it was associated. The other substantive section will analyze the failure of Pinchotism to develop an enduring organizational base of support. The conclusion places this episode in the context of subsequent environmental activism and the social influences that contribute to Pinchotist conservation being a somewhat unlikely radical movement.

The Emergence of the Private Land Controversy

When conservation emerged as a national problem the movement's principle concern was public, not private, land. Conservation arose in the context of frontier expansion. The public domain was being disposed under land and settlement laws devised to initiate the privatization of westward resources as rapidly as possible (Veblen 1923; Pinchot 1998 [1947]; Robbins 1976 [1942]; Dunham 1937). A movement for

conservation first coalesced in the late nineteenth century in reaction to the waste and disorder accompanying the public domain's disposition (Robbins 1976 [1942]; Pinchot 1998 [1947]). Over time conservation came to stand for a policy of retaining land in the public domain and placing it under some form of permanent protection. The establishment of parks and National Forests, as well as agencies to administer them, stand out as the principle successes of this early phase of conservation. This phase of conservation ran its course with the passage of the frontier. Afterward conservation's progress depended upon a more controversial subject, its application to privately owned land.

The Initial Phase: Public Reservations

During the initial phase conservationists were fortunate to have the support of large, powerful corporations. The explanation for this confluence of interest is economic. After decades of disposition from the public domain the choicest parcels of land were consolidated and the opportunities for land-grabbing wound down. Accordingly large business firms came to dominate resource extraction. The corporate interests were chiefly interested in avoiding excessive output associated with conditions of heightened competition. If supply could be managed the holders of resources could anticipate to gain from the appreciation of assets acquired at little to no cost from the public holdings. The opportunity to control output was recognized with the passage from abundance to scarcity (Conant 1913).

Thorstein Veblen (1923:194) identified this sequence as the generalizable course of development in the extractive sector. "[T]he outcome is monotonously the same," argues Veblen. The "initial waste" of resources, he observed, gives way to their, "eventual ownership on a large scale and on a quasi-monopolistic footing." The transition to control

by large, quasi-monopolistic corporations occurred at precisely the moment that concerns over waste and scarcity sparked interest in conservation. Veblen (1923:194) further notes the sequence was typically, "helped along covertly and overtly by official and legislative furtherance." This is undoubtedly a reference to conservation policy. The policy of public reservation was attractive to corporate interests because it tied up resources that would otherwise be disposed and function as a weight on the market, and this is why the lumber industry enthusiastically backed the National Forest System (Robbins 1976 [1942], 1982).

Government resource administrators recognized the confluence of interest. They associated competition with destructive waste and believed that low prices stalled the adoption of expert management (Hays 1959; Robbins 1982). The alliance of government resource administrators and corporations, argues Samuel Hays (1959:266), reflected, "a mutual revulsion against unrestrained competition and undirected economic development."

Theodore Roosevelt's presidency marked the climax of conservation's early phase. The President enthusiastically backed the programs of government resource administrators, and in doing so, established conservation as a definitive policy of his administration. Under Roosevelt the Forest Service was established and its timber and grazing program was upheld as a model for other resource sectors. The President tripled the area within the National Forest System and withheld other valuable public lands from entry. These achievements were realized with the backing of powerful economic interests (Pinchot 1998 [1947]; Hays 1959; Robbins 1976 [1942]).

Gifford Pinchot achieved notability in this period as the architect of Roosevelt's conservation policy. Although he was known to rail against special interests and concentrated wealth—he would denounce the monopolization of resources as a danger equal to their waste (Pinchot 1998 [1947])—in his time as Chief Forester (1898-1910)

Pinchot pursued goals beneficial to large corporations (Hays 1959; Robbins 1976 [1942]). Pinchot assured corporate lumber operators, for instance, that the National Forest policy would benefit them because the Forest Service would withhold timber grown on public land from saturated markets in order to allow the price of lumber to appreciate (Hays 1959). Corporate representatives, such as F.E. Weyerhaeuser and the president of the National Lumber Manufacturer's Association, accordingly joined the National Forest Congress to support the transfer of the nation's Forest Reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture, where they could be administered under Pinchot's direction (Pinchot 1998 [1947]). The transfer was one of Pinchot's great achievements, as it allowed for the organization of the Forest Service.

The disparity between Pinchot's anti-corporate, populist rhetoric and conservation policies that seemed to benefit large corporations has led scholars to question whether conservation was indeed a movement to control corporations. The historian Samuel Hays's (1959) canonical study of the Progressive Era conservation movement, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, advanced this perspective, identifying the movement's substance in the applied sciences of resource management, namely forestry, geology and hydrology, not popular democracy. The goals of conservation, Hays (1959:2) argued, arose from the "professional ideals" of resource administrators who sought to realize the efficient development of resources through planning based on the concepts of multiple-use resource administration and the utilization of resources according to their "highest-use." The movement partnered with corporate interests, Hays (1959:262) argues, because conservationists recognized that corporations were the only institutions that, "could provide the efficiency, stability of operations, and long-range planning inherent in the conservation idea."

The Late Phase of Conservation: Private Property and Public Forestry

The early phase of conservation aligns closely with Hays's thesis, but the mutual revulsion against competition was a weak basis for an enduring partnership between corporations and conservationists. With Roosevelt's aggressive reservation policy and most of the desirable parcels of free land already in private hands, the conditions that define the early phase had largely run its course. Henceforth another phase of conservation commenced. The conservation of public lands was established as a successful national policy—however much the purposes of public land management would remain controversial—and conservationists paid greater attention to the misuse of privately owned land. This is the problem that defines conservation's late phase.

The years following Roosevelt's presidency—which mark the transition of conservation to this new phase—were also a period of dramatic episodes. The most dramatic episode of the period was Pinchot's termination by President Taft. Roosevelt's successor subscribed to a theory of the limited executive authority that was inimical to the Roosevelt-Pinchot conservation policy (Pinchot 1998 [1947]; Hays 1959). Behind the scenes tension came out in the open when Pinchot publicly backed the charges of a Department of Interior employee who accused Taft's Interior Secretary, Richard Ballinger, of impropriety over his approval of suspicious Alaska coal claims made on behalf of the Guggenheim Syndicate. Pinchot was fired from the Forest Service for insubordination in 1910. The episode would become known as the Ballinger-Pinchot Affair. It split the Republican Party and precipitated Roosevelt's Bull-Moose candidacy in 1912, which tilted the election to Woodrow Wilson (Pinchot 1998 [1947]). Another dramatic incident of the time was the damming of Hetch-Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park which divided the conservation movement. Before the Hetch-Hetchy controversy there were already cracks in the relationship between the wise-use wing of the movement, led by

Pinchot, and the preservationist wing embodied by John Muir. Muir and his supporters had been miffed by Pinchot's failure to invite Muir to the Conference of Governors on the Conservation of Natural Resources in 1908. The two had substantive differences over such as issues as grazing on public lands. Hetch-Hetchy was the last straw. Pinchot supported the violation of the Yosemite's integrity on the grounds that the "highest possible use" of the valley was as a reservoir for the residents of San Francisco (Miller 2013:140). This was unforgivable for Muir, and other supporters of conservation, such as the women's clubs, were alienated by Pinchot's stance (Hays 1959; Fox 1981).

These dramatic events overshadow the historical shift that had considerable impact on the prospects for conservation. A defining aspect of the late phase was a controversy over the appropriate mechanisms to expand conservation to private land. The progress of the movement depended upon such an expansion, and there were two possibilities: government cooperation with property holders or public control.

Long before conditions were suitable to make public control over private forests a reality, Pinchot had already come to the conclusion that government control of logging was necessary. He had come to the conclusion while studying forestry in Europe in 1889 and 1890. (Pinchot 1998 [1947]). Upon his return to the United States Pinchot (1891:9,54) read a paper before the American Economic Association, in which he argued that it was a "general proposition" proven by the history of forestry in other countries, that "private forest ownership" had "destructive tendencies" and that the protection of forests required the "supervision of some imperishable guardian, or, in other words, of the State." He was critical of his mentor's view—the esteemed German forester Dietrich Brandis—that in the US forest conservation, "must be by large private companies" (Steen 2001:40), and the view of Bernhard Fernow, his predecessor in the Division of Forestry, that government control of forests would be "unjust" to owners of private forestland

(Pinchot 1998 [1947]:34). But the objective of control, Pinchot later remarked, was "a generation beyond our reach" (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:35).

As a the nation's Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot laid the groundwork for the Forest Service's cooperative programs with industry. *Cooperation* entailed the adoption of conservative practices on a voluntary basis through government encouragement, education, grants of technical assistance and subsidy. At Pinchot's initiative in 1898 the Division of Forestry (the precursor to the Forest Service) instituted an early cooperative program known as "Circular 21." The program made Division personnel available to forestholders to assist them drawing up management plans (Pinchot 1998 [1947]; Steen 2004 [1976]). Circular 21 was discontinued in 1909 for a combination of reasons. Government foresters' efforts shifted to the management of public lands after the 1905 transfer of the Forest Reserves which involved a considerable increase in the bureau's responsibilities. Industry, in turn, found the working plans of government foresters impractical. But the experience brought government foresters in close contact with industry, contributing to the establishment of congenial working relations between the two, and establishing relationships from which later cooperative programs developed (Steen 2004 [1976]). Under Pinchot's successors in the Forest Service cooperative work was greatly expanded, most significantly in the area of aid for fire protection (Robbins 1982; Steen 2004 [1976])—though Pinchot had become critical of these efforts by that time (Miller 2013).

As of 1910 Pinchot became convinced that the time was ripe to push for regulation of cutting on private land. In March of that year he proclaimed in his diary his resolve to "force the lumbermen to go into forestry *in fact*" [emphasis added] (Steen 2001:153). The phrasing of the entry suggests Pinchot's suspicion over industry's ostensible support for the practice. Later that year in his address to the Second National Conservation Congress

he urged the conservation leaders in attendance to push for the regulation of logging on private land (National Conservation Congress 1911). The National Conservation Association, an organization Pinchot headed, subsequently came out in favor of federal regulation (Price 1911).

From here on Pinchot was increasingly concerned by what he perceived as the Forest Service's coddling of industry. He became critical of how conservation was being used, as a front for policies that would bring about the "consolidation of timber ownership and extension of operations to the limit allowed by the anti-trust laws," in the words of his close colleague George Ahern.[6]

In the late nineteen-teens Pinchot initiated a campaign for federal regulation through the Society of American Foresters which challenged the Forest Service's largely cooperative and conciliatory approach (Miller 2013). Pinchot's campaign for regulation did not achieve much momentum until after WWI. In 1919 a SAF Committee on the Application of Forestry was formed to study the problem of privately owned forestland and make policy recommendations. Pinchot chaired the Committee and selected its membership. After four months of study and deliberation the Committee published its findings in the December issue of the *Journal of Forestry* (Miller 2013). The Committee's report "Forest Devastation: A National Danger and a Plan to Meet it" (Society of American Foresters, Committee on the Application of Forestry 1919) outlined a far-reaching program, and drew up model legislation, to reform the lumber industry and halt "the conversion of productive forests to idle wastes" (Pinchot 1919:899). The report was published alongside a fiery editorial by Pinchot (1919) titled "A Line is Drawn," which heralded the new phase in the struggle for conservation.

[6]Ahern, "Hoover Drifting Far From the Theodore Roosevelt Forest Conservation Policy" *Bulletin* of the National Popular Government League No. 160 11/1/1932, box 5, folder 4, RMP.

In the editorial Pinchot charged that "The fight to conserve the forest resources of our public domain has been won" (Pinchot 1919:899-900). It was now necessary for foresters to enlist in a "bigger fight" to establish conservation in privately owned forests. The editorial blasted the idea that the industry would reform its practices without compulsion, or, "through persuasion, a method which has been thoroughly tried out for the past twenty years and has failed utterly." The editorial's title made it clear that foresters were being told to choose sides—they were either on the side of industry or the public's.[7]

By targeting the forestry profession Pinchot was attempting to direct the course of its development. Pinchot believed that conservation should be a democratic force in society. "To Gifford Pinchot," wrote Zon (1946:544), "the conservation of natural resources did not mean merely their physical protection, but their relationship to the welfare of all the people depending upon them." Many idealists were drawn to forestry because of Pinchot's identification of it with the public interest. Another approach to forestry, however, was growing in momentum, primarily as a consequence of the influence of the lumber industry. Forestry developed in the United States initially as a public enterprise, but in the nineteen-teens foresters were beginning to find lucrative positions in industry, often as spokespersons and policy experts. This faction of the forestry profession sought to direct forest policy towards cooperation in place of regulation (Robbins 1982). A major cleavage had developed in the profession between public forestry and industrial forestry and Pinchot's intervention in the SAF was an attempt to bolster the public position (Miller 2013).

The Pinchotists, believing that all land should be put to its highest-use, maintained that land unsuited for agriculture should be restored to forest, and maintained permanently

[7]This editorial is discussed in two major historical works, one a history of the Forest Service (Steen 2004 [1976]) and the other a recent biography of Pinchot (Miller 2013).

in a productive state, rather than cut, abandoned and left to grow what it could. Proponents of industrial forestry could not countenance such a policy. Their abiding concern was the overabundance of timber (Anonymous 1919; Kneipp 1928). They complained that it would be an injustice to force owners of timber stands to grow wood that would weigh down the market.[8]

While the issue of regulation versus cooperation was the primary dimension on which the cleavage between public and industrial forestry emerged, the split in the profession had broader implications. Proponents of industrial forestry espoused the belief that the way to establish forestry was to work closely with industry to discover how it could be profitably practiced. For this end foresters needed constructive, business-like relations with industry. It was imperative therefore, the adherents of industrial forestry exhorted, that foresters refrain from "antagonizing" industry by calling attention to its failures and deficiencies (Greeley 1917; Kellogg 1920; Maunder and Fry 1972). Pinchotists, in contrast, believed that foresters should be public advocates in broad manner. Edward C.M. Richards (1933:281), a radical forester who was part of the Pinchot faction, accused the profession of lacking guile, by allowing industry to seize the legislative initiative. There was contention over the proper professional attitude of foresters and the appropriate range of professional concern—with Pinchotists taking a more expansive view of forestry's purpose than advocates of industrial forestry. Pinchotists looked to how forestry could be used for environmental and social ends, while

[8]Foresters sympathetic to the lumber industry supported public acquisitions of forestland, for the same reasons the industry supported public reservation, and especially of lands already cut-over (Greeley 1917; Kellogg 1920). The scale of acquisition recommended in the Copeland Report and the implication that the public play a greater role in competition with industry, however, was alarming. At the 1933 SAF convention John W. Watzek, a board member of the National Lumber Manufacturers Association, expressed industry concern over, "talk regarding national forests selling timber in competition with private owners" prompted by the Copeland Report. A forestry professor with industry sympathies, at the same convention, worried that an increased government role in lumber could drag down prices: "Isn't it possible that we may be embarrassed by growing too much wood?" (Society of American Foresters 1934a:185,190).

the industry-minded foresters thought the field should lay more emphasis on such things as wood utilization and fire protection which would be of value to industry (Maunder and Fry 1972).

The report on "Forest Devastation" of the SAF Committee provides an instructive example of this difference. The committee did not confine their attention to a narrow consideration of forestry, but also took heed of the problem of workers in the forest industry. Their report criticized the "notoriously bad" working conditions that prevailed lumber camps, suggesting that the issue of the lumberjack was in the purview of forestry because working conditions were exacerbated by the industry's cut-out-and-get-out practice of forest exploitation: "Housing, sanitary arrangements, and hours of labor too often have been outrageous, and living conditions intolerable, and this because the lumber camp and lumber town exist only long enough to skin the timber from the land" (Society of American Foresters, Committee on the Application of Forestry 1919:932). The legislation the Committee drafted to regulate lumbering contained provisions to establish collective bargaining with a representative of workers' own choosing (Society of American Foresters, Committee on the Application of Forestry 1919:941-2).

It is no mere coincidence that William Greeley, one of the leading proponents of cooperation and industrial forestry, took special exception with the committee's labor proposal. Greeley was the number two person in the Forest Service when the committee issued its report, and was the point person between the Forest Service and industry. A year after the report was issued he became Chief Forester, and served in that capacity for nine years before retiring to become a spokesperson for the Westcoast Lumbermen's Association (Robbins 1982; Steen 2004 [1976]). Greeley espoused a more narrow consideration of the forester's professional concerns in contrast with Pinchotism. "Forestry deals with land," he argued:

> and whatever the the views of the members of the Society as to the proper adjustment of the relations between labor and employers, we would do well to confine our efforts as foresters strictly to the problem involved in the use of land. . . . Let us stick to the subjects in which, as foresters, we can claim some degree of expert knowledge (Greeley 1920:105).

In response Ferdinand Silcox (1920:317)—a member of the SAF committee, and also a future Chief Forester—defended the provision, arguing, "Surely forestry must concern itself with something more than a study of parenchymatous tissue in trees." Silcox proposed that "The definition of forestry must be broad and inclusive enough to cover all of those correlated factors which determine the practicability of making a 'timber-cropping' vs. 'timber-mining' program effective."

Over time the advocates of public forestry came to see even regulation as inadequate, for the reason that—even under regulation—private forestland could not be managed in a manner consistent with the broad social and environmental benefits of forests. Such ends, they purported, could only be realized with forestry as a public enterprise on public land. This was the view expounded in Marshall's *People's Forests* and in the Copeland Report. Leon Kneipp—director of the Forest Service's Division of Lands and one of the staunchest Pinchotists in Forest Service officialdom (Fry et al. 1974)—made the case in a 1928 article on "Industrial Forestry." Privately practiced forestry had serious limitations in comparison with public forestry, he charged: it "cannot realize financially upon the important by-products of forest lands such as improved environments, stream-flow protection, etc.;" it "does not enjoy the same opportunity to rent money at minimum interest rates;" and it "cannot minimize its unit costs of research and experimentation by spreading them over as wide an area of management or as diversified a field." While industrial forestry must be funded by the sale of lumber, public forestry was not subject to the same restraints. Its expenses can be justified through "numerous indirect returns to society in the way of better environment, stabilized

streamflow and climatic conditions, more diversified and secure industrial growth, broader culture, and other concomitants of an adequate forest capital" and "not only the volume and value of timber produced." This was the sort of social accounting Kapp (1971:xxvi) had in mind when he theorized that "social costs and environmental disruption may well become the principal driving forces of institutional change in the foreseeable future."

Aside from clarifying the divisions among foresters, Pinchot's post-WWI campaign in the SAF did not lead to material results. The SAF membership endorsed the committee's plan of federal regulation and a bill modeled after committee's proposed legislation was introduced in the Senate by Arthur Capper in May of 1920. The Forest Service under Chiefs Henry Graves and William Greeley opposed this measure. Graves advocated a middle course devised to achieve consensus between industry and conservation-minded foresters (Graves 1920; Steen 2004 [1976]). A bill introduced in the House of Representatives by Bertrand Snell was crafted by Greeley and industrial representatives based on Graves' plan (Robbins 1982; Steen 2004 [1976]). This measure would have made federal funds for cooperative forestry available to state governments that issued regulatory controls over forest cutting. Pinchot opposed this framework on the theory that the states with considerable forestland were the very states that would be least likely to enact adequate controls (Pinchot 1920; Steen 2004 [1976]). As it turned out even the weak regulatory provisions in the Snell bill were too much for Congress. Both bills languished until Greeley redrafted the Snell bill without the regulatory provisions. This version of the bill was enacted as the Clarke-McNary Act, a law formalizing cooperative forestry practices between the federal government, states and industry (Steen 2004 [1976]).

The Forest Service took a moved towards the Pinchotist position in the nineteen-thirties. The publication of the Copeland Report and Roosevelt's appointment of Silcox

as Chief Forester set the course. An address by Silcox to the 1934 convention of the SAF was notable for being the first instance of a sitting Forest Service Chief calling for federal regulation of logging (Robbins 1982). The title of the address, "Foresters Must Choose" echoed the message of Pinchot's 1919 editorial. In the address Silcox (1935:203-4) outlined the course of public forestry that he wished the SAF to support. "The public point of view... must dominate the economic and silviculture thinking of our Society," he declared, "We must base our forest policy not merely upon the need for timber, but also upon such other considerations as stability of communities and employment, dovetailing of agriculture and forestry, and balanced use of land resources." Foresters must resist the compulsion to act as "mere technicians" who "avoid expressing their views on social and economic matters."

A letter from Pinchot (1935:211), read before the same convention, struck a triumphant tone:

> Public acquisition of forest lands on a large scale, supervision over cutting on private lands, sustained yield management as a means of maintaining permanent communities, recognition of the social purposes of forestry as more important than private forests—these are no longer ideas to be spoken of only in whispers. I rejoice with you that aggressive forestry, eager and unafraid, is coming back.

But while Pinchotist foresters were optimistic about the prospects for a comprehensive national forest policy under a progressive New Deal administration, the results fell short of expectations.

Roosevelt added land to the National Forests but not on a scale commensurate with the recommendations of the Copeland Report. Foresters never prevailed upon Roosevelt the need to regulate forest cutting. Several New Deal initiatives put the Forest Service on the back foot. The lumber industry was given the opportunity to regulate itself under National Recovery Administration lumber codes (Robbins 1982; Steen 2004 [1976]).

Although the Lumber Code Authority was dissolved after court challenge a month prior to the Supreme Court's 1935 decision against the NRA (Robbins 1982), this failed experiment channeled effort away from regulation. The 1933 Taylor Grazing Act set up an alternative grazing administration to the one in the Forest Service in the Department of the Interior (since renamed the Bureau of Land Management). Grazing under the Interior's program was administered under the guidance of local advisory boards that included ranchers (Robbins 1976 [1942]; Steen 2004 [1976])—a concession to local control that marked an initial step toward an undermining of the doctrine federal control of national lands upon which the principle of conservation was established (DeVoto 2005 [1954]; Fry et al. 1974). Although Roosevelt's plan to reorganize executive agencies was interrupted by WWII, considerable effort went into fighting the proposed transfer of the Forest Service to the Interior Department (Steen 2004 [1976]). Foresters identified with the mission of the Department of Agriculture as an agency devoted to scientific land-use, and distrusted the Interior Department because of its checkered record as the agency responsible for disposing public lands. When reorganization had been proposed in the past it always seemed an effort to sideline the Forest Service.[9] The circumstances of Earle Clapp's anomalous 1939-1943 term as Acting Chief Forester reflect Roosevelt's probable view of the Forest Service. Silcox died in 1939 and Roosevelt left the agency in limbo without an official appointment for these four years. Pinchot pleaded with Roosevelt to no avail for Clapp to be given the appointment (Steen 2001). It is safe to speculate that the reason Roosevelt hesitated, and ultimately decided against, appointing Clapp was

[9]Such a transfer was previously proposed by Hoover. George Ahern described the prevailing opinion at the time: "The President has urged the removal of the Forest Service from the scientific atmosphere of the Department of Agriculture to a proposed Public Works Department. The well established policy of the Agriculture Department has always been to manage scientifically the lands which it controls; but quite different is the policy of the Interior Department, *which is chiefly concerned with land disposal.* By transferring the forests to the proposed new department [Interior Department under a new name] the efficiency of management would be impeded *and the ease of transfer to private interests facilitated*" (Ahern *ibid.*)

due to Clapp's uncompromising views on public ownership and regulation, as well as his opposition to Roosevelt's plans to reorganize federal land agencies.

The Fate of Pinchotism

It is apparent that the professional ideals, theorized to have set the course of scientific conservation, were a matter of serious contention. The cleavage in the forestry profession did not emerge until it became necessary to expand the focus of conservation to private land. Hays (1959) did not recognize it, but differences on this matter were a factor in the splintering of the conservation movement after Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. Foresters who had worked under Pinchot in the Forest Service were going over to the lumber industry, like Royal Kellogg, who became a forester for the National Lumber Manufacturers Association, and E.T. Allen who headed an industry front group, the Western Forestry and Conservation Association. They and the American Forestry Association—the principle forestry advocacy organization—would oppose the course Pinchot advocated. Pinchot was on the outside of the conservation establishment.

But for a time Pinchot's ideas still had force and it was because they were accepted by a vocal and determined contingent of foresters. These foresters made their fight within the Society of American Foresters. It is within this professional organization that the fate of Pinchotism laid, because conservation was, indeed, a scientific movement, and to have legitimacy a far-reaching public forestry program needed the support of the profession.

The Society of American Foresters, 1919-1934

The Society of American Foresters was founded in 1900 by Pinchot and the close circle of foresters who worked under him in the Division of Forestry. Its purposes were to promote forestry, increase the technical competence of foresters, and aid institutions

established to train foresters in a nation just discovering the profession's value (Pinchot 1998 [1947]). Pinchot, moreover, hoped that the organization might help to endow the profession with sense of public responsibility that he hoped would permeate the Forest Service (Miller 2013). The SAF as he saw it was, "welded together into what was later to become the vital core of the Forest Service—vital in loyalty to all that the Service stood for" (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:151).

Foresters who attended the SAF's early meetings—held at the Pinchot family estate—would have been indoctrinated about forestry's public mission, as Pinchot and his closest colleagues conceived it. Even those who would later become critical of Pinchot recounted coming under his influence early on (Fry and Maunder 1965; Maunder and Fry 1972). Emmanuel Fritz, a vehement critic of Pinchot's efforts to bring privately owned forests under public control, describes coming into the profession in these early days. Foresters were, he recounts, "inoculated [sic] with the philosophy of the day that Pinchot was a sort of messiah in forestry and that everything he did was correct." Initially the indoctrination took hold. Fritz reminisced, "I had never met a man of such captivating personality as Gifford Pinchot. He had a magnificent bearing. . . and he spoke with such fervor about politics, conservation and forestry that I was captivated by the man" (Maunder and Fry 1972:21,23).

One of the advantages which control over the SAF afforded was editorial control of the *Journal of Forestry*. The *Journal* was the principal publication in forestry. Whoever controlled had the ability to propagandize down the ranks. This was particularly important to Pinchotists because their status in the profession was predicated upon stirring up sentiment. As Leon Kneipp noted, forestry, "is motivated by a spirit of social service and by individual desire to work creatively and constructively for the advancement of mankind." But such objectives, "are apt to be obscured in a cloud of technical or

administrative minutia and thus lose their dominating significance to the individual unless they are vivified in somewhat dramatic and appealing ways through appropriate media and at appropriate intervals, if not continuously" (Society of American Foresters 1934b:902).

During the initial campaign for regulation the Pinchotists' control within the SAF was an asset. At this time Frederick Olmsted—nephew of the famous landscape architect and a staunch Pinchotist—was the organization's president, and Raphael Zon edited the *Journal of Forestry*. The Pinchotists utilized the advantage this afforded. The Committee on the Application of Forestry's report was printed in the *Journal* and mailed to the press before the Society's membership had approved it. When the proposals of the committee went before the membership the ballot did not give members a choice to vote for state regulation in place of federal regulation. Opponents of the committee's position objected to both these decisions (Olmsted 1920b; Adams 1920; Sherman et al. 1920; Montgomery 1962).

A year after the vote took place the opponents prevailed and a second poll was arranged giving members the option of specifying whether they favored federal or state regulation (Society of American Foresters 1921; Montgomery 1962). These two membership polls provide an indication of the status of Pinchotism in the SAF in the period. In the first poll the proposal to endorse federal regulation passed by a 3-2 majority, and all other proposals of the committee passed with only a single exception. Even the controversial proposal concerning labor unions—an indicator of the of the membership's social views—carried (Olmsted 1920b). But the membership endorsed state regulation by an overwhelming 2-1 majority in the second poll, casting into doubt the earlier result. The result of the second poll would appear less ambiguous than the earlier poll, but the *Journal* reasoned why this might not be the case. By the time the

second ballot was issued it was clear that the Capper bill had no chance of enactment. Members in contact with the *Journal's* editors explained that they voted to endorse state regulation, "for reasons of expediency, or with the idea that it should be given a trial as a stepping stone to Federal control later on" (Society of American Foresters 1921:318).

Whatever the case, the deference with which Pinchot was held in the profession would decline in the coming years. An election for the SAF presidency held at the 1933 convention was a crucial turning point (Montgomery 1962). The election, which coincided with the Forest Service's more progressive turn, pitted Earle Clapp against H.H. Chapman. Had Clapp won, he would have done what he could to bring the SAF behind the ambitious programs the Forest Service leadership had conceived. Chapman, however, had a good sense of the strength of the opposition and made the election a referendum on the Society's relationship to the Forest Service. The "dominant issue" in the election, he charged, "was whether the officers of the Society for the next two years should be Forest Service men" (Society of American Foresters 1934c:232). In later years he would recount how his victory helped rid the SAF of Forest Service influence, by which he meant the public conception of forestry (Montgomery 1962). From this point Pinchotism was clearly marginal within the Society. A few years after Chapman's election Marshall wrote Zon complaining that that there was not "a truly liberal man" on the eleven member executive council of the SAF.[10]

The failure to hold the SAF clearly emboldened opponents of public forestry. When Silcox delivered his 1934 SAF address urging foresters to support public forestry, Chapman (1935:204-5) countered, in a rejoinder titled "The Responsibilities of the Profession of Forestry in the Present Situation," urging political moderation. He warned foresters not to get caught up in "the crusading spirit of the ancient days"—a reference

[10]Marshall to Zon 12/31/1937, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

to the time when Pinchotist ideals dominated the profession—or the new "spirit of the New Deal." The tables were turned on the Pinchotists who had previously used the SAF to rebuke the policies of Chiefs Graves and Greeley. Silcox's efforts were hampered by dissent within the profession. A letter Zon sent to a colleague provides indication that dissension was rife in the Forest Service: "Silcox, with all his good intentions, cannot overcome the mass inertia and opportunistic philosophy of the key men of the organization. A general, after all, cannot charge too far ahead of his army."[11]

Two critics of Pinchotism who were active in the SAF provide accurate assessments of what lay behind the transformation of the forestry profession. Both attributed the decline of Pinchotism to its rejection by growing number of foresters working in industry. Franklin Reed (1930:463) made the observation at the start of the nineteen-thirties:

> An increasing number of [foresters] each year finds a more profitable opportunity for their forestry knowledge and skill in the business field, in the forest industries, and in operation of private timber properties. Amid such surroundings the forester inevitably must look upon forestry as a business proposition, to be practiced with a due regard for financial profit, rather than a public cause to be striven for with something akin to a religious zeal.

Emmanuel Fritz concurred:

> When I adopted forestry as a profession I had one single purpose—to put forestry in the woods. I had heard or seen too much of condemnation of lumber destroying the forest, too much missionary zeal, too much worship of Pinchot. At the same time, there was a growing number of young foresters going into private employ who had the same idea I had (Maunder and Fry 1972:178).

These assessments are corroborated by Leon Kneipp, who was critical of the transition. The SAF, argued Kneipp, became a lobby seeking to encourage the growth of public funds for industrial forestry under the guise of government-industry cooperation. "It

[11]Zon to George Ahern 5/14/35, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

was perfectly obvious to members of the Society, other than those who were federally employed or state employed," he recounted, "that unless there was a great increase in private forestry there would not be any great increase in the profession." The transformation led him to resign his membership: "I resigned on the grounds that it seemed to me to be an agency designed primarily to defeat the objectives and goals of Gifford Pinchot. . . . Later for the same reasons, I resigned from the American Forestry Association, which is a joke" (Fry et al. 1974:107)[12]

One of the consequences of the Pinchotists' marginalization was the loss of the *Journal of Forestry*. Previously under Zon's editorship the *Journal* had provided an important venue for the Pinchotist foresters to expound the doctrines of public forestry. Zon, however, gave up the editorship in 1928 in order to devote more time to research (Society of American Foresters 1934d). Fritz became editor in 1930 and took the *Journal* in another direction. He aimed to reduce the *Journal's* political content and focus on technical aspects of forestry (Maunder and Fry 1972; Montgomery 1962). This editorial focus continued under Franklin Reed who took over the editorship in 1933. So Fritz explained: "he had the same general ideas about the private enterprise system that I had, that is, anti-socialism." (Maunder and Fry 1972:187).

Zon complained that *Journal* had become, "the vehicle of innocuous articles on measuring sample plots and similar inconsequential matters." Fritz's objective, he asserted, was to, "eliminate all worthwhile articles that touch on more fundamental forest issues, and wherever possible change imperceptibly the attitude of the profession in favor

[12]Pinchot resigned his membership of the AFA in 1943 (Steen 2001). The Pinchot group had discussed resigning from the AFA in the early 'thirties. The group however held out hope of the possibility of "reforming the organization from within" (Pinchot to Marshall 1/20/1932 and 4/1/1932 and Marshall to Pinchot 2/13/1932 and 3/25/1932, box 9, folder 5 RMP).

of the lumberman." The issue was serious, because, "the progressive membership of the of Society has completely lost control of its only literary outlet."[13]

In June of 1934 twelve foresters, including Pinchot, Zon, Marshall, Silcox, Clapp and Kneipp, petitioned the SAF's Executive Council for a reformulation of editorial policy (Society of American Foresters 1934d; Montgomery 1962). The "editorial policy of the Journal," the petitioners charged, "no longer represents the broad social ideals of the founders of the Society." It was, "a satisfactory outlet for some of the scientific findings of the profession," but it lacked "the spirit of social leadership which was once a distinguishing characteristic of the profession." The group demanded that the Council appoint an editor "with strong social convictions but tolerant of the opinions of others," and that the editorship be made independent of the Executive Council (Society of American Foresters 1934d:781-782). The petition was a last attempt to stall the Pinchot group's marginalization (Montgomery 1962).

There was heated debate over the petition in the pages of the *Journal* and at the 1934 SAF convention (Society of American Foresters 1934d,b; Montgomery 1962; Maunder and Fry 1972). At the convention Chapman (1935) cited the petition in his attack on Silcox as an instance of Forest Service pressuring the Society to follow its line. Silcox objected that he had been smeared (Society of American Foresters 1935a). When Fritz addressed the convention he crossed a line even Chapman was wary of. "In launching his defense," recounted Chapman, "he deliberately attacked one of the signers in a personal manner, accusing him of communist sympathies" (Montgomery 1962).[14]

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[13]Zon to Marshall 2/13/32, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

[14]The debate was mysteriously stricken from the convention's proceedings (Maunder and Fry 1972; Montgomery 1962), possibly because it would have embarrassed Fritz. In an oral history Fritz maintained that he did not accuse a petitioner of being a Communist, but merely pointed out that the newspapers had reported that morning that Marshall was under investigation by Congress for alleged Communist sympathies (Maunder and Fry 1972), however much the distinction matters. Marshall was indeed under investigation by Martin Dies's House Un-American Activities Committee. Silcox would also come under

It was apparent that the petitioners did not have the support to hold sway. Leon Kneipp moved to table the issue and the question of editorial policy was put to rest (Montgomery 1962; Maunder and Fry 1972).

The petition, Chapman later recounted, was, "the last serious effort of the Forest Service men to dictate policies to the Society" (Montgomery 1962:6-5). Fritz concurred. When the petition was issued, "It was already plain that the Pinchot group was losing control of the SAF" (Maunder and Fry 1972:179). In Fritz's estimation the "socialist" presence in forestry went into decline by World War II and a post-war attempt to "resuscitate" it failed (Maunder and Fry 1972:140-1).

An Alternative Forestry Platform?, 1934-1943

There were some notable developments involving Pinchotist foresters in the nineteen-forties. In 1945 the International Woodworkers of America, a union of the CIO, hired Ellory Foster—a Pinchotist forester—to push a sustainable forestry agenda (Loomis 2016:89-122). Another effort also centered on the CIO. Anthony Wayne Smith, executive secretary of the CIO's Committee on Regional Development and Conservation, moved the confederation to embark on an ambitious campaign for a "national forest with park units comprising the entire coast redwood belt in California" (Smith 1952:193). Smith, a lawyer, had previously worked as Pinchot's secretary and he would go on to become a long serving president of the National Parks Conservation Association (Miles 1995). The legislation Smith and the CIO hoped to instate was drafted by stalwart Leon Kneipp and introduced into the Senate by Helen Gahagan Douglas (Fry et al. 1974). These efforts suggested the possibility of a grassroots constituency in the labor movement

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the Committee's attention too (Gardner Jackson to Robert Marshall 9/30/38, box 46, folder 11, GJP, and "High Federal Aides Are Linked to Reds at House Hearing" 1938 *New York Times* August 18, p. A1

for Pinchotist conservation. If organized labor was an important backer of post-WWII environmentalism (Dewey 1998), then Pinchotism deserves credit for helping put the labor movement on such a track.

Yet these campaigns came at a time when Pinchotism was a marginal presence in forestry and its continued decline shows that something was needed so that it might persevere and potentially rebuild a following later. Had Pinchotists attempted to found an advocacy organization to function as a counterweight to the American Forestry Association it might have helped. Decades earlier, Pinchot's National Conservation Association was such an attempt. But that organization failed to attract a membership (Hays 1959) or to develop a life apart from Pinchot and dissolved in 1923 when Pinchot embarked on a political career (Miller 2013). Conditions might have been conducive for another attempt in the context of New Deal progressivism.

In fact there were discussions by the Pinchot group over the possibility of a new forestry organization or at least an alternative forestry publication in the nineteen-thirties and forties. When the Pinchot group petitioned against the editorial policy of the *Journal of Forestry* the petitioners raised the possibility of the establishment of a rival forestry publication (Society of American Foresters 1934d), something Marshall, Pinchot and Zon had discussed over the previous two years. Marshall, the most capable of the younger acolytes of Pinchot, would have been well-suited to lead the effort. Significantly Marshall had the means to fund a new forestry organization or periodical. He was the son of a wealthy New York lawyer, and his personal fortune bankrolled the Wilderness Society in its early years (Sutter 2009). When the initial discussions were held about the founding of a rival publication he stated his interest in funding the operation of a "militant pamphlet service" to disseminate the views of the group, modeled after the newsletters of the National Popular Government League, the People's Lobby and the American Civil

Liberties Union.[15] The group, however, appears to have prioritized fighting to reform the culture of the SAF.

Marshall suffered a fatal heart attack in November of 1939. He was just 39.[16] The group was still fighting it out within the SAF in Marshall's final years. He did not lose any interest in the issues of forestry and public ownership even after he became absorbed in the operation of the Wilderness Society. A letter to Zon composed on New Year's Eve 1937 expressed the continued resolve of Marshall and Wilderness Society colleague Bernard Frank to get advocates of public control elected to the SAF council.[17] In that year he also gave two talks before the People's Lobby, a radical group, on public ownership of natural resources. One of the talks was being prepared for publication in the radical magazine *Common Sense* in the year of his death.[18] Marshall, an energetic personality and effective leader, was the most likely person to carry on Pinchot's legacy. His death deprived the conservation movement of an important voice at a critical time.

The death within a month of each other of Marshall and Silcox prompted Pinchotists to consider how they might preserve their legacies. A plan to form a "Marshall and Silcox Memorial Association" was devised by Zon and others. Pinchot and New Dealers Rexford Tugwell and John Collier offered to contribute some money to the endeavor. A prospectus written by Zon describes the purpose of the proposed group:

> The object is to propagate and give expression to the ideas to which Marshall and Silcox devoted their life efforts. These ideas, briefly stated, are: (1) social

[15]Marshall to Pinchot 2/13/1932 and 3/25/1932, box 9, folder 5 RMP.

[16]Marshall's death was brought on by advanced leukemia which he had kept secret from his friends and colleagues. Gardner Jackson to Raphael Zon 11/14/39, box 79, folder 8, GJP.

[17]Marshall to Zon 12/31/1937, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

[18]Drafts of "Public Ownership and Development of Natural Resources" (delivered at the People's Lobby Luncheon) and "Public Ownership of Natural Resources" (submitted to *Common Sense*). Marshall also addressed a People's Lobby Luncheon on "What Private Ownership of Forests Means" (carton 2, folders 28 and 33, RMP). Marshall discussed publication with *Common Sense* editor Alfred Bingham in correspondence dated 2/21/1939, 2/24/1939, 3/2/1939, 3/13/1939, and 6/10/1939 (box 6, folder 4 RMP).

> control of privately owned timberlands; (2) development of forest resources for the benefit of the people as a whole and not for any special group; (3) stimulation among professional foresters of a sense of social responsibility for their work, and cultivation among them of an interest in public affairs as citizens of the country.

The group would sponsor lectures, issue pamphlets, and publish an "honor roll" of foresters who contributed to the purposes Marshall and Silcox espoused. The old idea of an alternative forestry periodical—"something which Bob and I often talked about"—was again floated. Zon suggested that the Association might issue "three or four times a year a little leaflet consisting of comments and interpretations of forest events." He again reasoned that such a platform was needed, "because at present the forestry profession is dominated by the conservative wing which controls also the *Journal of Forestry*. The younger and more progressive members of the profession have no outlet for their opinions."[19] The group behind the Memorial Association appear to have gotten as far as deciding that Ellory Foster would lead it (Loomis 2016), but it does not appear that the Association fully materialized.

One more possibility for a new forestry association was spearheaded by Earle Clapp. After being passed over to head the Forest Service Clapp was resolved to carry forth advocating for forestry outside of government. Clapp met with Pinchot to discuss his idea for a new forestry organization to take up the fight for public control of the lumber industry in January of 1943 (Steen 2001). Three trusts had been formed out of Marshall's estate to advance the causes he supported. Clapp concluded that the Marshall trusts were the natural venue to seek funding.

The three causes specified in Marshall's will for which he wished his $1.5 million estate devoted were the "preservation of the wilderness conditions in outdoor America";

[19] A plan for the Memorial Association was provided to the Robert Marshall Foundation. Zon to George Marshall 7/8/1940, box 79, folder 1, GJP.

"the cause of civil liberties"; and "The education of the People of the United States of America to the necessity and desirability of the development and organization of unions of persons engaged in work or of unemployed persons and the promotion and advancement of an economic system in the United States based upon the the theory of production for use and not for profit."[20] Clapp's plan fell outside of the area of civil liberties, but it did touch upon the preservation of wilderness and "production for use and not for profit." Clapp submitted his proposed "project designed to advance American forestry" to two branches of the Marshall trust.[21]

Clapp envisioned the establishment of a small "one man and secretary" organization to "lead the fight" for public regulation and "a greatly enlarged scale of public ownership" of forests. A new forestry organization was needed, he explained, because, "No known nongovernmental organization has the combination of understanding, incentive, courage, and financial backing needed to fight for the controversial issues involved. . . . Even satisfactory means of publishing the public interest side of the issues are almost wholly lacking." What impetus there had been for public control of forests had come from within the Forest Service, "under serious governmental limitations and handicaps," and against the opposition of "reactionary interests, powerful and entrenched." The organization would publicize the issue, agitate, and partner with other organizations.[22]

Unfortunately Clapp's proposal fell through the cracks of the charters of the respective trusts. Two members of the five member board of the wilderness trust were prepared to approve the proposal. The other three trustees, all officials of the Wilderness Society, voted against approval. To this trustee William Zimmerman objected that his

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[20]"Last Will and Testament of Robert Marshall," 7/12/1938, box 79, folder 1, GJP. See also Gottlieb (2005) and Sutter (2009).

[21]Earle Clapp, "Social Project Based on Land and Forests," 2/5/1943, box 28, folder 5, GJP and 3/6/1943, series 2, box 9, folder 2 ALA.

[22]Clapp, *ibid*.

fellow trustees were imposing a "narrow construction" of their charter. "Certainly the essential purpose of what Clapp has in mind is involved preservation of wilderness conditions in America," he charged, citing a passage in which Clapp warned that devastation of forests for timber threatens to "engulf. . . virgin timber *regardless of how fully some of them now seem to be safeguarded*" [emphasis added]. Zimmerman believed that Marshall would have worked with Clapp to revise his proposal so that it could be brought "within the scope of the trust." Trustee Robert Sterling Yard, who was also Wilderness Society president, acknowledged that the proposed project was something Marshall would have approved of, but maintained his opposition. "What Mr. Clapp proposes seems to me a very great work," wrote Yard, "No doubt it seemed so to Bob also, but he left no money to help it along."[23] It was clear from the makeup of the board that Marshall intended this trust to provide for longterm finances of the Wilderness Society, so Yard was probably correct.

Even if the objective of the Wilderness Society's financial provision was not an obstacle, it is not clear that the board, as composed, was entirely understanding of the objectives Clapp sought to accomplish. Yard shared Clapp's proposal with Leopold, who as a Wilderness Society official had an interest in the trust's actions. Leopold could see no reason why Clapp's proposal fell under the charter. "The fact that Bob Marshall was *also* interested in extending forestry seems to me no satisfactory answer," he wrote to Yard. Leopold also could not understand why Clapp had to start a new organization. Why not work with the American Forestry Association, he wondered.[24] This was of course an organization that consistently opposed the ends Clapp sought. Leopold fundamentally misunderstood the purpose of the cause. Yard could not see why what Clapp proposed

[23]Yard to William Zimmerman 5/11/1943 and Zimmerman to Yard 4/27/1943, series 2, box 9, folder 2 ALA.

[24]Leopold to Yard 6/8/1943, series 2, box 9, folder 2 ALA.

should require the foundation's special attention. He was amazingly under the impression that the "public appeal" of Clapp's project and "its source of money-getting" were "enormously greater than those of saving and developing fine areas of the disappearing primitive."[25] This notion of Yard's is demonstrably false in retrospect. Funders of environmental organizations generally favor preservationist groups (Carmichael et al. 2012). Leon Kneipp saw this as an important determinant of conservation advocacy. The "Wall Street group" favored recreational, wildlife and aesthetic conservation, rather than "conservation generally" (Fry et al. 1974:192).

Clapp's proposal fared no better with the other branch of the Marshall trust. Zon was one of the appointees to the board of the branch of the trust dealing with labor and socialist education, and so one would think that Clapp's proposal had a good chance of approval. Initially there was support for its approval. But trustees, including Zon, later reconsidered. This branch of the trust also concluded that the proposal was outside of their charter. The language of Marshall's will, it seems, was interpreted in such a way as to exclude proposals not involving farmer and labor education. The bulk of the trust's funds were expended on education campaigns within two mass organizations, the CIO and the National Farmer's Union. Zon supported this interpretation but expressed misgivings: "I often wonder why trade unions, and for that matter the Farmers' Union, too which handle millions of dollars, should depend on paltry contributions from a comparatively poor Foundation to educate the rank and file."[26] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this branch of the trust passed up an opportunity to advance conservation in line with Marshall's life work.

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[25] Yard to Zimmerman *ibid.*

[26] Zon to Jackson 2/27/1943 and 6/18/1943 and Jackson to Zon 7/11/1943, box 79, folder 1 GJP.

As it stood individuals subscribing to Pinchotist notions were involved in all manner of conservation advocacy. They were officials in two of the important preservation organizations—the Wilderness Society and the National Parks Conservation Association. They were active trying to get the American Forestry Association and the Society of American Foresters to take up policies of public control. Yet they failed to establish an enduring organization of their own to propagate the idea of public control over resources. Why Marshall spearheaded the founding of the Wilderness Society, and generously funded it, but not an organization dedicated to public control of forests, will remain an interesting question. Yard offered that Marshall probably, "thought it inevitable when the time should come."[27] This is entirely logical. The Pinchotists were the followers of peerless figure in conservation. They believed that their position was supported by undeniable logic and that it was morally correct. Public ownership, Marshall wrote to Pinchot in his last year of life, "is certain eventually to encompass all the major resources." It was "the only possible way which they can be handled in a manner to contribute to social and economic welfare."[28] Pinchot (1998 [1947]:21) still believed toward the end of his life that "Government control" over forests was "certain to come." This is not to suggest that they failed to fight for public ownership because they thought it was inevitable, but that they might have been caught off guard by the marginalization in bodies like the AFA and SAF in which they had been central actors. It certainly would have been difficult for them to predict that their marginalization in the conservation establishment would continue.

[27]Yard to Zimmerman 5/11/1943, series 2, box 9, folder 2, ALA.

[28]Marshall to Pinchot 3/29/1939, box 9, folder 5, RMP.

Summing Up

As has been pointed out in the conventional accounts of the movement, the Pinchotist movement was fundamentally a movement of a subclass of professionals involved in resource management. It was just a small part of a larger conservation movement, but its influence on the larger movement was far-reaching. Pinchot deserves special credit for imbuing conservation with a democratic sensibility.

That professionals like foresters were responsible for this is unusual. A longtime veteran of the Forest Service, whose work began in the early days of the agency, commented on the moderation of his colleagues. Foresters, he said, "don't indicate our moods for public exposure so easily, and perhaps—we lean conservatively, that is we don't grab at new things because by experience we've learned to be cautious" (Fry 1975:107). And yet Pinchot maintained during his life a committed following of professional foresters seeking objectives other conservationists thought controversial. It was the leadership he provided to an otherwise risk averse and moderate subset of professionals that made Pinchot's movement an exceptional phenomenon. The radical implications in the idea of comprehensive land-use and resource planning required the backing of professionals like foresters, and Pinchot provided the leadership necessary to legitimate the planning idea.

Thorstein Veblen theorized that the technical arts (science and engineering) are shackled by an irrational subjugation to pecuniary pursuits. This perspective prompted Veblen (1921:138) to entertain the notion that technicians might help to establish a planned social order in a "revolutionary overturn." But Veblen held back his optimism over this eventuality: "[T]he country's technicians," he observed, "are consistently loyal, with something more than a hired-man's loyalty, to the established order of commercial profit and absentee ownership." David Noble (1977:63) commented that the radical

disciples of Frederick Winslow Taylor—the inspiration for Veblen's notion of a "soviet of technicians"—"had to choose between being radical and being engineers. A handful chose both, and ended up being neither."

It is informative to compare the Pinchotists to this group. The Pinchotists, like the radical Taylorists, saw the potential of their field stymied by the compulsion to bring it in compliance with the narrow demands of private enterprise. But the culture that developed in forestry was more accepting of political-economic heresy than other fields of management. This is, perhaps, why Fritz wished forestry could be more like engineering. In that field, he asserted, "controversies were pretty well limited to to technical matters" (Maunder and Fry 1972:27).

The rational order that Pinchotism seemed to herald was very different from the formal rationality that Weber foresaw taking hold of the world. Pinchot's conservation was no mere "gospel of efficiency" as Hays (1959) portrayed it. It was too invested in moral questions for that. In Weber's theory the unsettling predilections of charismatic authority serve to counter an otherwise inexorable drive of rationalization (Gerth and Mills 1946). We might consider Pinchot's role in forestry as something analogous. Pinchot was a figure with almost mythlike reputation in forestry. For his opponents the "zeal" or "crusading spirit" he imbued in forestry was an unsettling influence on professional affairs.

The exceptional nature of Pinchotism explains its ultimate dissolution. The Pinchotist view of conservation emerged in public service, in the context of public land management, and internalized a public orientation into its conception of resource management. When the field of conservation expanded its focus to private property the Pinchotist conception of public forestry was challenged by the more narrow conception

of industrial forestry. Professional orthodoxy ultimately won out. The marginalization of Pinchotism in the Society of American Foresters was a serious blow.

The dissolution of Pinchotist conservation and its program of public control had profound historical repercussions on the form of environmentalism that emerged in the decades following WWII. It is conventionally assumed that environmentalism involved a rejection of Pinchotist utilitarianism. Pinchot personally had strong utilitarian biases, and these stamped themselves with no uncertainty on his Progressive Era conception of conservation. But his influence on forestry was toward a broader conception of management, based on forests as public goods. As a supporter of the Copeland Report's acquisition program declared at the 1933 SAF convention:

> Forests are essentially, intrinsically public wealth because they take in these other values. . . ; watershed protection, recreation, and all other factors, but private forestry does not recognize any of those values. . . . Private forestry is based on dollars and cents only; timbers are in the class of private wealth and forests in the class of public wealth. . . . [L]et us have more public forests (Society of American Foresters 1934a:191-2).

This was Pinchotist forestry. Marshall (1933:210) argued similarly, "Public ownership is the only basis on which we can hope to protect the incalculable values of the forests for wood resources, for soil and water conservation, and for recreation." Public forestry allowed for a fuller valuation of forests as something other than mere commodities. As such the aims of the Pinchotists to expand the National Forest System had obvious environmentally beneficial implications. Had Pinchotists gotten their way and a considerably larger area of forestland been added to the National Forest System—including land better suited for timber production overwhelmingly in private hands—the post-WWII development of environmentalism may have been considerably different. As Steen (2004 [1976]) has pointed out, the Forest Service transformed from a custodial agency to one engaged in timber harvesting in this period. Whereas the

Forest Service had a reputation as a defender of the forest, before the War, afterward it developed a reputation as one of the enemies of the forest. But how might this have played out if Pinchot's struggle for public control of private forests met with greater success? Marshall had argued that the fate of the wilderness depended on sustained yield management of lands suitable for timber production. The seeming conflict between utilitarian conservation and preservation might have been suppressed had timber lands been kept productive.

With the decline of a Pinchotist presence in the conservation movement, the later environmental movement of the post-WWII era lacked a clear political program. Without Pinchotism, or a notion of comprehensive planning for the public good, environmentalism tended towards single-issue activism. The Wilderness Society was a case in point. While its founders Marshall and Benton MacKaye looked towards public control and planning as means towards a balanced relation between humans and lands, they allied with individuals like Leopold and Robert Sterling Yard who were of a very different political persuasion. This is characteristic of how environmental advocacy organizations work. Groups are organized for specific purposes—say to establish more parks, or reduce water pollution—and they tend to avoid unnecessary political controversy, seek consensus and be opportunistic about mechanisms of reform. This sort of activism is important because it is an effective means of achieving largely defensive results. But while defensive environmentalism is essential, it operates in a void of the systemic changes upon which environmental preservation ultimately requires.

There is a congruence between single-issue environmental activism and Leopold's land ethic. Leopold's nature philosophy originated from an attempt to rid conservation of its political-economic orientation. What resulted was a powerful justification for nature conservation on its own terms. But the philosophy is also politically limiting.

Leopold's suggestion in 1933 that environmental problems might be remedied through the ethical consideration of consumers and producers is clearly insufficient in light of the scale of the present ecological crisis. Some sort of collectivist framework will probably have to be resorted to so that people can live with each other and within the Earth's means. It is difficult to see how this could be accomplished in the absence of the sort of social controls Leopold rejected. It therefore appears that the political doctrines of the Pinchotists may be of more use than a pure nature philosophy in considerations of the problem of sustainability. This however is not to argue against the legitimate criticism of development that have arisen from a more nature-centric conception of environmentalism.

Today the idea of social control of property is more controversial than ever. Federal land programs, the legacy of the conservation movement, are under broad threat, and have been so since the Eisenhower administration (DeVoto 2005 [1954]). While conservation advocates once envisioned far-reaching programs of comprehensive land reform, there has been no realistic consideration along these lines since before WWII. It is difficult to see how that sort of ambitious thinking can be rekindled. The character of early conservation movement had much to do with exceptional historical circumstances, but the precedents of that movement certainly offer lessons.

CHAPTER III

PERMANENT FORESTS AND A RURAL CIVILIZATION

One of the most notable passages in George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature*—the foundational Civil War era treatise on conservation—is a short passage on the "Instability of American Life." This passage directly follows a celebrated section on the "Duty of Preserving the Forest" for future generations. What followed was an indictment of American profligacy: "We [Americans] have now felled forest enough everywhere, in many districts far too much. Let us restore this one element of material life to its normal proportions, and devise means for maintaining the permanence of its relations to the fields, the meadows, and the pastures, to the rain and the dews of heaven, to the springs and rivulets with which it waters the earth." Marsh had a clear idea of what was at fault. The "physical face of nature" bore the marks of the "incessant fluctuation" of the country's people. "It is time for some abatement in the restless love of change which characterizes us, and makes us almost a nomade [sic] rather than a sedentary people." Marsh presciently asserted that restoration of forests to their "normal proportions" and the establishment of a "fixed ratio" of forest and cropland, "would involve a certain persistent of character in all the branches of industry, all the occupations and habits of life" (Marsh 1864:327-9). This passage is notable because it anticipated one of the more intriguing ideas of American forestry—that stabilizing forest cover depended upon stabilizing industry and employment.

The wreckage of the original forests of America comprised a process of transient exploitation. A good portion of what was destroyed was lost to what Marsh (1864:271) called the "slovenly husbandry of the border settler"—i.e., the forest clearing of the ever-on-the-move frontier farmer. The lumber industry was no less migratory. Cutting

was carried out at a furious pace, with no thought for perpetuating forests or local jobs. Various Forest Service publications paint a vivid picture of what occurred: "Each successive chapter in the history of the lumber industry in the United States has been a story of depletion and migration," states one (U.S. Forest Service 1920:13). Another similarly: "The center of the lumber supply in the United States shifts constantly, as one region is cut over and another attacked" (Price et al. 1909:9). And a third: "[D]esserted villages are signposts that too often mark the trail of lumbering operations. . . . Towns spring up almost overnight, flourish for a few years until the adjacent timber is cut out, and then sink rapidly to inactivity or even complete extinction" (Dana 1918:4).

Samuel Trask Dana (1917; 1918), then a researcher in the Forest Service's Office of Silvics (its early research division) described the fate of a typical lumber town: Cross Fork, Pennsylvania. The Lackawanna Lumber Company established operations in this isolated part of north-central Pennsylvania in 1895. A state-of-the-art sawmill was constructed, with a capacity of 230,000 board-feet per day. With Lackawanna came a railroad line, workers, retail business, hotels—seven to be precise. Investments in amenities followed: a modern high school was built; a Y.M.C.A.; an opera house; the Lackawanna Company owned a baseball team with professionals on the payroll; Cross Fork had lighting, telephones and a sewerage system.

Production in Cross Fork peaked in 1906. Three years later the saw timber was exhausted and Lackawanna closed shop. A stave-mill operated by another company remained in operation for a few more years but it too closed. Soon after rail service was discontinued and the track to Cross Fork tore up. The majority of those who had moved in for work left. Fires ravaged the slash that remained of the forest. "Desolation reigned supreme," wrote Dana (1917:361) after visiting the scene in the nineteen-teens. He described what remained, "Fires had followed lumbering; puny fire-cherries, sumacs,

and blackberry bushes now grew where mighty hemlocks had once flourished. . . . To-day Cross Fork's streets are overgrown with weeds, and the cattle graze in them undisturbed." Hotels had burned down, or were boarded up. "The high school still stands in all its glory, but, with only twenty-two pupils to be taken care of, it is a glory that the town would be only too glad to dispense with." The town's heavily reduced tax-base was left paying its bonds. Sixty inhabitants remained into the nineteen-teens, many of whom were employees of the state who had bought the timber company's land to reforest it. We can imagine that the workers moved West to other timber centers: the Lake States (which were already running thin of timber), or the Pacific Northwest, wherever the axes were still swinging.

The lumber camps of the West was was a product of migratory exploitation comparable to the ghost towns of the East and Middle-West. Edward C.M. Richards (1920:312), a forester with "personal experience of conditions in our lumber camps" and the "injustices heaped upon" the workers in them, described its typical features. These were remote cites lacking "all communication with the outside world"; where "no houses are built"; the worker lived in "freight cars or big bunk houses with crowds of other men like themselves"; "No women—good, bad, or indifferent—will come to such a place to live"; and while amenities were entirely lacking, "vermin" abound. "Add to this the autocracy of many camp bosses and the hopelessness of it all, and it is easy to see how any redblooded human being would tend to feel resentful." The one organization which spoke to men in the camp, wrote Richards, was the I.W.W.—a "most unjustly treated" group in Richards's opinion. For "demand[ing] better treatment" the I.W.W., "are beaten, tarred and feathered, or given long jail sentences."

The operation of the lumber industry had repercussions for the economies of entire regions. When the lumber industry abandoned a region, it usually left it depressed. While

lumbering was taking place farmers had a local market for their products and, through part-time work in the mills and forests, cash income they usually relied upon to pay off investments in their farms. Without the industry, unless agricultural land was especially productive, or some other industry filled the void, farmers were often displaced with the lumberjacks (Dana 1918; Zon 1929). As with Cross Creak, rural localities abandoned by industry typically were left with a reduced tax base, holding the bills of more prosperous times. Farmers typically saw their taxes increases to cover the costs of roads, schools and other amenities. The predominant feature of rural economies abandoned by the lumber industry, such as the cut-over region of the Lake States, was the prevalence of tax-delinquent lands. Raphael Zon (1929:73) observed that the "large acreage of idle land unproductive of taxable value acts as a depressive influence on the returns of the farmers in the cut-over region." He likened the effect of tax abandoned land on the farmer's income to the effect of "reserve army of the unemployed" on the wages of urban workers. These factors contributed to regional out-migration. In this way the lumber industry contributed to rural desolation and dislocation on a regional scale. "Tax delinquency, once started," wrote Zon, "forms a vortex into which other properties not yet delinquent are being constantly sucked in" (U.S. Congress 1940:1047).

The transient lumbering of the US stood in sharp contrast with the settled forestry of Europe. In 1889 a young Gifford Pinchot traveled to Europe to study forestry at the *L'Ecole National Forestière* at Nancy, and observe the forestry practices of other countries (Pinchot 1998 [1947]; Miller 2013). In France he saw for the first time a forest being managed according to a longterm plan, and how this resource sustained a population who could depend on it year to year—something that impressed him very much. "Work in these woods," he wrote, "was assured for every year, and would be, barring accidents, world without end. The forests supported a permanent population of trained men. . . and

not only a permanent population but also permanent forest industry" This was in sharp contrast to the prevailing conditions in the US where "the greatest, the swiftest, the most efficient, and most appalling wave of forest destruction in human history was then swelling to its climax. . . and *the American people were glad of it*" (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:1,13-14, emphasis added).

This ideal of permanent forests, permanent industry and permanent communities was part of the vision of sustainability associated with scientific conservation. But how to achieve it in a country with such distinct historical, geographic and political conditions from the nations of Europe was an uncertainty hanging over American forestry. The sociologist Max Weber (1946 [1906]:366-7) described capitalism and what he called "rural society" as two antagonistic systems in the countryside of the "completely settled old civilized countries." Competing logics of land-use were associated with these two forms. Under feudalism land was a source of social status. Under capitalism it is an economic good to be used to maximize profits. The countryside of the older societies was therefore a site of struggle between these separate logics. As Weber put it, "The thousands of years of the past struggle against the invasion of the capitalistic spirit." Scientific conservation in the US, was neither one or the other. As we will see, it viewed the land as a multi-faceted public good and sought the optimal use of it according to scientific principles and social welfare.

Foresters were keenly aware of the different logics of American land-use and the historical patterns that developed in Europe. An associate of Pinchot's identified some of the factors responsible for European patterns of land-use. In Europe, he wrote, forestry "is the outgrowth of a long historic development, in which density of population, scarcity of natural resources and survival of remnants of feudal system have played their part" (Zon 1938:260). "It must be conceded," wrote another forester, "that this condition

[settled land-use in Europe] is the result of centuries of evolution rather than programmed planning; that in part it represents adjustments of human needs of land use dictated by whims or personal interests of powerful landowners. Some of Germany's finest forests exist today because three centuries ago some Archbishop or Prince had greater love for the hunt than for farming" (Kneipp 1936:258-9).

Marsh's early observations of European forestry were not dissimilar. The nations of Europe that took measures to save and replant forests did so after reaching the point where the consequences of destruction were readily felt: "the destructive agency of man becomes more and more energetic and unsparing as he advanced in civilization, until the impoverishment, with which his exhaustion of the natural resources of the soil is threatening him, at last awakens him to the necessity of preserving what is left, if not of restoring what has been wantonly wasted" (Marsh 1864:39-41). Forests left intact were often the entailed forest estates and hunting preserves of the feudal nobility, a circumstance that provoked the peasants' animosity: "In the popular mind, the forest was associated with all the abuses of feudalism, and the evils the peasantry had suffered from the legislation which protected both it and the game it sheltered, blinded them to the still greater physical mischiefs which its destruction was to entail upon them" (Marsh 1864:283-4).[1]

When Pinchot toured the forests of Europe he was repulsed by the vestiges of feudalism he saw in forestry. He considered the German variety of forestry, which was something of the standard of the art, especially abhorrent (Miller 2013). One of things he witnessed that left an impression on him was the inhumanity exhibited by a Prussian *Oberfoerster* towards the servile peasants who toiled in the woods: "I shall never forget, the old peasant who rose to his feet from his stone breaking, as the Oberfoerster came

[1]This assessment is confirmed by modern historians. The eminent historian Braudel (1979:363-4) describes the peasantry as "the most dangerous" enemy of forest reserves.

striding along, and stood silent, head bent, cap in both hands, while the official stalked by without the slightest sign that he knew the peasant was on earth" (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:22). Pinchot grew skeptical about the applicability of his European training to American conditions. His mentor was the esteemed German forester Dietrich Brandis, known for his administration of forests reserves in colonial India. To what extent would the methods Pinchot was learning in Europe from Brandis and others aid him in establishing forestry in the US?, wondered Pinchot. "Dr. Brandis had done his work under an autocracy," he wrote (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:20).

It was Brandis's opinion that in the US forestry "must be by large private companies"—so Pinchot wrote in his diary (Steen 2001:40). This was another thing that failed to convince Pinchot. He left Europe convinced that American forestry must be consistent with the American "economic and political practicabilities" and "habits of thought" (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:20), by which he meant a democratic and egalitarian spirit.

Pinchot's impression of European forestry was shared by some of his close colleagues. His friend Raphael Zon was irked that associates of his were often oblivious to the authoritarian elements in German forestry and land-use. The profession he wrote had been guilty of an "uncritical, almost slavish following of European patters," especially those of German origin. He understood why the German model of forestry would appeal to lumber operators:

> An old friend of mine, a lumberman, a shrewd observer, upon returning from a trip to Germany aptly remarked that if the American lumbermen constituted a favored class in this country as the owners of the large estates were in Germany, if they occupied top government positions and shaped the policy of the country, determined the tariffs and kept labor under their thumbs, they—the American lumbermen—would be able to practice better forestry than the Germans (Zon 1951:179-180).

But why foresters, especially public servants, would be interested in the German model was, "difficult to understand or to explain" (Zon 1938:261).

Zon was especially troubled by a report on "Forests and Employment in Germany" written by a close colleague. This report looked to Germany for a model of how to establish the laudable goal of using permanently managed forests to provide employment in stable, permanent communities. Its author had traveled to German speaking countries in nineteen-thirties as part of a delegation of foresters and lumber executives sponsored by a foundation of German-American businessmen. This was of course during the Third Reich, when elements of feudalism were being reintroduced to the rural economy. The Czech forester in charge of the tour was Franz Heske—an admirer of Nazi economic policy (specifically land and labor laws) which he credited for establishing an environment conducive to the practice of forestry.[2] "Oh! What price, sustained-yield management!," Zon angrily wrote to his colleague upon reading the manuscript. American foresters who left Germany "filled with enthusiasm" for what they saw there, he asserted, "either do not understand or entirely overlook the *undemocratic* basis of this relationship as it exists there." Of course foresters should seek to establish a "desirable relation between permanent forestry and stable rural communities," but this relationship, he insisted, "must be based on the relations between free men and in the spirit of democracy," and not on a framework of a "landed aristocracy, monopoly, or military capitalism."[3]

Years later when writing about the influence of German forestry, Zon credited Pinchot as a counteracting influence: "Fortunately, the man who most profoundly affected

[2]See Franz Heske (1938) *German Forestry*, written for an American audience to promote the German forest policy and technique. The forestry delegation to Nazi Germany was sponsored by the Oberländer Trust and Carl Schurz Foundation. See Meine's (1991) biography of Aldo Leopold an interesting account. Leopold was a participant.

[3]Zon to W.N. Sparhawk 2/14/1938, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

the development of forestry in this country—Gifford Pinchot—rejected the European, especially the German, patterns and sought to build forestry on the solid foundations of the traditions and the social and economic structure of our own country" (Zon 1951:179-180). The idea that conservation in America had to be an indigenous development was also the view he expressed to his colleague in the late-thirties: "Our program must come for the economic conditions of our own country, from the traditions and ideology of our own people." Zon was confident about this goal. He believed that the foresters of the US government had made progress towards its attainment. He wrote, "I am sure that eventually we shall have in this country permanent forests, and will develop a rural *civilization* (not a medieval, barbaric peasant state) through conservation of all our natural resources."[4]

What Zon referred to—"permanent forests" and "rural civilization"—alludes to the vision Pinchotist foresters shared of a sustainable and just social order. This vision, as we see, followed from the task of conceptualizing how land-use management should function under democracy (i.e., in contrast to what what Weber deemed "rural society.") Specifically it originated from the Pinchotist tradition in forestry of land-use science in public service, and the democratic ideal of that tradition.

In the previous chapter I demonstrated that Pinchotist forestry is generally misunderstood and mischaracterized in academic scholarship. A result of this unclarity surrounding Pinchotism has been an ignorance of the sort of world Pinchotists hoped to establish through conservation. In this chapter I attempt to give shape to the vision of rural land-use and social relations that Pinchot inspired in some of his more radical

[4] *ibid.*

followers. We will see in the following that Zon's idea of a "rural civilization" established through conservation, gives a good sense of what the radical Pinchotists were after.

To represent "radical Pinchotism" I have chosen five foresters, primarily on the basis of whether or not their published output was sufficient to provide a comprehensive representation of their views. I have also utilized some unpublished material from correspondence. I extrapolate from their various writings a unified vision that no single text provides. To do this it is necessary to make certain judgments about what views were characteristic of the school even if an individual included might not have expressed himself on a given point.

The five foresters are: Leon Kneipp, Benton MacKaye, Robert Marshall, Edward C.M. Richards and Raphael Zon. MacKaye is something of an odd man out. While all the others spent their working lives as foresters, MacKaye started his career in forestry, but followed his interests from from forestry to regional planning. It is nevertheless useful to include him because his more advanced expressions provide a sense of the far-reaching significance of some of the Pinchotist ideas beyond forestry. I am justified in doing this, as will be clear, because under the auspices of regional planning MacKaye continued to work with themes characteristic of Pinchotist forestry. This will be reflected by the cohesiveness of the vision I present.

That those considered here can be called "Pinchotist" is reflected by the fact that the four foresters were signatories to the 1934 petition against the editorial policy of the SAF (as discussed in the previous chapter). That they are "radical" can be judged from their expressed views. The sources I quote and summarize to give a sense of their vision of sustainability are as old as 1909, but mainly date to the nineteen-thirties when more radical and clear conceptions of planning had developed. This represented the culmination of the Pinchotist approach to conservation, in my estimation.

To provide a comprehensive depiction of their idea of "rural civilization" I start by elaborating their critique of development, and their views of why merely affixing forestry to the present social order would fall short of what was needed. These two sections demonstrate why the Pinchotists' sought more far-reaching change. After this I summarize some of the features of the social order they envisioned. Finally the conclusion discusses the significance of this vision in relation to the concept of sustainability.

Critique of Development

The Pinchotists' ideal of a rural civilization followed from their view of the defects of capitalist development generally, but more specifically the pathologies of land-utilization that arose as the result of American capitalism. To understand their social ideal of a rural civilization it is therefore necessary to start with their critique of land-use under New World settler capitalism.

Raphael Zon was an astute observer of American development and how it differed from that of Europe. In a letter to a colleague he characterized its principle features:

> One thing that always struck me when I compared Europe with the United States, so far as lumber production is concerned, was that our lumber market tended always to be *national* while in Europe the lumber markets were largely *local*. At different periods in our history one region supplied the bulk of national needs and after it had become exhausted the center of production moved to some other region.

The river valley system, rather than political divisions like states and counties, was the primary geographic unit in this process. As Zon observed, "one valley after another was exploited, exhausted, and abandoned, and development transferred to a new yet undeveloped valley. . . . Where the picking was particularly rich, mammoth factories were established to provide the needs of the entire continent." What Zon described was

characteristic of capitalist resource exploitation under New World conditions; i.e., a land without feudal traditions, and absent customary controls or indigenous systems of land use and tenure of older densely settled populations. The effect of this sort of development, Zon recognized, "was to break up the self-sufficiency" of the various valley units. Its lasting consequence included widespread desolation, regional inequality, and incessant economic migration and uncertainty.[5]

Amongst the Pinchotists it was clearly understood that the practice of "timber culture" as opposed to "timber mining" presupposed some form of super social organization entirely at odds with the drives that characterize capitalistic production (MacKaye 1918; Kneipp 1928; Marshall 1933). Edward C.M. Richards (1932; 1933) made this case in an analysis of European forestry. There was a great deal of diversity in European forestry as to systems of ownership, methods of social control and results. Some forests, Richards observed, were publicly owned and managed as national, provincial or communal (i.e., municipal) forests; entailed forest estates were properties privately held but not under fee-simple ownership—they came with the permanent restriction that they be kept forested; other plantations were privately owned but under "regulations [which] would be considered an unconstitutional infringement of the rights of the private owner of property here in America" (Richards 1932:137); etc. Fee-simple ownership was clearly not conducive to forestry. The rotation periods in Europe's genuine plantations were above 100 years for softwood and as long as 200-300 years for hardwoods. In a true forest farm, Richards observed, the individual harvests "forests planted by men long since passed away" and attends to forests which "will be cut by men yet unborn." A degree of social organization was a precondition for this to work. As Richards observed, the "one way" this works is for the individual "to begin to think

[5]Zon to to Edward C.M. Richards 12/2/1933, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

of himself as one of a social group whose life goes on forever, even through its members drop out at the end of fifty to seventy-five years" (Richards 1932:135).

It was really only when the woods were treated as a public asset that Richards observed adequate management taking place in European Forests. Forestry "works properly only if carried on under the total or almost total control of society itself, as generally typified by the Federal Governments, States, or same other branch of the public body politic" (Richards 1932:138). It was in cases where private initiative played a greater role that there tended to be departures from sustained yield management. The forest estates were often not true tree farms. In many cases they were held as pleasure items for rich families and hunting grounds, rather than productive investments. If a family fell upon hard times and needed cash the law of entail by itself was not enough to prevent clearing. Experience had shown that legal requirements against forest clearing on private land were only as good as public enforcement (Richards 1932). The actual land area under sustained yield management even in nations like Germany with reputations for practicing forestry, was smaller than the impression American foresters had (Zon 1951).

"Free private Forestry?," Richards (1933:279,282) queried. In the meaning recognized by the American lumber operators—i.e., "being entirely free from public restrictions, both legal and socially implied"—"It just won't work, that's all," he declared. There were forest plantations in Europe making modest profits, whether for a community or for an individual owner, but the returns were far below what could be expected from other investments, including less riskier outlets like government bonds. This was the case despite the fact that European conditions—specifically greater wood scarcity and lower wages for workers—were far more conducive to profitability. Even these favorable circumstances were not enough to overcome the risks inherent in growing forests (i.e., the long rotation periods and ever present danger of fire, wind, drought, insects and blight)

and competition from less populous forested nations. The belief of some foresters that industry could practice timber culture as a normal paying industry, Richards placed in "the mystical realm of the fantastic and the visionary" (Richards 1932:137).[6]

The consequences of forest exploitation in the US, both those of the social and environmental character, argued Richards, were the predictable results of running the lumber industry as a private enterprise. Lumber operators, he wrote, "have merely been following out the fundamental ideas of capitalism as developed here in American—namely trying to make as much money out of a given natural resource as they could." The end result, "forest devastation," he noted, "was quite in line with the working of private capitalism in oil, coal, and very often in agriculture as well" (Richards 1933:279-80).

If lumbering continued as a private business, then, Pinchotists generally recognized, there would be no natural economic incentive to curtail forest devastation and transition to timber culture until the supply of lumber was reduced to a point at which it could be profitably grown—in other words, until virgin stands had been exhausted (Kneipp 1936; Marshall 1933). As Marshall, noted advocates of the industry were not too opaque about their desire for an "economy of scarcity." He accused colleagues of following the industrial logic to the irrational conclusion that, "The way to establish forestry practice in America is to make forests scarce." To take such a position one would have to disregard myriad present and future consequences to the public welfare including the destruction of "inestimable values in soil and water conservation and in beauty" (Society of American Foresters 1934b:907).

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[6]Pinchot was appreciative of Richards's analysis of European forestry. After the publication of his (1932) article in *American Forests*, Pinchot wrote Marshall that he was "delighted with Richards' wonderful article" (Pinchot to Marshall 4/1/1932, box 9, folder 5, RMP.)

The tendency for capitalism to waste resources was central to the Pinchotists' understanding of the system's defects. Leon Kneipp (1936:260)—who, as the director of the Forest Service division responsible for land acquisitions, possessed a keen mind for public accounting—asserted that the conservation problem rests on a contradiction under "the old economic order" (i.e., prevailing economic ideology) between an "assumed or attainable excess of natural resources" and "the economy of scarcity which has dominated this country's economic thought." The industrial logic which this reflected dictated "a reduction rather than an increase of the area dedicated to forest use, or at least a cessation of intensive silviculture management"—something conservationists generally considered unacceptable. For Marshall "Private ownership and development of natural resources" was "deleterious" because it simultaneously caused both "underconsumption of many resources" and "waste of most resources." He contended that this was no contradiction. Both outcomes followed from the fact that under private ownership businesses seek "to obtain the maximum income which is feasible from the development of these resources." In doing so they charge the highest price that competition allows, which if successful can deprive consumers of socially necessary goods. They also lower production costs to a minimum which as a rule entails wasteful methods of exploitation since conservation tends to require additional labor expenditures which could not be justified financially in competitive markets. This means, "waste" is the "general rule."[7]

If a resource was relatively plentiful then continuous waste would theoretically help "correct" excessive competition—at least from the point of view of business. It is in this way that capitalism was supposed to be rational system, but from the point of

[7]Marshall "Public Ownership and Development of Natural Resources" undated draft of paper delivered at the People's Lobby Luncheon in 1937, carton 2, folder 33, RMP.

view of conservation this was hopelessly backward.[8] The whole idea behind forestry in America, until the industry began to influence the profession's thinking, was the goal of saving the forests, not leaving them to be devastated. Marshall (1933:104-5) consequentially recognized that there was fundamental contradiction between the needs of private industry and the public welfare. "Private owners today want the maximum timber markets possible," he wrote, but "public welfare demands curtailment in markets to give badly depleted forests a chance to recuperate." Marshall wrote these words during the Depression, which he considered, "the greatest godsend the American forests have known since lumber production became a major industry" because it reduced the demand for lumber, and "wrecked" the industry. That Marshall was not opposed to industry *per se*, but rather private industry, underlines this point. As with other Pinchotists he had high hopes for organizing lumbering operations on a sustainable basis under public control.

The Pinchotists did not share the notion of present day economists that capitalism could divorce itself from nature or *dematerialize* through an infinite capacity for innovation (Foster et al. 2010). Zon's view of wealth was akin to the classical political economists. He was known to quote William Petty's dictum that, "[N]ature, or the earth, is the mother and labor the father of all products necessary to sustain human life."[9] As such he believed that human prosperity in the long run necessarily depends on

[8]Environmental sociologists Foster, Clark and York (2010:54-5) have asserted that the "ecological contradictions of the prevailing economic ideology [i.e., neoclassical economics] are best explained in terms of the 'Lauderdale Paradox."' This is the idea that there is an inverse correlation between public wealth and "private riches" under capitalism. James Maitland (1759-1839), the Earl of Lauderdale and a classical political economist identified the paradox that when a good became scarce it became a greater source of economic wealth (exchange-value). This is the very problem foresters were dealing with in trying to preserve forests as a source of public wealth.

[9]MacKaye (1968:34), unaware of the origin of this quote, attributed it to Zon. Foster and colleagues have described the view of classical political-economists that wealth derived from nature and labor, as a starting point for a serious consideration of the relation between the environment and the economy. It makes possible the separate conception of prices (exchange value) and wealth more broadly understood (use-value). Neoclassical economics rejected this theory of value in favor of marginal utility in which wealth was

"natural resources and upon the knowledge of how to use them with as little destruction as possible." It was silly in Zon's view to believe that "there is such a thing as an inexhaustible natural resource." Potentially renewable resources, like the soil and water, can easily be be destroyed through misuse (Zon 1909:3). Zon and other Pinchotists were also critical of the capacity of innovations to reduce the degree of material dependence on the environment or specific key resources like forests. Substitutes for wood, and treatments to get the most out of them, might be developed that "check the consumption of timber," but it was "a feature of modern commercial progress that, in spite of this, consumption per capita is steadily increasing" (Zon 1920:164).[10]

The impression most have of Pinchotist conservation, is that its proponents were advocates of development. Indeed it is true that the Pinchotists' support for public industry is something that distinguishes them from other conservationists. There was, however, an understanding of *over-development* associated with Pinchotist forestry, and this has not been recognized. Starting from the premise that "'Land,' in its broad sense, is the ultimate source of all employment," Benton MacKaye (1919:11) deduced a general understanding of the flaw of unplanned economic development. This is that industry or the "secondary sector" of the economy, cannot "develop ahead" of the "primary" agricultural and extractive sector (i.e., the sector of natural resources) without disastrous consequences. "The creamery is dependent on the dairy farm, not the dairy farm on the creamery," he wrote, "the abattoir is likewise dependent on the range; the sawmill on the logging operation; and the smelter on the iron mine." The development of industry in

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collapsed into the prices of goods. Under such a theory there was no possible contradiction between public wealth and private riches (Foster et al. 2010).

[10]On substitutes Richards (1920:311) similarly observed, "One often hears that the substitutes for wood are replacing it so rapidly that ultimately little or no wood will be used. But this fails to consider the fact that new uses for wood are being discovered more rapidly than are substitutes."

advance of the primary sector's ability to support it, constituted "overproduction." When this occurred its consequences were "waste of material and uncertainty of employment."

This was how MacKaye characterized the excess milling capacity which was the norm in the American lumber industry. Our example of Cross Fork, and its high capacity mill and rapid rate of exploitation, was not an isolated case. MacKaye considered the lumber industry a general case of larger phenomena (applicable to meatpacking, the steal industry, etc.) It was a process that unfolded systematically destroying the basis of a sound rural economy—or as Zon noted, wrecking one major river valley system after another. The alternative was a planned system in which production was coordinated between the primary and secondary sectors of the economy and the land, the "ultimate source of employment" preserved through conservation.

Beyond Sustained Yield Management

To the unfamiliar, Pinchotism appears as a program of sustained yield management. This perception, however, is not entirely accurate. In the previous chapter I demonstrated that Pinchotists emphatically rejected the idea that forestry should be concerned solely with timber yields, and that this was a source of controversy in the forestry profession. Sustained yield management was part of the conservation program Pinchotist foresters advocated. It was a precondition for settling some of the pressing problems of land-use mentioned above. In the *People's Forests*, Marshall makes the characteristic argument that "rural stabilization" is "dependent on sustained yield management of forests." But Pinchotists generally did not believe sustained yield management *in itself* comprised a sufficient form of forestry. Marshall was unequivocal: "[M]anagement involves more than raising the maximum amount of timber. . . . [I]t is possible for a forest program to lay too

much emphasis on the forest itself and to consider insufficiently the related *social values*" (Marshall 1933:79-80,132, emphasis added).

What the Pinchotists sought was to realize was the full *social value* of forestry, by which they meant the fullest range of social and environmental potentialities that could follow from forest management and permanent forests. These include but are not reducible to wood commodities. Such benefits as stable rural employment, environmental protection and recreation fell under this subject.[11]

This approach involved a more far-reaching program than sustained yield management. It is not hard to see the limits of a mere program of sustained yield. As Leon Kneipp (1936:260) pointed out, at nineteen-thirties levels of consumption the US could "produce all the wood products that would be needed" on "the best 200 million acres of forest soils in the United States under maximum intensity of silvicultural management"—at least under the presumption that "industrial and financial economy" was all that mattered. This was at the time roughly a third of the forestland that could be classified suitable for commercial production. But such a course would not be satisfactory to the people who resided amongst the 400 million acres that was surplus to requirements. If economy was all that was at stake these people would be told "to adapt themselves to uses of their lands other than forestry, in which event the natural query would be: 'What other uses?"' Basically they would be told, "to remove to some other part of the country." Actually this is precisely what was occurring and had already occurred on millions of timbered acres.

The lumber industry was much less hostile to the idea of sustained yield management than it was of alternative conceptions of forestry. If forestry was just a question of balancing growth with consumption, then the industry could argue that

[11]This was the perspective of forestry that the Copeland Report took, as we saw in the previous chapter. That document is probably the most fully developed and comprehensive depiction of social forestry.

with the exhaustion of virgin forests the time was approaching when more intensive siliviculture was justifiable—which is precisely what they did. At the 1934 convention of the Society of American Foresters (1935b:242-3), the following question was put to Marshall by a forester whose sympathies were with the industry: "If every cut-over acre in the United States had the best known silviculture applied and had been handled with a high degree of intensity what would we do with the timber?" The question insinuated that the industry's practice of cutting over forests, abandoning land, and leaving regions desolate and depressed was excusable because an area sufficient for industry was still intact. Marshall had distinct concerns about this however. He responded that if the nation's timberlands had been kept productive, consumers would enjoy higher quality lumber at a lower cost; we would have ample provision for protective forests; and there would be "plenty of forest for recreation."

Kneipp (1936:260-2) was unequivocal that there was, "no probability that one-fifth of the land area of the United States will be allowed to lie idle, and gradually deteriorate through neglect until its social potentialities largely have diminished." Such a course might be justified according to "time-honored economic axioms, such as the law of supply and demand, lowers costs to the consumer through lowers costs of production, etc." but "a veritable myriad of social, economic and, and political considerations" stood in opposition. Kneipp cited four: that future need would be greater than the present and provision for future growth would have to be made far in advance; "that the social values of forests are not measured by the cash reciepts for timber products"; "that. . . forests must be developed as means of life for a considerable proportion of the population"; and that the social value of forests justify public expense.

We have seen that Zon and Pinchot believed that the social relations around which forestry was organized in Germany were authoritarian. This sort of forestry, wrote Zon

(1938:260), was practiced for the benefit of "the large landholder" rather than "the benefits accruing to society as a whole." Equally significant was Zon's (1951:180) view that German forestry had given insufficient attention the environmental benefits of forests. "German forestry," he wrote, "pursued for decades a policy of highest monetary returns only from two sources—wood and hunting—neglecting the indirect benefits of the forests such as amelioration of the climate, provention of erosion, and effects upon agriculture." These were important considerations that fell under the social values of forestry, and they were elements of forest policy Pinchotists emphasized. In in his *Primer on Forestry*, Pinchot (1909:3) himself asserted that the "highest usefulness" of a forest could be rendered by its "standing as a safeguard against floods, winds, snow slides, moving sands or especially against the dearth of water in streams."[12] Zon was considered a scientific expert on "forest influences"—as the environmental functions of forests were referred to in his time (Schmaltz 1980a). In a government report he argued that, "A national policy which, though considering the direct value of forests as a source of timber, fails to take full account also of their influence upon erosion, the flow of streams, and climate, may easily endanger the well-being of the whole people" (Zon 1927:1).

Richards, as we have seen, believed that the private forest estates of Europe were an unrealistic model for the American lumber industry, because he doubted that the practice of forest culture could ever be profitable. He also found the model insufficient. It was only when forestry was practiced as a public service under public ownership that the "various intangible benefits" of forestry could be realized—i.e., those not features not related to "cash", "such as purer water supply, prevention of erosion,

[12]This was the first page of a text written for forestry instruction. The placement shows the priority that Pinchot gave the subject, and as such serves to balance the perception that Pinchot's doctrine of "highest use" of resources (i.e., what is called utilitarianism in the conservation literature) was narrowly industrial.

recreational possibilities—hunting, fishing, camping, hiking—and better climatic and living conditions" (Richards 1932:137).

The view of the shortcomings of narrow sustained yield management had much to do with the Pinchotists' criticisms of forestry reforms. They did not believe that forestry could merely be affixed to the rural economy on top of private ownership. In the previous chapter we saw that the proponents of industrial forestry sought reforms from government ostensibly devised to make forestry on private land profitable. Proposed policies typically revolved around measures that would reduce the carrying costs of holding and growing timber through subsidy, or to raise the price of lumber and other forest products. An idea that had periodic support among the larger lumber operators was to exempt the lumber industry from the Sherman Anti-Trust law, to allow the industry to restrict harvesting to a rate that would guarantee profit. The idea with all these proposals was for the public to pay the cost of growing forests—either through subsidy or monopoly pricing—while "leaving to the owners only the harvesting of the profit," as Marshall (1933:106,130) emphatically put it. But even if the public took over a substantial burden of the costs associated with raising forests, Marshall argued, it "would not at all insure adequate forestry measures" (i.e., environmental protections), nor would it "protect the interests of labor;" "the consumer's welfare;" or rural communities.

In the early twenties when the industry was successfully extracting government aid to protect private land from fire under the banner of "cooperation," the Pinchotists insisted that "Forest fire-protection. . . is not forestry" (Richards 1920:311). The industry acted as if fire protection "were a sort of mechanical panacea for all our forest ills" wrote Society of American Foresters president Olmsted (1920a:601), feeling that the idea of forestry was being reduced to protecting the commodities of private businesses.[13]

[13]In *Forest Fire and the American West* Mark Hudson (2011), demonstrates that the Forest Service became irrationally obsessed with fire suppression as a result of the industry's influence over its policy.

New Deal era policies were also the subject of criticism. Under the regulatory codes of the National Recovery Administration there was an opportunity to regulate cutting on private forestland—however briefly, as it turned out, because the Lumber and Timber Code was dissolved in March of 1935. This was just a month before the Supreme Court's decision in *A.L.A. Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States*, which ruled the NRA unconstitutional. Pinchot and Marshall had warned Roosevelt, in their 1933 letter to the president, that little could be expected from forest regulation, because, "Federal regulation would be difficult to apply when the majority of timber land owners are bankrupt, or verging upon it"—as was the case during the Depression—and, they added, if the lumber operators "ever became rich and powerful again it would be equally difficult to keep them from controlling the agency which regulates them."[14] Marshall (1933:120) nevertheless believed that regulation "to stop the most flagrant abuses to private forest land" was a pressing need, because if a public forest acquisition program was to be carried out it would necessarily take time. He believed that the NRA lumber codes to be "a rare opportunity" in this respect. But what took place confirmed his initial expectations.

The Lumber and Timber code was adopted in August 1933, and a weak industry-enforced conservation provision was amended to the code in March of 1934 (Robbins 1982; Irons 1982). In the Summer of 1934 Marshall visited sites where the industry was purporting to practice forestry, but what he saw was mostly clear cutting (Society of American Foresters 1935b:242). When the codes were first issued he pointed out that the wage-rate set under the Lumber code was among the lowest of any industry (Marshall 1933). However even this weak labor regulation was too much for William Belcher, an

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One thing left unclear in the study is that those foresters who, in opposition, sought to promote a more comprehensive silviculture tended to be the Pinchotists.

[14]Pinchot to FDR 1/20/1933 (Nixon 1957:vol.i:130)

Alabama sawmill operator who believed that his workers were satisfied with what he was already paying them. When a group of Belcher's workers informed him that they were in fact not satisfied and would prefer to work at the still low wage set by the code, Belcher fired them on the spot. Belcher was indicted for this infraction, but he was victorious in court, precipitating the code's dissolution (Robbins 1982; Irons 1982).

The code had had the unambiguous support of large timber operators. The industry's trade associations had drawn it up with little input from the Forest Service or others, and had written the conservation provision in such a way as to preclude enforcement. Even so, this experiment in industrial self-government proved a failure. Although things might have been different if Government prioritized regulating the lumber industry, this episode seemed to prove both of Pinchot and Marshall's warnings, first of the difficulty of imposing regulations on a marginal industry, and second of the danger of industry regulating itself.

The other notable forestry project of the New Deal was the Civilian Conservation Corps, although it was also more than that. The Pinchotists were eminently sympathetic towards the CCC. Marshall and Pinchot had in fact suggested a policy of using the unemployed for forestry work in their January letter to Roosevelt.[15] But Pinchotists were critical of the longterm value of temporary public works programs. Zon thought the letter to Roosevelt should have emphasized that forestry could provide, "not merely emergency, unemployment relief, but to some extent a more permanent solution to the unemployment problem through publicly regulated land settlement within or adjoining the public forests."[16] MacKaye had actually developed such a proposal for the Department of Labor in the nineteen-teens. In a report on *Employment and Natural Resources* written for the

[15]Pinchot to Roosevelt, *ibid.*

[16]Zon to Pinchot 1/26/33, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

Department of Labor, Benton MacKaye (1919:11) worked out a resettlement proposal for public land and land that would be acquired by government for the purpose. Government would retain the title of settled land, in order to prevent speculation and the inflation of land values that tended to uproot farmers. The report attempted to show how government could provide 'the opportunity of making a *permanent* living" [emphasis added] , and argued that this could be accomplished through planned utilization of publicly owned natural resources. What MacKaye had in mind was decidedly different from "the mere 'handout' of a temporary job on public works."

It is interesting to note here that the CCC actually interfered with work being carried out in the Lake States where Zon and others in the Forest Service had arranged forestry operation to provide steady employment to rural communities. In testimony to Congress Zon stated the ability to do this work was "greatly reduced" because thirty-thousand CCC workers were active in the region. The work being provided (road building, fire protection, reforestation, etc.) was of a similar sort to that of the CCC. The workers engaged by the Lake States foresters were those with small farms, insufficient to make a living from, but with the addition of the forest work, Zon testified that these farm and forest laborers were able "to make a fairly good living." This undertaking could have been carried out "on a much larger scale, except for the C.C.C.," said Zon, though he was careful to add that he "believed a great deal in the C.C.C. itself" (U.S. Congress 1940:1053-4). Despite the fact of the Pinchotist's sympathy for the CCC, the case highlights the different goals the Pinchotists were after. While proposing that resources should be used to provide the unemployed with jobs, they had something distinct in mind: stable rural industry in places where workers could make a permanent home. It was to be unlike the impermanent employment that came of capitalist resource exploitation, and separately that of temporary public relief. As the work of the CCC unfolded Marshall

and MacKaye found another reason to be critical of the program—its road building had become a threat to wilderness. The invasion of wilderness by automobiles—not logging or dam-building—was the development that precipitated the founding of the Wilderness Society (Sutter 2009).

Permanent Communities and Regional Balance

The idea that the rural economy could be reconstructed through "systematically studied and planned land use" (Kneipp 1936:261) to provide conservation, permanent employment and livable communities was one of the advanced ideas of Pinchot's radical followers. This was the starting point of their vision of an ideal rural transformation. It was hoped that a more balanced distribution of industry and settlement between the different regions of the US would follow, and with this decentralization, greater regional self-sufficiency. Within these regions they hoped to establish an appropriate balance between working and natural environments. The systematic land-use planning that formed a means of achieving this rural transformation, they believed, would allow for a superior adaptation to the physical environment. I elaborate on these four areas below.

Permanent Communities

The idea of permanent communities based on the planned and sustained use of resources was something that got its initial impetus under Zon in the Office of Silvics. Dana's research on lumber ghost towns, cited earlier, had been part of this work (Fry and Maunder 1965). The real advancement was MacKaye's work on forestry and working conditions which also began under Zon's direction (Anderson 2002). Through his familiarity with the miserable circumstances of itinerant lumber camps and depressed conditions of lumbered over regions—specifically the cut-over region of the northern

portion of the Lake States—MacKaye had come to the realization that the provision of longterm work in a forest and a home in a permanent community, was an objective that required deliberate planning on the part of the forester (Anderson 2002; MacKaye 1968).

In a paper on the "Social Aspects" of forestry MacKaye (1918:210-11), presented what would become a definitive part of social forestry. "Foresters have long preached timber cropping *versus* timber mining," he wrote, and they have pointed out the dangers of depleting timber resources, and destroying watersheds. "It is true also," he wrote, "that the point has been made from time to time that the practice of forestry will tend to stabilize forest employment and to make for permanent community life." But this last objective would not necessarily follow from sustained yield management. It was an objective that required planning in its own right. Of principle importance in this regard was the size of the working circle, or forested area under single plan of management. From the perspective of sustained yield it mattered little "whether the working circle occupies a township or a State," but if one looked at the question from the perspective of the worker it was apparent that a working circle had to be large enough to sustain a logging community, but small enough that the worker could return home after a day's work. Otherwise the worker would live a "hobo life" in a work camp or a community under threat of abandonment.

If such an important aspect of the worker's life depended on the plan of management of the forester, it was hard to argue that industrial relations did not fall under the purview of forestry. This was precisely what MacKaye argued in making the case for the importance of forestry's "social aspects." Obviously the lumber companies were not going to adjust their operations for the workers' benefit of their own volition. The "initiative" to do something about forest working conditions fell upon government, argued MacKaye (1918:213). This subject therefore, like other areas of forestry not directly

related to commodities, fell to public forestry. In fact it was something of a definitive issue for foresters who favored the public approach. MacKaye's position was ultimately adopted by Pinchot's 1919 Committee of the SAF and was continually voiced by public oriented foresters, including the other Pinchotists and the New Deal era Forest Service Chief Silcox.

MacKaye was one of the most original and creative thinkers to emerge out of forestry's radical wing. Following his work in forestry he became an integral member the group who developed the regional planning idea. This was the Regional Planning Association of America, whose other core members were the writer Lewis Mumford and the architect and planner Clarence Stein. The basic idea of regional planning was the idea of planning a habitable environment through the decentralization of industry and population and halting the growth of congested cities (Anderson 2002; Sussman 1976). MacKaye is best known for proposing the idea of the Appalachian Trail, and as a founder with Robert Marshall, Aldo Leopold and others of the Wilderness Society (Anderson 2002; Sutter 2009).

Regionalism will be a subject examined shortly, but first it is instructive to see an instance in which an attempt was made to implement this idea of planned forest worker communities. In the nineteen-thirties Edward C.M. Richards, was appointed to head the Division of Forestry for the Tennessee Valley Authority. In this capacity he attempted to do just this.

Richards was selected for the post, by Arthur E. Morgan, a hydrological engineer, who was the more visionary member of the three member board that ran the TVA. In Morgan's account (1974:61) of his time in the TVA, he refers to Richards as "a creative and energetic young forester," and expresses the view that the "radical new forest policy" that Richards worked out "had promise." This was in reference to Richards's

proposal to develop tracts of several thousand acres of forestland into working forests for communities in the region. Richards sold the plan to Morgan as a modern version of the communal (i.e., municipally owned, usually village) forests Richards had visited during his travels in Europe. The plan depended upon a policy of purchasing land along the Tennessee Valley in excess of the bottom land to be flooded and the narrow ribbon bordering the reservoir. Morgan and Richards had in mind the purchase for reforestation of lumbered over forests, land regularly burned to provide forage for grazing, and submarginal farms that provided their owner but a "meager living." The forested areas would be interspersed with small garden tracts which could be used for subsistence for the forest worker community or to raise crops for an agricultural cooperative for additional cash income. The TVA would equip communities with training to manage their forests and in woodworking crafts so that the lumber grown could be processed locally. This work would have to be subsidized initially but it was intended that the communities would become self-sustaining.

Morgan (1974:62) appreciated the purpose of the timber culture Richards hoped to establish:

> This program would make possible a varied industrial development, very different from the vast individual timber holdings that leave the little mountain valleys uncultivated, with few or no woodwork craftsmen and most of the local people working as hired laborers. . . . Instead of vast forest areas owned and administered by outside corporations, there could have been locally owned and cooperatively managed forest industries that would strengthen the local culture by giving more people an active concern for the interests and development of the area.

The success of this program ultimately rested on the support Richards could get from the three person board. Although he had the support of Morgan, the other board members were increasingly at odds with Morgan's plans, which they thought impractical. Not surprisingly, Richards's forestry program was discontinued soon after the purchase of

land had begun. The tracts purchased for forestry were sold to lumber companies, who according to Morgan (1974:63), "stripped" them of their forests. Later Morgan was ousted by the other board members. As it turned out the board was unwilling to pursue even a basic conservation program of forestry, erosion control, and wildlife management. Richards resigned his position in protest when this became apparent (Richards 1938).

Forest worker communities were not the only type of rural settlements the Pinchotists sought. As we have seen, Zon and MacKaye were also interested in agricultural resettlement programs, based on similar principles of public ownership and planning.

Regionalism and Decentralization

The idea of regional balance was closely related to the idea of stable communities. MacKaye's idea was that there was a relationship between migratory labor and the migratory exploitation that plundered regions and left them depressed and desolate. The cut-over region of the northern Lake States, for instance, in the words of Zon, had "been used for long time as backward colony from which raw materials were exported without contributing to any extent to the permanent building up of the region itself" (U.S. Congress 1940:1048). By stabilizing communities it was supposed that the problem of out-migration and land abandonment in plundered rural areas would be resolved.

When Richards was beginning work on the TVA, Zon believed that the TVA could serve this function of "building up" the Tennessee valley. He described his views in a 1933 letter to Richards. The process of successively stripping each river valley of its natural resources that characterized frontier capitalism had to come to an end, wrote Zon, as "most of the valleys have been stripped of their natural wealth." The historical economic process, he declared, "must be reversed," through the "rebuilding of our

primary resources. . . valley by valley," by which Zon had in mind the restoration of soil and forests. He suggested Richards work with others in the TVA to study what industries could be permanently established in the region. In place of the "mammoth mills and factories supplying the entire continent," there could be "smaller mills and factories meeting largely the needs of local populations." In such a way the Tennessee valley could be transformed into a "a self-sufficient economic unit." The "decentralization of industries" would stimulate a "redistribution of population which flocked to centers of production" and a shift in the course of the boom and bust development that characterized resource extraction.[17]

This view of decentralized industry and population was one of the ideas that animated regional planning. MacKaye was initially enthusiastic about the TVA, viewing it as a means dispersing industry and communities in such a way to establish a hospitable environment (MacKaye 1933). He even managed to get himself appointed as a regional planner in the TVA's Division of Land and Housing, although this position did not last long (Anderson 2002). By developing rural communities and industry the regionalists hoped to check the growth of the urban (MacKaye 1990 [1928]; Sussman 1976). "To enable men to live like civilized persons in civilized surroundings, and not like ants in an ant hill," MacKaye (1933:445) suggested was "the ultimate promise of decentralized industry."

Balanced Environment

Before starting his short term of work for the TVA, MacKaye (1933:44) already had an idea of what he would seek to accomplish. He made a list. First was, "Control of the flow of development along the highway channels." This meant insulating communities

[17]Zon to Richards 12/2/1933, box 10, folder 7, RMP.

from traffic, as had been done in Radburn, New Jersey—a community designed by MacKaye's RPAA colleague Clarence Stein. Next was the "Distribution of development in communities throughout the lowlands." And finally, "Maintenance of wilderness on the mountainsides." This meant that roads and settlement would be restricted to the lowlands, leaving the mountains, so far as possible, free from mechanized civilization.

MacKaye's plan was considered too impractical to get off the ground, but it provides a good instance of his idea of the need for balance between natural and human dominated environments. The idea expressed in MacKaye's (1990 [1928]) writing was the need to develop, as an objective of planning, a balance between the communal, rural and primeval (or town, country and wilderness). MacKaye's Appalachian Trail plan was conceived in this light, as a trail system to connect the rural with the primeval and to serve as an outlet for those who needed reprieve from urban life. In his book *The New Exploration* he proposed the method of establishing bands of "wilderness areas" to "form 'dams' and 'levees' to control the flood" of metropolitan growth into the hinterland (MacKaye 1990 [1928]:179).

It is interesting to note that other Pinchotists shared this vision. Three of the eight founders of the Wilderness Society, for instance, were Pinchotist foresters: Marshall, MacKaye, and third being Bernard Frank, a forest hydrology expert who worked under Richards in the TVA's Division of Forestry, and before that under Zon in the Great Lakes Forest Experiment Station. Marshall (1933:64-5) described the need for wilderness in a similar manner to MacKaye, as a refuge from the "nervous strain, the high pressure, and the drabbness" of a "mechanized" society. Another Pinchotist, Leon Kneipp, had been a forceful advocate for wilderness designations within the Forest Service (Fry et al. 1974; Meine 1991). That is three out of the five foresters I have considered here as exponents of a radical Pinchotist forestry. This does not appear to be a mere coincidence.

That the idea to form the Wilderness Society was planned on a roadside near the TVA's Norris Dam seems odd today, considering that some of the major battles of the wilderness movement have been against dam construction. Present when the plan was hatched was Frank, MacKaye, Marshall and Harold Broome, who was a Knoxville lawyer and hiking enthusiast—two of this initial group being TVA employees. Even after seeing how the TVA panned out, it is interesting to note that MacKaye and Frank were proponents of a Missouri Valley Authority (Anderson 2002). As Sutter demonstrates in his history of the Wilderness Society, the group was not formed in reaction to utilitarian conservation, but in reaction to automobile transportation and its threat to solitude of wild places. The immediate spur was a plan to build a skyline highway that would have hugged the mountain path of the Appalachian Trail. The reason Marshall was in Tennessee visiting with the other Wilderness Society founders is because he was on special assignment from Interior Secretary Harold Ickes to investigate the route of the proposed parkway (Sutter 2009; Anderson 2002).

Scientific Adaptation

The idea at the heart of scientific conservation was that land should be used in a manner consistent with its physical characteristics. This is what was meant by the presently maligned idea of the *highest use* of resources. "[U]nsound types of land and resource utilization," wrote Kneipp (1936:257-8), had produced consequences "too numerous and too tragically evident to leave any room for doubt." Land use planning, in contrast, would give rise to "the fullest practicable application" of "the principle that human uses of land must be correlated with human needs and with the limitation of natural action." Foresters had a big role to play in any adjustment because, as Kneipp recognized, one-third of the land area of the US "will serve its highest purpose only

through the agency of forests"—whether to produce lumber, protect watersheds, or recreational use. It followed from this fact that "that every forester has a direct personal and professional interest in all proposals to systematically plan the use of non-urban lands."

Marshall's (1933:165-6) *People's Forests* provides a good sense of the logical conclusion of this subject. The book outlines a radical program of public land acquisition and "complete rural reorganization." Extensive surveys should be undertaken to identify the best uses of land across the country (including non-uses like protective forests and wilderness). The program would include resettlement. Government would acquire land in depressed areas and resettle marginal farmers so that the lands unsuited for agriculture could be reforested and agricultural communities could be "concentrated in those areas best adapted for agriculture instead of being scattered all over the outdoors." The government would progressively nationalize the lumber industry, establishing forest-worker communities along the lines MacKaye proposed. Agricultural communities, where possible, could be developed in tandem with forestry communities. This was the common vision of the radical Pinchotists.

Marshall argued that "public ownership would furnish an ideal background" for such a program. Indeed it is difficult to see how it could arise otherwise in any appropriate timescale. The scientific planning of land-uses represents an alternative logic to that of speculative capitalism with its attendant waste. To realize the potentialities of this distinct logic the Pinchotists recognized that measures of public ownership and control were crucial.

A Sustainable Social Order?

The conservationist notion of sustainability centered on the idea of *permanence*. Permanence was contrasted with migratory exploitation. The concept was based on the sustained use of resources. The Pinchotists' vision of a good life emphasized the potentialities of sustained use, specifically in the form of the possibility of permanent rural community life. The Pinchotists recognized that this potentiality depended on institutional change, specifically institutions of a collective and permanent character. As MacKaye noted, it required a means of making deliberate planning possible. Richards observed that the individual required the self-conception that they were part "a social group whose life goes on forever." Neither thought this was probable under private ownership of natural resources. They were enthusiastic about the ancillary benefits that would arise from such changes. "[P]ermanencey of institutions," asserted Kneipp (1936:258), would justify the development of a more pleasing built environment: "farm buildings of masonry and artistic design, instead of wooden shacks; sawmill smokestacks of brick or concrete, rather than sheet iron; urban structures that are permanent contributions wealth, instead of structures designed for wreckage within the quarter or half century in which obsolescence will overtake them"—in sharp contrast with the culture of impermanence that was the product of the prevailing instability. The rural worker would, thus, be given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a stable existence.

Was this vision of a rural civilization an adequate vision of sustainability? It is significant here to note that the Pinchotists' critiques of resource utilization and the trajectory of capitalist development exhibit some of the main lines of present day environmental social science—in particular, their concerns over the environmental and social costs of private enterprise (cf. Foster et al. 2010; Kapp 1971). According to their understanding, the lumber industry was not a productive enterprise, or one that produced

social values, but one that systematically destroyed them. There was the recognition that this followed from the logic of capitalist development, and that the lumber industry was little different from other extractive industries under capitalism. Their view of why rural regions are left depressed and depopulated hint at an understanding, similar to more recent theorization (cf. Bunker 1984), of the processes by which extractive economies leave regions in a perpetual state of under-development by precluding any stable industry.

The most striking aspect of their vision is its emphasis on the maintenance of a rural economy. The Pinchotists were distrustful of metropolitan civilization and the process of industrialization. Whenever they considered the problem of unemployment their preference was to set up a means to absorb surplus labor into rural employment. This preference was partially a product of their belief that capitalism's tendency to uproot people from the countryside, was contrary to a balanced society. But there is also indication that they were concerned that overproduction follows the disconnect between primary and secondary industry characteristic of production for far away markets and absentee ownership. Their proposals for regional self-sufficiency and decentralized industry reflect this concern. Rather than sawmills whose capacity will exhaust a location's supply of timber, or "mammoth factories" producing for the whole the country, they sought to maintain secondary industry at an appropriate scale that served the people of the region.

It has been recently noted that the meaning of the word *sustainability* has suffered a loss of force. The concept that the earth be maintained in such a state so that it is passed on unimpaired for future generations provides a fundamental standard for which to gauge purported environmental progress. In widespread usage today, however, the word's meaning has morphed into, "a little better for the environment than the alternative"—if even that (Engelman 2013:5). The new meaning of the word speaks to confusion spread

by advertising and of consumers' eagerness to be assuaged of the benign environmental impact of their products. But it also reveals a more concerning problem: the lack of a vision that can serve as an appropriate model for a sustainable civilization to work towards.

The concept of sustainability first arose in the context of conservation. In this context it meant continuous use of resources in a manner that does not degrade the productive capacity of the earth. This conception reflected the environmental problems conservation dealt with—what have been called "first-generation" environmental problems (Mitchell 1989). These were the problems of land-use. Later environmentalism, primarily of the post-WWII period, reflected an emerging concern for "second generation" environmental problems, or those of pollution. The one dealt primarily with *taps* (extraction of resources), the other absorbed this class of concern while also addressing *sinks* (discard and disposal). Conservation thus reflected the concerns of a still largely rural society rather than a more heavily urban, industrial one. This is to say that the Pinchotist vision of a rural civilization was devised to address only part of what falls under environmentalism today.

This would seem to be a drawback. Is this vision of rural civilization still relevant? If industrial, metropolitan civilization, is by its nature environmentally destructive, then no. The Pinchotists give some sense of how to a make rural society both sustainable and livable. Their writing could prove useful in considering how to maintain rural cultures that are still extant, but on higher plane of existence. They could also prove useful for considering how to de-industrialize and de-urbanize, if such is possible.

The main problem here, however, is the radical nature of their proposals. The Pinchotists inhabited an era when radical ideas such as theirs had greater legitimacy. Their views were controversial, but not nearly so much as they would be now. Here it

is worth recognizing that the individuals considered were prominent professionals of high rank in government.

There are problems with the Pinchotists' vision. Although the Pinchotists sought a balanced environment made up of working and natural environments, they were possibly too sanguine about development projects whose scale seems out of proportion today. River development projects like the TVA stand out. Multiple purpose river valley development was an idea closely associated with Pinchot's brand of conservation, and it was a program that inspired enthusiastic response. One only has to look at how Mumford (1963 [1934]:255-6) wrote about it in his classic *Technics and Civilization*:

> The smoke pall of paleotechnic industry begins to lift: with electricity the clear sky and the clean waters of the eotechnic phase come back again: the water that runs through the immaculate disks of the turbine, unlike the water filled with the washings of coal seams or the refuse of the old chemical factories, is just as pure when it emerges. Hydroelectricity, moreover, gives rise to geotechnics: forest cover protection, stream control, the building of reservoirs and power dams.

That multiple purpose development of dams, hydroelectric power, forestry, was viewed as something transformational, is clearly expressed here. But today's environmentalists would would be aghast at Mumford's reference to the "immaculate" multi-purpose dam. Pinchotists, it should be pointed out, were not ignorant of the environmental consequences of impounding water. Richards (1938:643) recognizes that the TVA could transform a living river system into a "biological dessert," and yet he still supported this concept of development. We must remember, however, in looking back at this moment that one could be a supporter of the TVA and a pioneering advocate for wilderness, as was MacKaye. Today this is strange, but in the nineteen-thirties it was not so contradictory.

This fact however should give us some pause over the logic of land utilization under a system of scientific planning as sought by the Pinchotists. Even environmentally

considered planning can be mistaken. That planning can be destructive as well as environmentally beneficial, should be recognized. Yet this is something that should be weighed against the alternatives, the principal one being the continuance of an unregulated capitalism and its environmental consequences. With this in mind it should be recognized that Pinchot's radical follower's vision was compelling.

CHAPTER IV

THE RADICAL UNDERCURRENT IN CONSERVATION

Environmentalism has been described as a movement that is "culturally radical" but "politically reformist" (Mitchell 1989:86). This is an apt description because environmentalism has given rise to viewpoint sharply critical of modern institutions and ideologies, while never developing a political program commensurate with its radical critique of the status quo. Environmentalism generally denotes a post-WWII movement with roots in the earlier conservation movement of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is often differentiated from conservation by its ecological focus. Conservation dealt primarily with land—both its use and preservation—a subject that was absorbed into the broader field of environmentalism (Mitchell 1989; Brulle 2000).

It was apparent from the time ecology came into this world that it signaled the need for radical change. But the early popularizers of the subject in US, before Rachel Carson, were political conservatives. Both Paul Sears and Aldo Leopold conducted pioneering thinking in human-ecology in the nineteen-thirties. This was a period of uncertainty over the future of capitalism, and the environmental problems of the period—like the Dust Bowl, the subject of Sears' classic 1935 book, *Deserts on the March* (Sears 1988 [1935])—reinforced the sense that capitalism's days were numbered. Sears would later call ecology the "the subversive subject," to underline the field's dissenting perspective (Sears 1964). Leopold (1966 [1949]) expounded the "land ethic," perhaps the most powerful and influential written exposition of environmentalism in culturally radical terms. In their writings the two expressed misgivings over the sustainability of private property, but because Sears and Leopold could not abide socialism, they placed their faith in education and ethics as a means of transforming society (as demonstrated in Chapter

1). And so we have the contradictory cultural radicalism and political ambivalence of environmentalism present at an early moment in environmental movement's development.

There was a striking contrast in how contemporaneous Pinchotist foresters (identified in the previous chapter) came to view the problem of land under capitalism. Robert Marshall—one of Pinchot's lieutenants and a colleague of Leopold in the Wilderness Society—publicly expounded the need for a Pinchotist program of public control over natural resources combined with an unabashed socialism. Others associated with Pinchotist forestry were also interested in making concrete the radical implications of conservation. Alongside Marshall was Edward C.M. Richards, who believed the nation's forest policy needed to be rethought from "THE RADICAL POINT OF VIEW"—so he wrote a colleague in all capitals to emphasize his point. By "radical" he explained that he meant, "the root bottom point of view, disregarding all of our ordinary capitalistic notions of ownership, profit, interest, rent, etc." This was a political stance consistent with the gravity of the environmental problem.[1]

Pinchotist conservation is not usually thought of as a radical program. Because of Pinchot's strong personal association with Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party, conservation is generally equated with *progressivism*, and this is the label Pinchot used for himself. There are contrasting perspectives on the progressive movement of the early twentieth century. Liberal scholars view progressivism as a movement that restrained corporate power by instituting economic regulations. However this interpretation has been widely questioned by those who pointed out that government regulation and corporate power are not antithetical. According to revisionist historians (c.f. Kolko 1963; Weinstein 1968) the transition from the laissez-faire capitalism of the nineteenth century to the managed capitalism of the twentieth, strengthened the domination of large corporations

[1]Richards to MacKaye 5/19/1928, box 158, folder 27, BMP.

over the economy. The reforms of the Progressive Era insulated the large corporations from competition and the insecurities and social instability of an unmanaged economic environment. In some instance progressive reforms were implemented to stave off the possibility of more radical change. Progressive reformism so stands as the inverse of radicalism.

The revisionists associated the conservation movement with the same dynamic of corporate reform that they saw in progressivism generally. Gabriel Kolko (1963:208) in his classic, *Triumph of Conservatism* likens Pinchot's conservation to Taylor's scientific management of labor. Both were efforts toward, "systematic exploitation," the one of labor, the other of nature—conceived to make capitalism more efficient. Samuel Hays (1959) similarly likened conservation to a "gospel of efficiency," identifying the movement's concerns with efficient growth and rational economic development.

Attempts have been made to cast the conservation movement of the Progressive Era in a radical or democratic light, but they have been unconvincing because they did not disentangle it from the sort of liberal reform that the revisionists identified. Leonard Bates (1957:30,31,42), for instance, writes that the conservationists of the Progressive Era aimed to establish "a limited socialism in the public interest," through "democracy in the handling of resources," and the "socialization of [resource] management." He describes the movement's ideological affinity with the American radical intellectual tradition, as represented by the likes of Henry George, Edward Bellamy and Thorstein Veblen. But he says little about the Roosevelt administration, whose New Nationalism was not a policy of economic democracy, but an acceptance of the ultimate inevitability and beneficence of so-called "good" monopolies. In this way Pinchot's close association with Roosevelt leaves much to contend with.

Natural resource economists Barnett and Morse (1963:73-4) believe that the conservation movement "was revolutionary in part of its doctrine." The conservation movement, they argue, was an American part of a "revolution in thought throughout the Western world against the dominant social philosophy of the fully regulating market." Its European counterpart, they state, was Marxist socialism. Both movements arose, they assert, following Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]), because the reduction of labor and land to mere factors of production under unregulated capitalism tends to result in their degradation. So just as the socialist movement rejected "the idea that labor is merely a factor input to the production function in a purely competitive, laissez-faire economy," Barnett and Morse argue, "Conservationists rejected the idea that nature could be reduced to the classical market place concept of 'land.'" The problem with this framework, as we have seen, is that the movement against "purely competitive, laissez-faire" economic system is not in and of itself "revolutionary." Marxism, which the authors identify as a counterpart to conservation, was something much more radical.

In chapter 1 I described the trajectory of Pinchotism in relation to private property. The conservation program of Pinchot certainly began as something easily accommodated within the boundaries of liberal capitalist reform. Liberal politics typically upholds the model of compromise and consensus between business, labor and consumer interests (Hawley 1966). Yet the reason Pinchot became the leader of the radical faction of foresters is because he rejected such an accommodationist approach. The word this faction repeatedly used to describe Pinchot's stance is "militant."[2] This was because he came to view the lumber companies and other special interests as adversaries of the

[2]For instance: "Pinchot and Ahern are heading up a more *militant* group who are by no means convinced that the lumber lobby should be allowed to dominate the situation," wrote Richards to MacKaye (2/17/1928, box 158 folder 27, BMP). Marshall (1928:218) asserted that the Pinchot "theory" was "a *militant* one—the forest devastation must if necessary be forcefully superseded by forest perpetuation." In a eulogy to his friend, Zon (1946:544) wrote that Pinchot had given "substance and direction to the struggles of a *militant*, progressive democracy."

conservationist. Pinchot stopped advocating measures to buy-off industry cooperation because he realized that industry was not a partner that was bargaining with the public in good faith. If industry had legitimate interest in seeking government aid to practice forestry it was perfectly capable of proposing and implementing its own plans.

And so Pinchot came to rely on his socialist associates in the forestry profession. This turn was established clearly in the late nineteen-teens, when Pinchot challenged the Forest Service's cooperative policy, promoting an alternative plan of forest regulation through the Society of American Foresters. Pinchot's actions caused Henry Graves, an old friend of Pinchot's and the then Chief of the Forest Service, to write worried notes in his diary about the influence of Raphael Zon on Pinchot and the "socialistic features" of the SAF's political program (Steen 2004 [1976]:178). Zon was something of an organizer for socialism in the Forest Service, and individual foresters with close associations with Zon—Marshall, Richards, Benton Mackaye—were some of the individuals most responsible for the more radical conservation perspective.[3]

Pinchot's conservation was oriented towards practical goals, so it was always reformist. But the reforms Pinchot and his radical associates came to favor were of a different character from corporate liberal reforms, because they centered on the need for public control rather than mere efficiency. Pinchot's efforts to subject lumbering to regulation were beaten back because the industry would not subject itself willingly to external control—even if regulation stood to make industry more rational and orderly. Later Pinchot came to emphasize large scale public acquisition over regulation, because he was increasingly critical of the idea that industry could in fact be regulated. There

[3]Samuel Trask Dana worked under Zon in the Forest Service's Division of Silvics. Accord to Dana, Zon, "was influential with a bunch of young folks" entering the forestry profession. He elaborates that Zon exposed young foresters to what Dana considered "socialistic" ideas. "He commonly got into philosophical discussions, and he always emphasized the public interest." Those whom Zon engaged would have come from "conservative, orthodox, middle class" backgrounds, so Zon's talks, thought Dana, had quite an impact (Fry and Maunder 1965:8).

is a parallel between Pinchotist conservation and the American socialist movement's understanding of reforms. As business elites become supportive of certain forms of government regulations and even public ownership in certain cases, some socialists recognized that, "Socialist demands must not be of the rationalizing variety, but must embody a vision of socialism and raise the question of control over fundamental decisions" (Weinstein 1968:132). Pinchot appears to have recognized a similar lesson from the experience of corporate reform. Although he did not become a socialist, he clearly distinguished between reforms that aided business and ones that centered around the right of the populace to control the utilization of resources in its interest. If Will Herberg (1952:489) is correct that bourgeois politics is "essentially affirmative" of the status quo even at its most radical, while socialist politics is "essentially negative and oppositional" even when it is opportunist, then late period Pinchotism had more similarities with socialist politics than bourgeois reformism.

In Pinchotism, conservation had a variant that could have served as a basis for a genuinely radical approach. Radicalism hardly characterizes conservation generally, and the politically radical elements within the movement were never sufficiently organized or strong. It is however reasonable to speak of a *radical undercurrent* in conservation, because radicalism was something present but mostly below the surface. This undercurrent was consequential. There was a clarity within it of the need for public control and planning lacking in subsequent environmentalism. Although the radical undercurrent was somewhat amorphous, a sense of its palpability is revealed by Leopold and Sears' compulsion to explicitly reject radical economic measures in their writing.

The most definite materialization of conservation's radical undercurrent is shown in the later development of Pinchotism, but this was not its only expression. As I will show below, conservation and radicalism in the US were, to a some extent, intertwined

movements. This was partially shown by Bates (see above) but without sufficient clarity, or attention to the twists and turns of the movement's devolopment.

The Composition of the Radical Undercurrent at the Close of the Progressive Era

In November of 1917 Gifford Pinchot delivered an address on "The Conservation of Natural Resources" before the first annual conference of the Public Ownership League of America (POLA). The address was not of any special importance. What is significant about Pinchot's attendance at the POLA conference is that it reveals a specific array of individuals representing various radical traditions in American politics which provides a sense of the makeup of the radical undercurrent. Many of the individuals who addressed the conference represented traditions in US politics with histories intertwined with the development of conservation.

Hays and others correctly identified corporate support for conservation policies during the Roosevelt years. Among the groups who backed the transfer of the Forest Reserves to the Department of Agricultural—so that they could be administered by Pinchot in the soon to be established Forest Service—were the presidents of the Pennsylvania and Northern Pacific Railroads, the president of the National Lumber Manufacturers Association, the president National Woolgrowers Association, the superintendent of the Homestake Mining Company, and timber baron F.E. Weyerhaeuser (Pinchot 1998 [1947]). When Pinchot first recognized the need for a nongovernmental conservation organization with a membership representing the general public, he tapped a respectable figure with ties to the corporate reform community to lead it. Charles W. Eliot was selected by Pinchot to head the National Conservation Association in 1908—the group that fronted Pinchot's conservation activity for the next decade (Miller 2013). Eliot who recently retired as President of Harvard University, was also a member of the

National Civic Federation, an organization that was the epitome of corporate-liberal reform (Weinstein 1968).

But the crowd at the POLA conference was a very different sort. POLA's secretary and key figure was Carl D. Thompson, an ex-Congregationalist minister who had been a longstanding member of the Socialist Party of America (SPA). The organization's President was Albert M. Todd, peppermint oil tycoon and a onetime congressman for the People's Party. The speakers who shared the stage with Pinchot at this first conference represented a cross-section of American radicalism, as would subsequent conferences hosted by POLA. At the 1917 conference Pinchot shared a forum with a number of prominent socialists, including Milwaukee politicians Victor Berger and Daniel Hoan, and Harry Laidler of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. Other speakers included Louis F. Post, a close associate of the late radical political-economist Henry George and editor of the Georgite/single-tax magazine *The Public*; Benjamin Marsh, a radical and veteran of multiple social causes, who at the time headed the New York Committee on the Congestion of Population and the National Emergency Peace Committee; several representatives of the neo-populist National Nonpartisan League were present; and a few from the leftwing of organized labor.[4] Significantly Pinchot and his brother Amos are listed as officials for the organization in advertisements that appeared in *The Public*.

The gathering of elements shown here are reflective of the tradition of vernacular radicalism in the US. I use this phrase following Shanin's (Shanin 1983:255-6) concept of the vernacular revolutionary tradition. Shanin defines these as non-Marxist, pseudo-Marxist socialist and/or populist ideologies that are a product of both "intellectual and plebeian strata" of a "native society," and "appeal in a language of ideas, emotions and recollections" to the "political experience and circumstances" of that society. In the

[4]On the attendees, see "The Public Ownership League" 1917. *Municipal Journal*, December 22, pp. 617,620.

American context, Populism, Henry Georgism, and our own homegrown varieties of socialism comprise elements of such a tradition.[5]

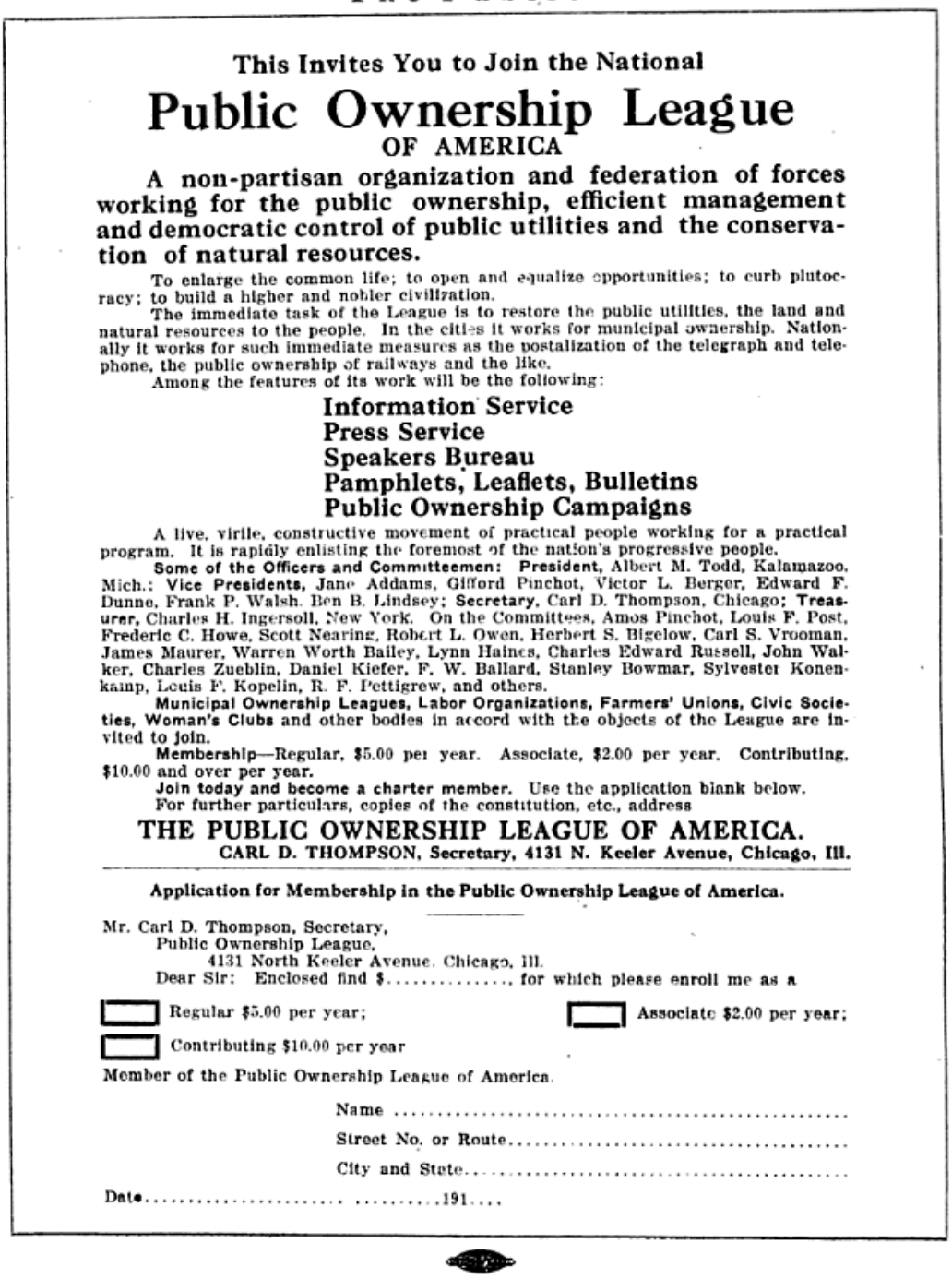
As important as who was present at the POLA conference, was *who was not*. If this were a meeting of the National Conservation Congress or the American Forestry Association representatives of various trade associations and other business interests would be present, as well as leaders of the women's clubs, which also tended to reflect an elite class interest. This is no coincidence. Around the time of WWI—the close of the so-called Progressive Era—Pinchot was increasingly at odds with the establishment conservation policy network.

Conservation appears in the League's advertisements as one of the organizations's principal objectives. In an announcement of the group's founding printed in the *The Public* (see FIGURE 1), the group was described as, "A non partisan organization and federation of forces working for the public ownership, efficient management and democratic control of public utilities *and the conservation of natural resources*." These efforts were devised, "To enlarge the common life; to open and equalize opportunities; to curb plutocracy; to build a higher and nobler civilization"—purposes suggestive of the social ideals with which Pinchot imbued conservation. Its program aimed to, "restore the public utilities, the land and natural resources to the people."[6]

The makeup of the conference reveals an alternative constituency that was in the making—even if it never fully developed. As suggestive as the conference is for a possible "federation of forces" backing conservation at the close of the Progressive Era; looking back from 1917 from the biographies of some of the individuals assembled at

[5]See Quint (1954), Green (1978), Weinstein (1967) and Pollack (1962) on the American radical tradition. For the deeper historical roots of American radicalism see Lause (2005) and Sotheran (Sotheran 1892).

[6]Advertisement printed in *The Public*, August 3, 1917, p.444 (emphasis added).



This Invites You to Join the National

Public Ownership League
OF AMERICA

A non-partisan organization and federation of forces working for the public ownership, efficient management and democratic control of public utilities and the conservation of natural resources.

To enlarge the common life; to open and equalize opportunities; to curb plutocracy; to build a higher and nobler civilization.

The immediate task of the League is to restore the public utilities, the land and natural resources to the people. In the cities it works for municipal ownership. Nationally it works for such immediate measures as the postalization of the telegraph and telephone, the public ownership of railways and the like.

Among the features of its work will be the following:

Information Service
Press Service
Speakers Bureau
Pamphlets, Leaflets, Bulletins
Public Ownership Campaigns

A live, virile, constructive movement of practical people working for a practical program. It is rapidly enlisting the foremost of the nation's progressive people.

Some of the Officers and Committeemen: President, Albert M. Todd, Kalamazoo, Mich.; **Vice Presidents,** Jane Addams, Gifford Pinchot, Victor L. Berger, Edward F. Dunne, Frank P. Walsh, Ben B. Lindsey; **Secretary,** Carl D. Thompson, Chicago; **Treasurer,** Charles H. Ingersoll, New York. On the Committees, Amos Pinchot, Louis F. Post, Frederic C. Howe, Scott Nearing, Robert L. Owen, Herbert S. Bigelow, Carl S. Vrooman, James Maurer, Warren Worth Bailey, Lynn Haines, Charles Edward Russell, John Walker, Charles Zueblin, Daniel Kiefer, F. W. Ballard, Stanley Bowmar, Sylvester Konenkamp, Louis F. Kopelin, R. F. Pettigrew, and others.

Municipal Ownership Leagues, Labor Organizations, Farmers' Unions, Civic Societies, Woman's Clubs and other bodies in accord with the objects of the League are invited to join.

Membership—Regular, $5.00 per year. Associate, $2.00 per year. Contributing, $10.00 and over per year.

Join today and become a charter member. Use the application blank below.

For further particulars, copies of the constitution, etc., address

THE PUBLIC OWNERSHIP LEAGUE OF AMERICA.
CARL D. THOMPSON, Secretary, 4131 N. Keeler Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Application for Membership in the Public Ownership League of America.

Mr. Carl D. Thompson, Secretary,
Public Ownership League,
4131 North Keeler Avenue, Chicago, Ill.
Dear Sir: Enclosed find $....., for which please enroll me as a

☐ Regular $5.00 per year; ☐ Associate $2.00 per year;

☐ Contributing $10.00 per year

Member of the Public Ownership League of America.

Name .....

Street No. or Route.....

City and State.....

Date..... .....191....

FIGURE 1. Advertisement for the Public Ownership League, printed in *The Public*

the conference, there are significant manifestations of the radical undercurrent. As I will show, there was a radical interest in conservation that preceded Pinchot's own radical turn.

In this chapter I trace back the history of conservation's radical undercurrent from the various individuals assembled at this conference. This chapter is comprised of three sections that each link the radical history of conservation with one or more individuals present at the 1907 conference. As such his chapter identifies the specific strains of radicalism that provided substance, whether potential or definite, to conservation's radicalism. The first section suggests that the presence of fiery, populist ex-Senator at this POLA conference indicates that conservation historiography is skewed. The next looks at the relationship between conservation and the land reform tradition that was an important seedbed of American radicalism. Then I examine the history of American socialists interest in conservation. Before the conclusion I look at some of the links between the radical faction in forestry and American radical politics. The conclusion unpacks the lessons of this history.

Richard Pettigrew and the Establishment of Forest Reserves

The presence of one speaker in particular at the 1917 POLA conference demonstrates the existence of radical undercurrent in conservation. Richard Pettigrew, the firebrand former Senator from South Dakota, spoke to the conference on "The Fight for the National Forests."

Pettigrew was a radical, best known as an opponent of imperialism. He was a founding member of the Ant-Imperialist League in 1900. His speeches before the Senate on the subject comprise a book edited by Scott Nearing, *The Course of Empire*—an important document on America's imperial ambitions at the time of the Spanish-

American War and the annexation of Hawaii (Pettigrew 1920, 1922; Fanebust 1997). He occupied a Senate seat between 1889 and 1901, having been first elected as a Republican, and then targeted successfully for defeat by Republican boss Mark Hannah. In the interim he split with the Party to join the Silver Republicans, a group of Republicans who aligned with the Populists. Afterward he stayed active in politics, aligning himself with the various left-wing currents—as his presence at the POLA conference indicates. A memoir of his political career titled *Imperial Washington* charts his estrangement from the ruling class and Washington establishment. It was published in 1922 by Charles H. Kerr, the leading publisher of socialist literature in the US, and had the distinction of being praised by Lenin (Fanebust 1997; Pettigrew 1922).

Pettigrew's name is not unknown in the conservation history literature. He was a member the Senate Public Lands Committee when two of the most important pieces of legislation in the history of forest conservation were enacted. These were a provision of the 1891 General Revision Act which granted the president authority to establish Forest Reserves by proclamation from land in the public domain (the provision is now commonly referred to as the Forest Reserve Act), and an 1897 law that established the legal basis for the Forest Reserve's administration by the federal government. This latter law is often referred to as the "Pettigrew Amendment" because it took the form of an amendment, introduced by Pettigrew, to the Sundry Civil appropriations bill.

It is probable that Pettigrew's address at the POLA conference bares resemblance to the first two chapters of *Imperial Washington*. There Pettigrew claimed credit for authoring the Forest Reserve provision of the 1891 law. He offers that he supported the creation of Reserves because he opposed the "land-grabbing" then taking place, and that he believed what was left of the public domain should remain public property. "[T]he Federal Government still owned millions of acres of valuable timber, mineral

and agricultural land that might easily have been utilized for public advantage instead of private gain," he wrote, "I set myself to save it for the people" (Pettigrew 1922:13).

Pettigrew had in fact made this claim repeatedly beginning in 1898 (Fanebust 1997). His claim was brought to the attention of the conservation community in 1905, when a letter of his was printed in the *Proceedings* of American Forestry Congress. "I was the author of the legislation of 1891, authorizing the President to set apart forest reservation out of the public domain, and therefore always in favor of a policy which should protect these forests and perpetuated them," the letter read, "For my part I should be pleased if all the forest lands, and all the other lands now owned by the Government of the United States, were withdrawn from sale and were administered by the Government, so that the title would remain forever in the Government for the benefit of the people of the United States" (American Forestry Association 1905:367).

In *Imperial Washington* Pettigrew purports to have sought the further expansion of public reservations. In March of 1898 he recollects introducing a bill "to preserve the public lands for the people." He described the purposes of the bill as follows:

> 1. To make use and not ownership the criterion in the distribution of nature's gifts to individual citizens.
>
> 2. To keep the title to the public domain, including agricultural land, mineral land, timber land, water-power, and all other natural gifts, perpetually in the whole people, and thus prevent any greater quantities from getting into the grip of the few.
>
> 3. To localize control over the administration of the lands, so as to bring the [conservation] problem closer to the people.

The bill was not referred by the Public Lands Committee. But if it had been enacted, Pettigrew asserts, it would have amounted to a "first step" in the direction of, "a general program for the conservation of all resources" (Pettigrew 1922:26-7).

Pettigrew's interest in conservation is intriguing because it anticipated the radical direction Pinchot would later take. We see from the above a conservation perspective subsumed in antimonopolism, with populist concerns, and advocating socialistic measures (i.e., "use not ownership").

Pinchot and Pettigrew would not have been in complete accord. One of the essential elements of Pinchot's doctrine of conservation was that it was preferable for the federal government to administer resources, because otherwise state and local governments would be dominated by the landed interests that they would have to regulate (Pinchot 1920). Pettigrew (1916) believed that public lands should be vested in the states and territories in which they were situated on the legal condition that should always remain public property with definite limitations on the length that they could be leased. The difference reflects a more antagonistic view of Washington. But there was one important similarity in their thinking: both believed in public ownership and control of land and resources because it would derive, for the public, benefits that individual ownership and utilization would not. The organized conservation movement, in contrast, had come to favor public reservations because it was expedient from the point of view of establishing conservation—not because of the social issues involved. Consequentially Pettigrew's recollections would seem to indicate an inkling of the radical undercurrent in conservation that would take more concrete shape later on.

However Pettigrew's purported interest in conservation is not without issue. His claim to have been the author of Forest Reserve provision of the 1891 law was treated with skepticism by contemporary conservationists and subsequently by historians (Ise 1920; Steen 1991, 2004 [1976]). One historian goes further, referring to Pettigrew as "a reserve hater" (Lien 1991:11)—a charge that stems from his role in a controversy that precipitated the enactment of the 1897 law, as we will see below.

Pettigrew's claim was partially dismissed because it was made "immodestly" (Steen 2004 [1976]:27). Credit for the legislation deservedly lies with the members of the American Forestry Association (AFA), and in particular with Bernard Fernow, who was both the chief of the Division of Forestry and leader of the AFA (Kirkland 1971; Steen 1991). A number of bills with provisions that would have created forest reserves were introduced prior to the 1891 law, initially at the AFA's behest (Ise 1920; Kirkland 1971; Steen 1991).

The 1891 law that contained the Forest Reserve provision was conceived as a revision of the general land policy of the post-Jacksonian Era, which had favored wholesale disposal of the public domain. The law was part of what is now known as the General Revision Act. It was a first attempt to damper down the excesses of the public land policy. In addition to establishing the presidential authority to proclaim Forest Reserves, the General Revision Act modified the ways in which land was disposed to homesteaders. Specifically it repealed the Timber Culture Act and the Preemption Act, and revised the terms of the Desert Land Act—some of the principle pieces of legislation claimants used to acquire public land. This shift in policy was thought to reflect an understanding that the liberal disposition of land was not building up a nation of modest farmers, and a concomitant concern that the laws were being taken advantage of and large holdings of resources were being amassed. Conservation minded individuals in government, like John Wesley Powell for instance, had been urging a revision on these grounds for the previous decade (Robbins 1976 [1942]), but the main push came from the antimonopolist farmer and labor movement (Sanders 1999).

The Forest Reserve provision of the General Revision Act was not part of the early draft of the law approved by the House and Senate. Instead it was amended to the bill as a new twenty-fourth section by a conference committee of the House and Senate. The

circumstance of how Section 24 was added is not clear (Steen 1991; Kirkland 1971). Exactly who added the Forest Reserve provision is a controversial subject because it reflects on the purposes of the law. Did the Forest Revision provision reflect the emergence of an antimonopolist sentiment, as its inclusion in the General Revision Act would suggest? This was once the view that prevailed in conservation scholarship, and historians sympathetic to the program of Pinchotist conservation looked at the legislation as such (Robbins 1976 [1942]). But scholars, beginning with Hays, took explicit issue with this view: "Many have argued that the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 and subsequent conservation measures reflected the antimonopoly movement of the post-Civil War Era," Hays (1959:263-4) noted. "Yet, the antimonopolists did not conspicuously push conservation measures, and in fact frequently opposed them." The movements against monopoly and the one for conservation, "had entirely separate origins," he argued. The antimonopoly movement was "diametrically opposed to the spirit of that law." Hays characterizes antimonopolists as homesteaders who felt the same way about "forest, range, or mineral reserves," as they did about "withdrawals for railroad land grants. They fought with equal vigor to abolish both."

Pettigrew's support for reservations would lend support to the former perspective, but many histories of conservation subscribe to a different version of events. The more common story of how Section 24 was enacted into law, is that John W. Noble, the Secretary of the Interior, strong-armed a reluctant conference committee of the House and Senate to include a forest reservation provision as part of the 1891 law, with a threat that President Harrison would veto the legislation without it. When John Ise (1920:115) wrote the first academic study of forestry policy, this was the version of events he favored. But Ise seemed to do so reluctantly, writing, "Noble should receive credit," but that he was "unable to secure absolute proof" of the story's veracity. Later research showed that

the Noble story was almost certainly false (Kirkland 1971; Steen 1991; Arnold 1992). Ise also erroneously asserted that Congress had no idea what it was voting on when it enacted Section 24. Congress was under pressure to past the legislation quickly before the legislative session ended, but the *Congressional Record* shows Section 24 was, in fact, debated in both houses of Congress (Steen 1991; Arnold 1992).

The story of Noble forcing the conference committee to include Section 24 likely entered the historical record, and was perpetuated there, because it allowed various figures in the organized conservation movement to take credit for having the law enacted. In various accounts Noble was convinced of the need to pass the measure by Fernow, Arnold Hague, Robert Underwood Johnson and John Muir (Steen 1991; Kirkland 1971; Nash 1982 [1968]), individuals with ties variously to the American Forestry Association, Boone and Crocket Club and the Sierra Club—in other words, the organized conservation movement. The story backed up their agenda about what the purposes of the Reserves were. Historians partial to preservationism (c.f. Nash 1982 [1968]) favored the the Noble story, for instance, because Noble had greater sympathy for their cause than the individuals who served on the Public Lands Committees of the House and Senate. Noble had been in touch with some of the individuals who wanted the boundaries of Yellowstone park expanded. Congress was reluctant to do so. After Section 24 was enacted Noble had the Park expanded in President Harrison's first proclamation under the new authority (Steen 1991; Nash 1982 [1968]). The Noble story allowed the preservationists to claim that scenic preservation was principal motivation for the Reserves' establishment.

Because of the biases of historians there are some significant misconceptions about the two forestry laws of the eighteen-nineties, and the perception that Pettigrew opposed the Forest Reserves is in part a result of the shortcomings of this literature. The case of

Pettigrew is significant from the point of view of conservation historiography, because his contention to have been the author of Section 24 was dismissed, in favor of an alternative lacking documentary evidence. I review this literature below, not to make the case that Pettigrew deserves special credit. There remain problems with Pettigrew's account. I take up the issue because the way Pettigrew's claim was treated by scholars, and the larger biases in conservation history it reveals, demonstrate reasons a radical undercurrent remains obscure.

There is a strong impression in conservation scholarship that the Act establishing the Forest Reserves was preservationist, and that the next important forestry law, the Pettigrew Amendment, was utilitarian. Hays (1959) started this convention, and subsequent histories partial to preservationism perpetuated it (c.f. Nash 1982 [1968]; Lien 1991). The law of 1891 did not establish a means of administering the Reserves. It merely authorized the President to proclaim land as permanent public property and not subject to disposition under the various land laws. The second forestry law allowed the government to set up an administration for the Reserves and enumerated the purposes for which the resources within them could be utilized. According to it Forest Reserves could be established for, "purposes of securing favorable conditions of water flow, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber;" agricultural land was explicitly excluded from reservation; mature and dead timber could be appraised and sold; residents were declared free to gather timber and stone; and most importantly the Secretary of the Interior was directed to make rules for the protection of the Reserves (Steen 2004 [1976]:36). The perception perpetuated in the historical literature is that the 1897 law opened the Reserves to exploitation. In effect, however, the Reserves were already open to exploitation, because the previous law made no provision for their protection. The Reserves, John

Ise (1920:120) wrote, "stood in the same position as unreserved lands"—subject to depredation.

In the years following passage of the two laws there would be bitter disagreements among conservationists over government land management, but prior to 1897 there was no question about the desirability of bringing the Forest Reserves under management. John Muir, the leader of the preservationists, supported "wise management" at the time—something Nash's (1982 [1968]:134) convoluted history demonstrates but fails to come to terms with. It was not until after the 1897 law was enacted that Muir's Sierra Club began to lobby for non-use (Wengert et al. 1979).[7]

The reason the Act of 1891 contained no provision for the Reserves' protection is because it was not conceived as a coherent system of forest protection, but as stop-gap until a workable system could be established (Ise 1920; Steen 1991; Wengert et al. 1979). This was stated clearly when the Forest Reserve provision of the 1891 law was debated in the House. Lewis E. Payson, a member of the conference committee stated, "We have made a provision in this bill authorizing the President. . . to make a reservation of the timber lands. . . so that the water supply in that country may be preserved from entry and *until legislation shall have passed Congress whereby these lands shall be opened*" [emphasis added] (Steen 1991:20). Historians that have taken the preservationist stance have tended to gloss over this significant detail.

In the interim between the enactment of the two forestry laws conservationists were united in the desire for additional legislation to govern the Reserve's management. The situation was untenable. The prospects of establishing more Reserves were diminished with the uncertainty surrounding their status. For this reason President Cleveland

[7]The Sierra Club would remain part of a mostly unified conservation lobby for some time. For instance, the Club supported the 1905 transfer of the Forest Reserves to the Department of Agriculture (Steen 2004 [1976]).

explicitly declined to establish any new Reserves until Congress could clarify how they would be administered (Kirkland 1971). After Congress ignored the issue for several years a small group of conservationists got the National Academy of Sciences to appoint a National Forest Commission to investigate the situation of the Reserves and recommend to Congress a system of administration (Steen 2004 [1976]). The Commission appointed contained notable forestry advocates, like the Harvard botanist Charles Sprague Sargent and the geologist Arnold Hague. A young Pinchot was appointed to act as its Secretary—a position he used to advance his career (Pinchot 1998 [1947]).

The Commission was divided on the details, but not on the desirability of subjecting the Reserves to regulated-use. There were questions about whether grazing should be allowed in the Forest Reserves, or whether stock should be allowed under regulation.[8] The main division within the Commission was over whether the Army should be enlisted to patrol the Reserves and to deny entry to those who failed to obtain a pass. Military administration was favored by Sargent, the Commission's chairman who was close with Muir. It was opposed by Gifford Pinchot, who considered the idea authoritarian. Pinchot favored a civil administration of trained foresters because he was wise enough to understand that a military administration would turn the West against conservation (Pinchot 1998 [1947]). Sargent thought military administration would prevent politics from entering into management (Fox 1981). The differences were significant but it was not a case of use versus non-use.

[8]The grazing issue was one of the main concerns of the preservationist wing, and an important line upon the developing strife in conservation. At the time of the Commission, preservationists accepted utilization but believed sheep so destructive that they should be barred. Later Pinchot (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:179,180) accepted that the preservationists were right ("John Muir called them hoofed locusts and he was right."), but he did not think the Reserves could have survived a challenge of the grazing interests ("we were faced with a simple choice: Shut out all grazing and lose the Forest Reserves, or let stock in under control and save the Reserves for the Nation.")

The Commission failed to complete its report in time for Congress to deliberate on it. Instead it submitted a recommendation to President Cleveland in late 1896 for the establishment of 13 new Forest Reserves covering more than 21 million acres. In a reversal of his stated policy Cleveland went ahead with the advice declaring the new Reserves on George Washington's Birthday February 12, 1897 (Pinchot 1998 [1947]; Kirkland 1971).

The proclamation of Washington's Birthday Reserves (as they would come to be known) was designed to push Congress into action. Sargent described the Commission's intention in a letter to transmitting the Commission's recommendations to Wolcott Gibbs, President of the Academy and Commission member *ex officio*. He explained that it would be "easier" to pass legislation

> if the reserved areas are now increased, as the greater the number of people interested in drawing supplies from the reserved territory or mining in them, the greater will be the pressure on Congress to enact laws permitting their proper administration. For this reason it is the unanimous position of the Commission that the establishment by proclamation of the reserves described above is a matter of utmost importance to the development and welfare of the whole country (Kirkland 1971:228-9).

It should be noted that Sargent's statement contradicts the portrayal of his position in preservationist histories. Nash (1982 [1968]:136) wrote that the Sargent faction of the Commission "hoped the government could be persuaded to reserve more forests without provision for commercial use, in the manner of the 1891 Forest Reserve Act." He characterized the Commission's recommendation to establish the new Reserves and failure to report a system of administration as such. Others have perpetuated this falsehood (c.f. Lien 1991). And yet Sargent's statement shows that the proclamation was conceived to compel western congressmen to work out a system of "proper

administration." It also shows he had no illusion that managed mining and timber harvesting would be barred.

The position Sargent takes on administration in this letter is, in fact, consistent with the Commission's later report recommending managed-utilization of timber and minerals, but barring sheep grazing, and compromising on military administration. By the time the report was published, however, Congress had settled the issue (Pinchot 1998 [1947]).[9]

Cleveland's proclamation had its desired effect. The Pettigrew Amendment was added to the Sundry Civil Bill establishing a system of managed-use under the authority of Secretary of the Interior. But the manner in which it happened sparked controversy which put the future of the Reserves in jeopardy.

For westerners the proclamation came as a shock. The Commission had avoided publicity, and Cleveland had reversed himself on the matter. Pinchot related:

> Sargent had done his persistent and highly effective best to avoid and prevent any public knowledge of what the Commission was for, or what it was doing, or even that it had been appointed. . . . The net result was entire ignorance, in Congress and throughout the West, that the Commission wanted Forestry practiced on the public forests (Pinchot 1998 [1947]:108-9).

Pinchot believed that the proclamation should have at least been accompanied by a statement by the Commission containing its eventual recommendation. He blamed Sargent's brinkmanship for making Western legislators into "permanent enemies of the Forest Reserves," whom he would have the trouble of dealing with throughout his career

[9]The intention of Commission was noted by contemporaries. Charles D. Walcott, Director of the United States Geological Survey, said this before the American Forestry Congress in 1905: "In the letter recommending the establishment of the forest reserves the Forestry Commission stated, in effect, that it had purposely recommended very large reserves in order to create a public sentiment which would cause Congress to enact laws securing the proper administration of the reserves" (American Forestry Association 1905:365). Fernow acknowledges it earlier, in the 1897 *Proceedings* of the AFA (Steen 2004 [1976]:33). But the majority of published histories leave this detail out. An exception is a dissertation Herbert Donald Kirkland (1971), which is by far the best documented account of late nineteenth century forest policy.

(Pinchot 1998 [1947]:110). Fernow, similarly lamented that the proclamation "stirred up such an antagonism as we have never had before" (Steen 2004 [1976]:34).

There was momentum in Congress to rescind Cleveland's proclamation, and worse, to revoke the presidential authority to proclaim future Reserves. Many Western congressmen took to the floor to denounce Cleveland and the Commission (Ise 1920; Steen 2004 [1976]; Pinchot 1998 [1947]).

Pettigrew was one of those incensed. In his memoir he attacked the Commission: "These men rode about the country in a Pullman car, and prescribed the boundaries of forest reservations without any discriminating judgment." The Black Hills Reserve in his state "embraced within its boundaries the city of Deadwood, and towns of Leed, Custer and Hill City, which contained thousands of people who were mining, home-building and getting the timber necessary for these activities from the surrounding forests" (Pettigrew 1922:15). Pettigrew objected on the Senate floor that people residing in this area would be made criminals "if they cut a stick of firewood" (Fanebust 1997:293). A major employer in Pettigrew's constituency was also located within the Reserve's boundaries—the Homestake Mine (Pinchot 1998 [1947]). The inclusion of the populated areas and the large gold mine was, of course, probably deliberate, but Congress was left with the impression that the Commission did not adequately survey the area recommended for reservation because the Commission gave no public intimation of its motives.

Pettigrew thus joined Western congressmen clamoring for the proclamation to be vacated. The impression that he was an opponent of the Reserves follows from this fact. But historians have been so confused about the context of the controversy, that they could hardly be relied upon to provide an accurate account of the nuance of Pettigrew's position. Pettigrew vociferously denounced the Commission and Cleveland's proclamations, but he did not oppose the Reserves generally. His position was that

Cleveland had misused the authority the 1891 law granted, not that the law was ill-conceived (Fanebust 1997).

This is demonstrated by his actions. While debate was taking place on the matter he worked with Charles Walcott, director of the US Geological Survey, on the legislation that would permanently establish the Forest Reserves. Walcott drew up an amendment to the Sundry Civil Bill, he recounted, "at the suggestion Senator Pettigrew" (American Forestry Association 1905:367). Walcott's account also suggests the Pettigrew Amendment was based partially on the unpublished recommendations of the National Forest Commission. Pettigrew would ultimately vote against the Civil Sundry Bill with his amendment included. He stubbornly held that the original proclamation should be rescinded until a complete survey of the areas had taken place. There was not time to complete such a survey before the end of the legislative session (Fanebust 1997). But even as he called for others in the Senate to follow his lead rejecting the bill, he maintained that he believed in "saving and preserving the forests" (Fanebust 1997:294).

A year later Pettigrew began to claim to be the author of Section 24 of the the 1891 law.[10] Pettigrew's position on public reservations certainly changed around this time. In 1897 he sought to vacate Cleveland's proclamation until surveys could be completed. In 1898 he had come to the conclusion that the government should retain the title of all remaining public land. Just the same, if Pettigrew were not supportive of Forest Reserves it would be odd for him to seek credit for the law that allowed the President to establish them, and all the more so only a year after supposedly spearheading the attack against them.

Pettigrew's claim to have been the author of Section 24 has more veracity than historians have acknowledged. This is suggested by the available documentary evidence

[10]Wayne Fanebust (1997), Pettigrew's biographer, reports that Pettigrew made the claim in two 1898 letters. His claims probably were not generally known of until 1905.

historians have been able to piece together. When Ise (1920) wrote his history of the law he based it on the accounts of individuals he contacted who could be assumed to have some knowledge of what occurred. The Noble story originated with Fernow and Edward Bowers, of the General Land Office of the Department of the Interior. But subsequent study would show that Noble and Fernow were probably unaware that the Section 24 had been enacted (Kirkland 1971; Steen 1991). Fernow does not mention the law in his correspondence until two weeks after it was enacted. Noble had to be told of the legislation later by Arnold Hague, who was lobbying to have the boundaries of Yellowstone expanded. Ise was under the mistaken assumption that Noble publicly accepted credit for Section 24. It turns out Noble only took credit for his "official action. . . in support of the policy of reserving the forests" (Kirkland 1971:180). This was probably a reference to proclamation of the Forest Reserve adjacent to Yellowstone. The only possible claim Noble made was in a private conversation to Bowers (Ise 1920).

A dissertation by Donald Herbert Kirkland comprises probably the best documented history of early Forest Reserve policy. After examining available documents, Kirkland (1971:187) concluded that the Section 24 "came from someone within the conference committee," not Noble or others who have been suggested.

Pettigrew, a member of the conference committee, was the only contemporary to accurately state Noble played no role. In 1918 Pettigrew received an inquiry from Ise and the two engaged in a brief correspondence about his claim (Fanebust 1997). In these letters Pettigrew wrote that he "had never before heard that Secretary Noble had anything to do about it." Pettigrew claimed that it was he and William S. Holman who did the work of the conference committee. Holman was a Democratic representative from Indiana and the former Public Lands Committee chairman. Pettigrew described his role as "Acting Chairman of the conference Committee on the Senate side." He testified,

"Holman wished to repeal the preemption law, and I agreed to it on the condition that an amendment should be inserted allowing the setting apart of forest reservations, a section which I prepared and had accepted for the purpose" (Kirkland 1971:182-3). Pettigrew admitted that his recollection was hazy, and his letters occasionally confused the 1891 and 1897 law. His version of events is not entirely satisfactory, but it is the one contemporary account that accurately states that Section 24 was the work of the conference committee.

More recent study has uncovered strong evidence that Holman was in all likelihood the original author of Section 24. The language of the section was undoubtedly based on a provision Holman introduced previously in 1888 (Steen 1991; Arnold 1992). But this does not mean that Pettigrew did not insist on its inclusion in the 1891 bill and rework it into the form it would eventually take. While the two bills were nearly identical there were important differences. The earlier bill Holman introduced contained language, not included in the 1891 bill, allowing the President to deploy the military to protect the reserves, for instance (Steen 1991). The conference committee's work appears to have been the result of consensus. The entire bill was largely re-worked by the committee, and there was a pressing need to get the bill up for a vote before end of the legislative session (Steen 1991). Given these circumstances, each individual committee member would have had considerable power to shape the bill that was ultimately enacted.

While Pettigrew did not seek credit for Section 24 until 1898, Fanebust (1997:209-210) argues that Pettigrew's earlier correspondence "lends considerable support to his claim, making it as strong as that of anyone else." This correspondence has not been examined by any other historian. Fanebust demonstrates that just months after the enactment of the 1891 law Pettigrew was promoting the idea of using the new law to have a park established surrounding Harney Peak in the Black Hills. In one letter he mentions that park could be established "by proclamation of the President under an act of Congress

which I helped secure passage of last winter." The park was not proclaimed because of local opposition. In any case, in this earlier letter Pettigrew characterizes his role more modestly, stating that he "helped" to get the Forest Reserve law enacted. This would be more consistent with what is known of Holman's role.

What the review of these competing claims reveals about conservation historiography is perhaps more interesting than the question of who ultimately deserves credit. The impression histories of the subject long gave was that Congress was unaware of the law it passed, and that the momentum for conservation came from a few organized nongovernmental sectors—the American Forestry Association, the Boone and Crocket Club, the readers of *Forest and Stream*—and a small group of allies in the executive branch of government. While the former is clearly erroneous, the latter has much truth. The organized forces mentioned clearly initiated the drive for forestry legislation. Pettigrew's interest in conservation did not totally align with the organized movement of the AFA or the Boone and Crocket Club. The one group sought to have forestry practiced; the other, game reserves. Pettigrew, in contrast, took an interest in conservation because he was concerned about the amassing of property in the hands of a few, and the rights of the populace to the product of its labor. It was natural that his claims did not receive an adequate hearing, but organized conservation did not reflect the full range of support for conservation, or what the movement for conservation had the potential to become.

Pettigrew's interest properly reflects an undercurrent since it represented a palpable concern surrounding the conservation issue, but was not given voice by any organized segment of the conservation movement. What was the nature of this undercurrent at this time? Pettigrew was a radical and his radicalism was not uncharacteristic of his times. He was a populist and an antimonopolist. At the time he started to take credit for the Forest Reserve law he was also speaking fondly of socialism as the destiny of humankind

(Pettigrew 1922:22). When the Progressive Party was launched he supported its formation and campaigned for Roosevelt in South Dakota. But he regretted his actions, calling Roosevelt a "monumental faker," and objecting that the Progressive Party "offers a lot of reforms, with a view to the perpetuation of this infamous economic system." From then on he announced his attention to support "the socialistic ticket."[11] It is interesting that Pettigrew took interest in conservation at an early moment in his radicalization. We can only conclude that he saw in it a program with the potential to democratize resource utilization in the interests of the populace.

John Wesley Powell and Henry George

The conservation movement of the late nineteenth century must be credited for affecting a consequential shift in the historical land policy of the United States. Under various laws enacted from mid-nineteenth century through eighteen-seventies public land was handed out liberally to both individual settlers and corporations with the view of wholesale disposal. The problems conservationists initially had to contend with centered on the waste and disorder this policy unleashed. Eventually the policy was revised, albeit not before the bulk of valuable land was already passed into private hands and too much of it destroyed.

The Preemption Act of 1841 commenced a policy of making revenue from public land sales nominal for the purpose of encourage the rapid settlement of the continent (Robbins 1976 [1942]). The law granted squatters the right to acquire up to 160 acres of public land at a low cost. When Republicans took control of the government, the policy of encouraging disposal continued with passage of the Homestead Act, which made

[11]The first quote is from from Pettigrew (1922:236). The second and third are from a letter of Pettigrew to Henry Loucks (formerly of the National Farmer's Alliance) 12/28/1914, in the Loucks-Pettigrew Correspondence (1914-1916).

public land free to settler claimants. Amendments to the Homestead Act, under which settlers could get larger allotments of land, followed in the eighteen-seventies. Although the Republican Party's pledge to reserve land for "actual settlers" was a major factor in their rise to power, the Party was exceedingly generous in its land-grants to corporations. Under Lincoln, Johnson, and Grant, an area larger than California was handed over to railroad companies (Robbins 1976 [1942]:223).

Given the concerns of the populace, some of the land disposition laws contained provisions that stated the land was for individual use and that the claimant was not acting on behalf of any syndicate. This was a provision of the Timber and Stone Act of 1878, for instance. But the General Land Office of the Interior Department, charged with overseeing the disposal of public lands, was incapable of verifying even minimal compliance with the law. Pinchot (1998 [1947]:80) charged that the Land Office "adopted the general idea that their business was not to safeguard the Public Domain, but to pass Government lands into private hands as fast as possible, without regard to actual compliance with the law, so long as the papers were in order." Charles Beard (1917:404) commented, "A bare list of the timber and land frauds which have been unearthed by the government would fill a volume of no mean proportions."

But there could be little doubt that this was not merely a policy of the Land Office, but of government generally. In the two decades prior to 1890, Land Commissioners often made it known that the Land Office had been "compelled," through lack of resources, "to treat doubtful claims as valid…because it could not investigate the facts" (Robbins 1976 [1942]:137). Congress consistently ignored these pleas to rectify the situation (Dunham 1937). And because the power was with Congress to do something about the situation we can only conclude that it was government policy to get land into private hands, no matter whose and whatever the result, as rapidly as possible (Veblen 1923; Dunham 1937).

There were two consequences of this policy. One was monopolization. This was a concern of Pinchot (1998 [1947]:83), who charged: "enormous holdings of land were put together by fraudulent means, local monopolies flourished and the people suffered." He continued, "Land monopolies in the West," an area settled under laws ostensibly devised to favor landless settlers, "far surpassed anything that existed in the East." The other consequence was waste. Another forester, Bernard Fernow (1887:8) observed, "the peculiar and unique conditions under which this country has been settled. . . produced a tendency to wastefulness." In the rush to lay claim to the public domain under speculative conditions more land was taken up than was needed for cultivation. The same is true of timber claims and other resources. Veblen (1923:187) wrote that there was "no question. . . that the practice of competitively taking over land more rapidly and in larger parcels than the requirements of cultivation called for will have increased the rate and volume of this waste." Elwood Mead charged that the "results" of the rapid opening up of the country and of speculation land, was a "costly, wasteful, migratory settlement" (Zon 1919:286).

Conservation offered a means of conceptualizing an adjustment. It envisioned a settled society and the permanent utilization of fixed resources. The wasteful system of frontier capitalism needed to be brought into equilibrium with the nation's resource base and environmental conditions. This required land-use planning to assure that land and resources were used for purposes for which they were fit; forestland unsuited for agriculture should not be burned down by the homesteader to get at the soil; the watersheds needed to protect the water supply of a community should not be grazed over by sheep; lumbering needed to be practiced on a sustained yield rather than migratory basis; regions could not be built-up, pillaged and abandoned, etc. The overall view of

scientific conservation is identified by Mead (1918:73): "Science" should "have gone hand in hand with settlement."

Scientific bodies and government commissions examined the problems and recommended surveys, reforms and reservations of valuable resources. Although conservation in time would be associated with the fiery crusading politics of Pinchot, the individuals who initially led the way in the late nineteenth century tended to be scientific men with moderate sensibilities. They were slow to advocate the wholesale revision of the public land policy that was needed, and they were careful to confine their attention to the subject of waste. This is why Pettigrew's interest in conservation, discussed in the previous section, was uncharacteristic.

The forestry movement from which Pinchot hailed was the epitome of moderate scientific conservation. This is significant because, as shown in chapter 1, under Pinchot's influence, forestry would become one of the main vectors of radicalism in conservation.

The movement to save the forests from destruction coalesced in the eighteen-seventies. One of the principal figures in this movement was Franklin Hough, a physician and amateur scientist from Lowville, New York. A reading of George Perkins Marsh's foundational book *Man and Nature* confirmed Hough's own observation that the destruction of forests was associated with dangerous levels of erosion and flooding. This spurred Hough into action. In 1873 he read a paper, "On the Duty of Governments in the Preservation of Forests," at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. It was the reading of this paper that marks the genesis of the organized forestry movement. The following day the AAAS passed a resolution to memorialize Congress on the need to preserve forests. Hough would go on to co-found the American Forestry Association in 1875. A bill enacted in 1876 contained an appropriation for a government study of the forest situation. Hough was appointed to carry out the study,

and eventually an office that would become the Division of Forestry of the Department of Agriculture emerged to carry out further research. Hough headed the Division (Steen 2004 [1976]; Ise 1920). Henceforth lobbying for forestry would come from in and outside of government.

The forestry movement was exceedingly slow to advocate what was needed—public reservations. John Ise (1920:110) has shown that in the eighteen-seventies scientific opinion "generally favored the sale of timber lands." Perhaps higher on their agenda was the need for the government to commission further study, but there is strong indication that forestry movement temporized because they worried public ownership and administration was antithetical to American ideology.

A couple examples should suffice to exhibit the tepidness of their advocacy. The AAAS memorial to Congress did not even recommend mechanisms to halt deforestation. It merely called upon government to recognize and study the problem. A contemporaneous report by the AAAS Forestry Committee did examine possible mechanisms. It noted noted that in Europe "large forests are owned and managed by governments," and that public administration comprised a successful system. But in the US it concluded "operations of planting and management must. . . be left to private enterprise" (American Association for the Advancement of Science 1875:44). Franklin Hough's early reports for the Government's Division of Forestry equivocated on the question in a similar manner—noting the successes of other countries with public ownership, but declining to recommend it for the US (Ise 1920). In his "Report of Forestry" of 1878 he suggested that forest land be disposed with a legal stipulation that the owner make provision to ensure the regrowth of forest after timbering (Hough 1878).

Ise (1920:110) believed these reports "so qualified their disapproval of a system of national forests as to practically grant the advisability of such a system." Perhaps he is

giving the movement too much credit? It would not be until the mid and late eighteen-eighties that the main organized forestry bodies explicitly advocated public ownership. The American Forest Congress formally backed reservations in 1885, and the AFA did so in 1889 (Ise 1920).

It is interesting to note that the more forceful forestry advocates in the US were not American-born, and so probably did not have the same reticence to advocate what was necessary. Carl Schurz, a German-born Republican politician who served as the Secretary of the Interior (1877-1881), was probably the first to advocate public reservations as a general policy. Following him was Bernard Fernow, a German-born and trained forester who took over the work of Hough in the AFA and Division of Forestry (Ise 1920).

It should be apparent from this brief review that Pinchot did not get his notion of conservation politics from the American forestry movement. The fact that he studied forestry abroad, no doubt, impressed on him the need of public control (Pinchot 1998 [1947], 1891). But this does not explain why he saw it necessary to absorb within conservation the social aspects of land reform politics. This dimension of Pinchotist conservation appears to derive from two sources: John Wesley Powell, a government geologist; and Henry George, one of the few notable American political-economists.

Powell and George both published major works within a year of each other. In 1878 Powell submitted his *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region* to Congress, as part of his duties as director of the Rocky Mountain Geological Survey. The report warned of the urgent need to modify the public land laws in the arid West, in order to prevent the monopolization of the region's water supply. George published *Progress and Poverty* in 1879, an immensely popular work that drew attention to the monopolization of land. The similar themes of these two important works have been noted (Stegner 1993 [1954]). Powell and George, each in his own way, comprise an authentic continuation of the

American tradition of agrarian reform, which since antebellum times attacked speculation and monopoly. This tradition also comprised a seedbed of American radicalism.

Both men's influence on Pinchot's politics was previously identified by Bates (1957). But the full extent of the significance of their doctrines on the radical undercurrent in conservation has not been recognized. After tracing a sketch of these respective doctrines and their influence on conservation, I show how they overlap, and tie back to individuals present at the POLA conference.

John Wesley Powell and Democratic Conservation

Powell was an explorer, naturalist, ethnologist and pioneering conservationist. His biographer, Wallace Stegner, observed that he had the broad and unspecialized interests of a self-acquired education. Although he became a major figure in the scientific community of Washington, he was a man of the West with only a smattering of a college education, and little of it in science. His historical legacy rests on his efforts to put government science into the service of the populace. Powell had none of the elitist pretensions of his better educated contemporaries. Powell had just one arm. The other had to be amputated after he took a bullet during the Civil War. He came into public prominence after leading the first successful expedition down the Colorado River—a daring feat he accomplished with his one arm. A knack for self-promotion accounts for his rise within government science. His first position in the federal government was as director of the Rocky Mountain Geological Survey. Later he took charge of a combined US Geological Survey and founded the government's Bureau of Ethnology, created to study Native American culture. He ran the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Ethnology at the same time (Stegner 1993 [1954]; Worster 2000).

The *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region* constituted a major development in conservationist thought. Settlement was just spreading to the lands west of the hundredth meridian, and boosters were talking up the region's potential for agriculture and industry (Stegner 1993 [1954]; Worster 2000). Powell's (1879) *Report* warned of the impending disaster these false expectations would produce. The region's ability to support settlement was greatly limited by lack of rainfall. Only a small portion of the area's land, namely that which could be brought under irrigation, was suitable for agriculture. The nonsensity that bringing the land under cultivation would increase rainfall was dismissed.[12] The region had the capability to support a good quality of life for some, but the homestead principle would have to be modified for this to happen. Under existing laws there was certainty that control over irrigation would be monopolized in the hands of the few. The lands of the region, he wrote, "have no value without water. If the water rights fall into the hands of irrigation companies and the lands into the hands of individual farmers, the farmers then will be dependent upon the stock companies, and eventually the monopoly of water rights will be an intolerable burden to people." The water would be monopolized because investment in irrigation was costly, and "the individual farmer being poor" lacked the means to construct dams, reservoirs and canals (Powell 1879:viii,40).

Powell's *Report* made clear that there was a choice: The irrigable land of the West could be brought under cultivation by "aggregated capital"—what would happen under the current laws—or by "cooperative labor"—which would require reforms (Powell 1879:viii). In an article published later in a popular magazine he similarly elaborated the options: "Should the farmers labor for themselves and own the agricultural properties severally? Or shall the farmers be a few capitalists, employing labor on a large scale, as is done in the great mines and manufactories of the United States?" Already, he noted, "the

[12]Interestingly Powell thought George Perkins Marsh's observations about forests and climate encouraged the rainfall theory.

farming industries of the West are falling into the hands of a wealthy few," and capital from "the East and in Europe" was pouring into the region. Recommendations were proposed "to secure to the toiling farmers the natural increment of profit which comes from the land with the progress of industrial civilization" (Powell 1890:111-2,116): Sites requiring irrigation should be withdrawn from entry; surveys should be undertaken; land found to be irrigable should be parceled into equal, modest-sized allotments and organized into irrigation districts; water rights should be apportioned to the district as a whole and use governed by rules each district collectively and democratically devises. The same mechanisms should apply to pasturage (Powell 1879).

What Powell (1879:29) proposed was a "colony system" of settlement. He understood that irrigation was not something ever carried out by individuals. In "high antiquity," he observed, "men were organized as communal bodies or as slaves to carry on such operations by united labor" (Powell 1890:111). This was a form of despotism, and there was a similar character to the Mormon settlements he observed practicing irrigation in Utah "under ecclesiastical organization." Corporate control was no less a despotism. Democratic "association"—a word associated with Fourierist socialism—was needed to prevent "individuals from having undue control of natural privileges" (Powell 1879:27,29). His proposals outlined legal means to facilitate such an association.

One case seems to have provided the model for Powell's irrigation district idea: the Greeley Colony of Colorado. This was a colony established under diluted Associationist principals by the former Fourierist Nathan Meeker. There a community had labored together to build an irrigation system that was collectively owned and managed (Smythe 1905). In the *Report* Powell (1879:27) cites this community as an example in which the colony system "has been eminently successful." Yet the indebtedness of Powell's idea to

socialist colonies has not even been acknowledged—not even in the two biographies of Powell written by excellent historians (Stegner 1993 [1954]; Worster 2000).

Along with Fourierism, Powell's proposal hearkened back to another antebellum movement that had the support of this Colorado community's namesake. Horace Greeley, founder and editor of the *New York Tribune*, had been a supporter of the land reform measures of the National Reform Association (Robbins 1976 [1942]). This was a movement led by New York City workers concerned with the growth of competition among wage laborers. Their three principal demands: the exemption of homesteads from debt seizure; a federal homestead measure; and legal limitations on the amount of land an individual could own (Lause 2005). The movement like Powell was concerned with monopolization of land and its effects on laboring people. Their measures were proposed in order to encourage a more even distribution of population on the land, and to prevent the filling up of cities with destitute and vulnerable workers, whose competition would depress wages. An additional idea of two of the movement's leaders, Lewis Masquerier and George Henry Evans, was the proposal for "National Reform Villages" likened to a "rural city" or "city farm." Mark Lause (2005:61-2) writes that this idea was conceived as a "decentralized polis that the reform proposals of the day would make possible." The idea anticipated the "Garden City" as proposed by Ebenezer Howard (Magnusson 1919), but it also anticipates Powell's community settlement idea.

The demands of the National Reform Association had widespread airing. They were endorsed by the Anti-Renters of New York state, and Fourier's disciples in the American Union of Associationists; Greeley promoted this brand of land reform in his *Tribune*; the movement's slogans were later adopted by Free Soilers; Marx and Engels even mention "the Agrarian Reformers in America" in the *Communist Manifesto* as an American wing of the international proletarian movement (Lause 2005).

In the period of conservation's origin Powell was a lonely exponent in the nascent movement for democratic reform. His recommendations were not heeded. He was the proverbial voice in the wilderness. However he influenced a number of individuals who would imbue conservation with democratic concerns. It is with Powell that we get the first inkling that conservation could be a program of land-use planning in the public interest, and that conservation was to be a subject combining the sciences of natural resources and issues of collective social organization. Pinchot's (1998 [1947]:506) contention—that one of the "great purposes" of conservation was "to see to it that the rights of the people to govern themselves shall not be controlled by the great monopolies through their power over natural resources"—is clearly anticipated.

The influence of Powell on Pinchot came indirectly from Pinchot's colleague, WJ McGee, a geologist and ethnologist, who was one of Powell's protégés.[13] McGee worked under Powell in both the USGS and the Bureau of Ethnology (Cross 1953). Pinchot does not provide much of an indication of how he came upon his political views in his autobiography. The book contains no discussion of political or economic theory. He intimates only that he had been raised with conservative views, and he seeks to give the impression that his political beliefs changed as a result of his lived experience. He is emphatic, however, that McGee made an impression on him. Pinchot credits McGee for sensing the "full implications" of the conservation idea and helping him to see them. McGee is referred to as the "the scientific brains of the new movement." McGee, writes Pinchot (1998 [1947]:325-6), "defined the new policy as the use of the natural resources for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time," and it was him who made Pinchot "see, at long last and after much argument, that monopoly of natural resources was only less dangerous to the public welfare than their actual destruction."

[13]His other important protégé was the sociologist Lester Frank Ward, who worked under Powell as botanist.

Henry George and Conservation's Antimonopoly Current

The publication of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* was a sensation. Three different American associates of Karl Marx thought it so significant that they each sent him copies of the book. Marx criticized George for rehashing the rent theory of Ricardo's radical followers, which he considered trite. Yet he considered the publication of *Progress and Poverty* a "significant" event for the U.S., since it constituted the first effort "at emancipation from orthodox political-economy" (Marx and Engels 1953:127-130).

Sure enough, whatever its theoretical value, George's book led to radical awakening over the trajectory of American society. The book showed that ownership of land had become centralized; the homesteader was forced to traverse great distances for free land; population was filling in urban tenements with wretched conditions comparable to the developed Old World, etc. George warned that the situation was growing intolerable. Formal political equality under nominally democratic institutions, he contended, was meaningless without economic equality—or as he put it: "Equality of political rights will not compensate for the denial of the equal bounty of nature" (George 1929 [1879]:548). That such a book would become a sensation in a country as land-rich as the United States represented a serious indictment of capitalism. Indeed the book's publication preceded the populist uprising. Richard T. Ely (1885:20) in *Recent America Socialism* pointed to George's influence on a developing American socialism: George, "opened the way in the minds of laborers for other features of advanced socialism."

Theoretically the book set out from the observation that poverty persists as nations grow wealthy. Progress as defined by the increase of wealth and inventions was often accompanied by an increase in misery and poverty. George took issue with the view of the social Darwinians that the existence poverty was natural and a result of the different capabilities of human beings. In an analysis borrowing heavily from Ricardo, he argued

that the circumstance of poverty amid prosperity was a result of speculation in land and concomitant monopolization. He advocated a stiff "single-tax" on land, equal to its full rental value, as a means of expropriating the rentier and returning the value of unearned rental incomes to society as a whole. Marx and Engels had similarly argued for a tax on ground rent in *Communist Manifesto*, but for them it was a transitional measure. For George it was more—hence his followers would be known as "single-taxers." George (1929 [1879]:402-3) admitted that the economic and social problems of land-utilization could be solved "at one stroke by abolishing all private titles" and "declaring all land public property," but he believed the single-tax would "accomplish the same thing in a simpler, easier, and quieter way." The single-tax would have the effect of distributing land more equally, so he believed. It would permit individuals to retain the full value that their labor produced, while barring the accumulation of wealth from the monopolization of scarce goods.

Conservationists were undoubtedly influenced by George's book as it raised an acute awareness of land as a social institution. Yet George's influence on conservation had more to do with the philosophy he propounded in *Progress and Poverty* than the single-tax idea. In support of his program to socialize ground rent, George argued that the measure reflected natural justice. All people born on the Earth had a right to its use, he contended, the endowments of nature therefore should be shared, not monopolized. McGee (1909:379) had associated conservation with the same belief in the rights of the people "to resources rendered valuable by their own natural growth." The principle was only modified to include future generations as well as those of the present. "McGee's indebtedness to Henry George is obvious," concluded Bates (1957:40), and by extension this would apply to Pinchot. Given this basic similarity it is not surprising that when a

Texas congressman spoke in favor of Powell's reforms, he was chided by an antagonistic colleague as a likely single-taxer (Stegner 1993 [1954]:336).

Progress and Poverty additionally raised awareness of the social evils that came of speculation and inefficient land-use in a manner consistent with the emergent conservation movement. It was no coincidence that Veblen's analysis of the wasteful development of American natural resources, later published in *Absentee Ownership*, originally appeared in the *The Freeman*, a single-tax magazine (Gaffney 1994). George's perspective illuminated how the rush to acquire speculative values in land had funneled an overly rapid expansion, that had dispersed population over great distances. More land than was needed and that could be efficiently used was brought into production. And still, because individuals were barred access to land in close proximity to population centers, the area under production was stretched further. In contrast, rising land values in cities had given rise to centralization and over-crowding.

This perspective mirrored the anti-metropolitanism and antimonopolism of the of the National Reform Association, who were an unacknowledged influence on George (Lause 2005). The residents of crowded tenements, George (1929 [1879]:451) wrote, were denied, "the pure air and sunshine of the country," whereas, "The life of the average farmer is now unnecessarily dreary. . . . [H]e is cut off by the sparseness of population from the conveniences, the amusements, the educational facilities, and social and intellectual opportunities that come with the closer contact of man with man." George believed that the "destruction of speculative land values" would allow for a more even dispersal of settlement. It would function "to diffuse population where it is too dense, and to concentrate it where it is too sparse; to substitute for the tenement house homes surrounded by gardens, and to fully settle agricultural districts before people were driven far from neighbors to look for land." Agricultural population would likely "cluster in

villages," surrounded by farmland. This vision of settlement and talk of clustered villages and "homes surrounded by gardens" was likely the direct inspiration for the garden city proposal of Howard.[14]

While conservationists were influenced by George's antimonopolism and his philosophy of economic equality, there were important differences in their outlooks. Philip Wells, a close associate of Pinchot, would write to a colleague that conservationists, like George, supported socialization of "raw resource value," but that their policy went further. George was an economic libertarian, or as Wells put it, a representative of the "Neo-Manchester School." Indeed in the preface to *Progress and Poverty*, George (1929 [1879]:xvii) stated his single tax idea served to synthesize the laissez-faire liberalism of Smith and Ricardo "with the noble dream of socialism"—as expressed by Proudhon and Lassalle. Yet conservation, as a movement for land-use planning, required stringent public intervention. Wells wrote that, "George would anarchize the management of all natural resources by turning them over to unrestrictive

[14]Howard read George's work in 1884, as well as Alfred Russell Wallace's writing on land reform, which was of similar perspective. This seems to have sparked an interest in Howard, whose "direct involvement in radical groups at the time was slight," according to Buder (1990:33). Howard of course had other influences such as Ruskin, Morris and Bellamy. Lewis Mumford (1963 [1934]:259) has observed that idea of integrating town and country, "was constantly present in the best minds of the nineteenth century," citing Marx, Ruskin and Kropotkin. In fact the idea was endemic to socialism.

In a passage of *Progress and Poverty*, George pointed out the environmental irrationality of urbanization, in a manner similar to Marx's critique of capitalist agriculture. In *Capital* Marx had observed that the reduction of "the agricultural population to an ever decreasing minimum," and "growing industrial population crammed together in large towns... produces conditions that provoke an irreparable rift in the interdependent process of social metabolism, a metabolism prescribed by natural laws of life itself"—namely soil nutrients transfered through agricultural products for consumption in urban centers are not cycled back to the soil, but instead expelled in urban areas as a heavily concentrated effluent (Foster 2000:155). George (1929 [1879]:451-1) concurred: "The concentration of population in cities fed by the exhaustive cultivation of large, sparsely-populated areas results in a literal draining into the sea of the elements of fertility. How enormous this waste is may be seen from the calculations that have been made as to the sewage of our cities, and its practical result is to be seen in the diminishing productiveness of agriculture in large sections." In *Social Problems*, a later work, he similarly noted the "destructive character of our agriculture" through the fact that twelve thousand cattle were slaughtered a week in "the shambles of New York." He implored his readers to, "Consider what this single item in the food supply of a great city suggests as to the elements of fertility, which, instead of being returned to the soil from which they come, are swept out through the sewers of our great cities" (George 1966 [1883]:234).

private ownership," whereas, conservationists favored "socialization of management" (Bates 1957:41-2).[15]

Followers of George, however, varied in how flexible they were in their application of George's thought. Some were adamant about the single-tax and free-trade. Others, including some prominent American socialists who were influenced by George (Green 1978; Weinstein 1967), saw a ground rent tax as a practical measure consistent with a larger program of socialization.

William Kent, a California politician who was both a conservationist and a Georgite (Fox 1981), for instance, thought that the single-tax was overemphasized. Taxation was, at best in his view, a remedial measure to restore to the public what should not have been alienated in the first place. Government ownership was more logical since it provided the simplest possible method of social control over land (Kent 1919). George was nevertheless important. He had illuminated a problem conservationists faced trying to get resources back under public control: "[W]e are now hoping to get back from the private owners a few specimen redwood trees which they practically got for nothing" (Kent 1950:293). And George had done a great deal to stimulate an " impulse toward the destruction of land-owning privilege" (Kent 1919:222).

Louis Post and Benton MacKaye and Public Land Colonization

One of the speakers at the 1917 POLA conference serves to demonstrate how the traditions of Powell and George overlap. Louis Post was present at the conference, and he was addressing it, not on the single-tax, but on "The Public Ownership of Land."

[15]This letter is quoted in Bates (1957:41) and the author relates that a notation on it reads, "GP [Pinchot] read and approves this."

Post, a journalist, had been George's closest collaborator, starting with George's campaign to become mayor of New York in 1886, and continuing until George's death in 1897. In 1889 Post began publication of *The Public*, a magazine dedicated to the single-tax and other reforms—ranging from feminism through municipal ownership (Candeloro 1976, 1978). Richard Pettigrew was, for a time, on the editorial board of the magazine. He called *The Public* "the strongest weekly publication in the interest of general democracy now being printed," characterizing its perspective as "radical and independent" (Pettigrew 1917). Pettigrew occasionally wrote for the magazine, including at least one article on conservation (1916).

At the time of the POLA conference Post was serving an appointment as Assistant Secretary of Labor, having been brought into the Labor Department by Secretary William B. Wilson (McCartin 1971). It is safe to surmise that his address at the conference would have touched on a project he was then undertaking in the Department in collaboration with a forester, Benton MacKaye.

MacKaye, as already demonstrated, was a creative and idiosyncratic mind in conservation. Some of MacKaye's thinking on employment and natural resources, mentioned in the last chapter, took place partially under the auspices of Post in the Department of Labor. Beginning at the end of the 1915 the two collaborated to promote "a new homestead principle" as reconceived in light of the failures of the old one (Anderson 2002:91). Their work together was spurred by the understanding that involuntary unemployment had become a normal part of economic life, and not just a product of industrial depressions. This had been a conclusion of the Commission on Industrial Relations, appointed in 1912 to investigate the causes of labor unrest, whose report MacKaye cited (MacKaye 1919; Creel 1916). MacKaye and Post believed public lands, both in current possession and lands newly acquired, could be settled to absorb

the unemployed, just as the Homestead Act had previously. But they sought to "trim" the homestead idea "of its salient defects." As MacKaye (1968:34) would later recount. In another reflection on this work he noted how his and Post's proposals "embodied the Powell plan" of community settlement.[16]

The key features of Post and MacKaye's proposals was, first of all, that government should retain the title of lands settled so that tenure would be dependent on use and centralized holdings and speculation prevented; and second, that lands be appropriately classified according to the types of use they would support and developed with government assistance so that the settler was not being set up for failure—as was generally the case under the original Homestead Act. Prior to working out these recommendations with Post, MacKaye had undertaken study of the cut-over districts of the Great Lakes states, a region wastefully exploited by lumber companies. There he had seen prospective farmers unscrupulously sold acres of stump-land to establish farms upon: "The game was to sell these lands. . . omitting to advertise the stumps."[17] Land such as this might never be fit for farming. The soil in the region was of low quality for agriculture. But if a plot of land had the appropriate physical characteristics it would have to be cleared of stumps—a task requiring considerable time and effort. This was a class of land destined to revert to the public domain through tax abandonment. Colonizing such land was beyond the means of the poor. It was in this way similar to what Powell previously observed in the arid West. Other lands in the public domain or areas to be added to it through abandonment, which could potentially support a community, faced similar difficulties. This is why MacKaye sought government planning and assistance to develop lands in advance of settlement.

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[16]Benton MacKaye, "Powell as Unsung Lawgiver" *Cosmos Club Bulletin* Nov. 1969, box 200, folder 17, BMP.

[17]MacKaye, *ibid.*

Under these principals Post and MacKaye hoped to establish planned lumber, mining and agricultural communities. To realize this vision MacKaye drew up a National Colonization Bill, which was introduced by single-taxer congressman Robert Crosser in February 1916. The bill proposed to establish a National Colonization Board made up of officials from the Departments of Labor, Interior and Agriculture, to be tasked with implementing plans for "farm-colony reserves." As parks were areas to be reserved for nature, these would be areas reserved for employment. A "colonization fund" would be initially financed through bonds, and then funded by settlers on the basis of the assessed value of the holdings occupied. Government would retain title, so the "tax charge" settlers paid would function in the manner of a single-tax. The Colonization Board would also be granted authority to purchase private holdings (Anderson 2002:91-2).

The bill MacKaye and Post pushed did not aim to overhaul the use of land and natural resources in the US, but it was nevertheless a radical measure in that it would have set precedent for an alternative system of land tenure in which use superseded financial speculation. It therefore had much in common with the bill Pettigrew had written in 1898. Neither had hope of advancing far in Congress. Yet hearings on the National Colonization Bill were held in the House in the Spring of 1916. Those that testified on the bill's behalf, not surprisingly, represented the tradition of both Powell and George.

One of the principal authorities attesting to the bill's value was Elwood Mead (Anderson 2002), a hydrological engineer who had known Powell and adopted his ideas early on (Stegner 1993 [1954]). Mead told Congress, "The great merit of this bill is that it provides organization, practical experience and the use of adequate capital in carrying preliminary work necessary to successful settlement. It substitutes community and cooperative action for that of the individual" (Anderson 2002:93). This was the Powell approach in a nut-shell.

A witness, hailing from the single-tax tradition, was Benjamin C. Marsh, who spoke in his capacity as Executive Secretary of the New York Committee on the Congestion of Population (Anderson 2002). The Committee had been founded in 1907 by Florence Kelley, Mary Simkhovitch and others, and Marsh was appointed to head it not long after. The NYCCP had linked the conditions of slums and crowded tenements to land speculation, they advocated zoning, and a land value tax in the tradition of George (Marsh 1953). Marsh, an "indefatigable crusader," actually wrote one of the first American books on city planning. The approach of the NYCCP represented "a very different spirit from the polite gentility of the leaders of the City Beautiful movement," writes an historian of city planning (Peterson 2009:126). Marsh's boss Florence Kelley, after all, was the translator of Engels's *Condition of the Working Class in England*. Marsh (1953:28) would reflect later that "Land speculators and bankers had captured the city planning movement" from the radicals, like Kelley and him. They diverted the movement's emphasis to "artistic display features, and the slums continued." Marsh had a long an interesting career as a social activist, continuing through the New Deal, of which he was one of the most trenchant left-wing critics.

At the hearing over the Colonization Bill, Marsh testified that although the Bill was experimental, its provisions for leasing representing the correct strategy to grant security of tenure by insulating settlers from the dangers of speculation. "Aside from the economic factor involved in placing people on the land," testified Marsh, the bill made provision for "social and community life," which he said was lacking in country districts. He likened the plan to the Garden City idea: "The proposed bill points out the way in which we must secure a normal distribution of population, and enable a larger proportion of the people of the country to secure a livelihood and have a more normal life on land" (U.S. Congress 1916:30,32).

Marsh was also present at the 1917 POLA conference where he delivered a paper on the "The Proper Method of Financing Acquisition of Public Utilities." He and MacKaye's paths had crossed, previously, no doubt through Post. While MacKaye and Post were working out their colonization scheme, Marsh provided MacKaye with a memo on how to "commandeer" land and other resources. The content of this memo might have made its way into his address at the Public Ownership conference.[18]

MacKaye's work under Post gave him the opportunity to branch out from the more circumscribed field of forestry. In the coming years he would identify as a planner not a forester. In 1923 he was part of the group of writers, architects and planners who founded the Regional Planning Association of America. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the regional ideal that the group propounded centered on a rejection of metropolitanism, in favor of decentralization; the balancing of town, country and natural landscapes; and community life (Sussman 1976). It has been suggested by one writer (Guha 2000, 1991) that the regional planning movement occupies a distinct category outside of the major traditional areas of environmental activity (which he defines as scientific conservation, the back-to-the-land movement, and the wilderness movement). Yet, MacKaye who was a central figure in regional planning, also represented the core tradition of scientific conservation of Powell and Pinchot, as well as the wilderness movement. Moreover, the anti-metropolitanism of the Regional Planning group had deep roots in the American political tradition of land reform and radicalism that includes Henry George. Benjamin Marsh's work for the NYCCP, based in this political tradition, anticipated much of it. MacKaye like his counterparts in the RPAA represent a visionary offshoot of something that was more widespread though somewhat amorphous.

[18]Benjamin Marsh to MacKaye 4/17/1917, box 165, folder 1, BMP.

American Socialism and Conservation

In 1885 consciousness of the need for conservation was hardly widespread. Legislation to protect forests through reservations was only just being proposed. Consequently there was no talk of preserving land and natural resources in any of the major political parties' platforms. In fact the Democrats and Republicans would not produce platforms with clear and unambiguous statements favoring conservation until 1908 (Johnson and Porter 1973), when Theodore Roosevelt had already made a major issue of it.[19] One small, principled political party, however, believed that conservation was important enough to warrant inclusion in its platform: the Socialist Labor Party. The SLP was the first American political party to adopt a platform with planks favoring conservation. At a convention in October 1885 the Party endorsed a platform with the following demands. Plank three: "Public lands to be declared inalienable. They should be leased according to fixed principles. Revocation of all land grants to corporations or individuals, the conditions of which have not been complied with or which are otherwise illegal." Plank five: "Congressional legislation providing for scientific management of forests and waterways, and prohibiting the waste of the natural resources of the country" (Socialist Labor Party 1886:2).[20]

The SLP platform also called for workers to wrest power from the bourgeoisie and seize control of the means of production, but the *immediate demands*, which the conservation planks fell under, were not conceived as revolutionary goals. They were proposed as actions that would provide "immediate amelioration of the conditions of

[19]By *unambiguous* I mean containing planks that mention "conservation" specifically, or calling for specific instances of conservation, such as reforestation, soil conservation and land-use planning. This same definition is employed later when I discuss platforms in more detail.

[20]Johnson and Porter's (1973) compendium of party platforms does not contain the 1886 platform but it contains a later 1892 platform of the SLP containing the same planks which still easily predates those of the major political parties.

the working people" under capitalism—which any bourgeois reform party might have adopted. Thus, they were considered purely reformist. Still the measures the platform called for compare favorably with statements of demands of the organized conservation movement, which were often tepid and weak. Moreover, the platform hints at a more far-reaching critique. The ideal of socialism was envisioned as a more rational social order. As the platform stated, the SLP sought "to introduce the *perfect* system of cooperative production." Socialists attacked capitalism not just because it was unjust, but because it was considered an irrational way of organizing production. In particular they attacked its wastefulness that resulted from "planlessness" and "reckless" production. Among the "natural outgrowths" of a system so organized, the SLP platform stated, was "the waste of human and natural forces" (Socialist Labor Party 1886:1). These statements intimate at the self-conception of socialists as a scientific movement, and suggest that this led to an identification of conservation as something socialists supported.

Aldo Leopold (1933:639-40), we have seen, viewed socialism as an industrial ideology, whose goal was ever-increasing living standards, or as he described it, "the distribution of more machine-made commodities to more people." Its premise, thought Leopold, was "the theory that if we can all keep warm and full, and all own a Ford and a radio, the good life will follow." Socialism, he wrote, outdoes "even capitalism itself" in its "preoccupation" with material living standards. This concern for human wellbeing, Leopold felt, was difficult to square with purposes of conservation. His friend Jay Darling, similarly felt that the humanism of socialism rendered it "oblivious" to the purposes of conservation. He wrote to Leopold:

> [B]ecause socialization of property is born of desire for equal economic privileges and because the socialistic mind is completely obsessed with the objective of human equality to the exclusion of all other considerations, it has followed in the past and probably will in the future that those minds are as

> oblivious to the temporary quality of natural resources as were our forefathers on this continent.[21]

These views anticipate the argument of Garrett Hardin, that collective control over resources and the environment tends towards wanton destruction. Better to leave control of resources to the "warm and full," than to grant a stake in the control over their use to those lacking basic necessities.

Although Leopold and Darling's view may have resonance with the socialist movements of underdeveloped countries, the SLP's platform demonstrates that socialists in the US could not be so easily dismissed as a movement "oblivious to the temporary quality of natural resources." Environmentalists of today are somewhat put off by "scientific management of forests and waterways," but in the historical context of the late-nineteenth century, this meant forestry—i.e., the practice of selective and sustained cutting. Waterways featured in the plank according to the prevailing science which emphasized the protective function of forests for watersheds.[22] The phrase *scientific management* evidently predates Taylorism, which was indeed an industrial ideology of the sort Leopold criticized.

In calling for forestry, the SLP were part of a minority of advanced thinkers. This is significant because by the start of the twentieth century socialism, not populism, or any other perspective, defined the radical position in politics (Weinstein 1967). Although socialists never effectively challenged the power structure of the US, when the socialist movement was at its peak in America, as Weinstein (1975:7) demonstrates, "few movements were untouched by the question of socialism and the participation of Socialists." And yet this is less self-evidently true for conservation as it was for other major movements such as labor, the women's movement, civil rights, or the movement

[21] Jay Darling to Leopold 12/20/1935, series 1, box 1, folder 9, ALA.

[22] It may also imply managed usage of water, but in this context that is not clear.

for civil liberties—which all had a definite radical element. It will be shown below, that a socialist conservation was something that was taking shape. The wing of the socialist movement that did not swear off political action was receptive to conservation. Unfortunately the real opportunity to establish socialist conservation came later when both socialism and conservation were in decline.

Early American Socialism and the Critique of Capitalist Waste

In the eighteen-eighties political socialism, like forestry, was very much a European importation. The US had long had the other type of socialism, the colonizing variety. The modern political form of socialism—of Marx, Lassalle and others—which called for a revolutionary transformation of society through the seizure of political power, was a novelty. The Socialist Labor Party in the eighteen-eighties was primarily an organization of German immigrants. But socialism was in the process of being Americanized (Bell 1999 [1952]; Quint 1954), and becoming a formidable movement and intellectual perspective.

One of the events that precipitated the growth of American socialism was the publication in 1888 of Edward Bellamy's (1960 [1888]) fantasy novel *Looking Backward: 20001887*—one of the bestselling novels of the late-nineteenth century. The novel is told from the point of view of Julian West, a young man who falls asleep in Boston of 1887, to wake up in a future world in which capitalism has been abolished and popular government extended to industry under collective ownership. The narrative takes the form of an extended conversation between West, Dr. Leete and his daughter Edith (West's hosts in the twenty-first century), as they acquaint West with the great changes that have taken place during his long sleep. This format allows Bellamy to juxtapose the irrationalities and injustices of his contemporary capitalist order with the possibilities of

life under socialism. West is again and again shocked that he did not question the myriad pathologies of his own time or consider that they might be changed. Franklin Rosemont (1988:157) summaries some of these changes. Along with private property the following have also been abolished: "social classes, exploitation, poverty, starvation, sex slavery, war, slums, crime, jails, buying, selling, money, banks, censorship, charity, corruption, taxes, custom duties, advertising, housework, air pollution, politicians, merchants, servants, lawyers, the militia, the army, the navy and the State Department."

The vision of Bellamy was evidently fantastic, which was part of the book's appeal. However the book was nevertheless consequential because it precipitated serious consideration of socialism as a form of social organization. Marxism, as I stated above, was at the time marginal. Engels derided the SLP, which claimed adherence to Marx and Lassalle, as a hopelessly dogmatic sect. He did not believe that there was any hope of the SLP converting Americans to socialism. In the year *Looking Backward* was published Engels wrote to a colleague opining that it would be for the best if "the whole *German* Socialist Labour Party" would "decay" (Bell 1999 [1952]:32). Bellamy's version of socialism, in contrast, had wide appeal. J.A. Wayland, one of the great socialist propagandists, whose weakly *The Appeal to Reason* had a circulation that peaked at 927,000 (Quint 1954), reckoned that Bellamy "popularized socialism, made it interesting, and started millions thinking along lines entirely new to them" (Quint 1954:73). *Looking Backward* was like *The Appeal* in that it crafted a socialism out of a common sense and moral appeal. Socialist standard bearer Eugene Debs concurred with Wayland. Bellamy's books, he wrote, "were valuable and timely contributions to the literature of Socialism and not only aroused the people but started many on the road to the revolutionary movement. . . . Thousands were moved to study the question by the books of Bellamy and thus became Socialists and found their way into the Socialist movement"

(Rosemont 1988:162-3). It was not only Bellamy's writing that led people into the socialist movement, but also the Nationalist Clubs, which sprang up spontaneously across the country after the novel's publication (Morgan 1944; Rosemont 1988). Bellamy, who had been a journalist and author, enthusiastically took up the role as propagandist for socialism and such causes—public ownership, labor unions, the People's Party—he thought would hasten it. For this effect he published an agitational weekly *The New Nation*, that was partially financed by muckraker Henry Demarest Lloyd.[23] Bellamy published the *The New Nation* for several years until his health gave out (Rosemont 1988). He succumbed to tuberculosis in 1898, just after the publication of *Equality* (Bellamy 1934 [1897]), a sequel to *Looking Backward*, which continued the story of Julian West and Dr. Leete. His death came the year before the founding of the Social Democracy, the political party, that would become the SPA. At the founding of this political party, Debs helped draft a tribute "to the memory of Edward Bellamy, first to popularize the ideas of Socialism among his countrymen and last to be forgotten by them" (Rosemont 1988:163).

Bellamy's brand of socialism was denoted "nationalism"—as in the *nationalization* of industry. He did not object to being called a socialist, and used the word occasionally in his political writing. It must be recognized that in Bellamy's time *socialism* denoted everything between the ideas of Karl Marx and the Christian Shakers. Bellamy took up the word *nationalism* because he felt it denoted a more specific political program—national ownership and democratic administration of industry—than did the vague word *socialism* (Bellamy 1894). He seemed especially concerned with distancing himself from the colony movement, and the more libertarian leaning socialists who believed socialism would not require planning and industrial coordination (Rosemont

[23]Lloyd was a key figure in the Populist movement, and was a socialist who corresponded with Engels and met with him when he visited England (Pollack 1962).

1988). Bellamy's ideas have been badly mischaracterized in accounts that cast him variously as a liberal or a proto-fascist. But as Rosemont (1988) has shown, Bellamy was no reformist but a revolutionary and democratic socialist who explicitly opposed the major political parties and ameliorative reforms. He was a supporter of the People's Party, because he believed it represented a seed of a popular revolt, and that its platform, with its demands for public ownership of railroads, grain elevators and telegraphs, and postal saving banks, expressed an incipient Nationalism. Bellamy, liked his associate Henry Demarest Lloyd, believed that the Populists might be brought over to to socialism—which was not unreasonable when we consider the individuals that left the People's Party for the SPA, with Debs and Wayland prominent among them (Quint 1954; Pollack 1962; Weinstein 1967).

Bellamy's importance as progenitor of modern socialism is second to very few. In one area, the critique of capitalism's wastefulness, Bellamy is second to none. There is in *Looking Backward* a fully developed theory of waste as a byproduct of the irrationality of capitalism. Dr. Leete says of capitalism, "No mode more wasteful for utilizing human energy could be devised, and for the credit of human intellect it should be remembered that the system was never devised, but was merely a survival from the rude ages when the lack of social organization made any sort of cooperation impossible." To the people of Bellamy's Utopia, such a system "was as absurd economically as it was morally abominable." Wasteful public expenditures, including the army and navy, no longer exist in this future world. Because production is organized for use not profit there is no salesmanship, the purpose of which was to "induce" people "to buy what they didn't need," a character reckons. "Merchants and bankers" have been "dispensed" with, because, "Their functions are obsolete in the modern world." The populace of Bellamy's Utopia gets its goods from central warehouses rather than countless stores that wastefully

fill up urban space. There is no psychological inducement to acquire nonfunctional luxuries for conspicuous display, because the national product is equally distributed and wealth has ceased to dictate status. Neither is there economic or social compulsion for constantly changing fashions. Since production is organized as a social service there is no duplication of industrial infrastructure by business competitors. As Dr. Leete opines, "Competition. . . is another word for dissipation of energy, while combination is the secret of efficient production." The elimination of wasteful production allows the people to produce what they need with minimal labor expenditure, leaving time for human development and leisure. Most people work four hour days, and the age of retirement is forty-five (Bellamy 1960 [1888]:70,81,156,165-6).

All these elements of waste Bellamy identified, would be analyzed more thoroughly in Thorstein Veblen's (1953 [1899]; 1932 [1904]) first two books—*The Theory of the Leisure Class* and *The Theory of Business Enterprise*. The first examined the basis of status emulation in class inequality, and the second the social inefficiencies of production under conditions of monopolistic competition. Veblen labeled whole classes of business "parasitic," including "most advertising and much of the other efforts that go into competitive selling, as well as warlike expenditure and other industries directed to turning out goods for conspicuously wasteful consumption" (Veblen 1932 [1904]:36). While Veblen's writing on these matters is more thorough and scientific, and Bellamy's ethical and literary, the similarities are striking. For Veblen scholars (Edgell and Tilman 1989; Tilman 1985; Stabile 1982) the influence of Bellamy is taken as evident. Not only did Veblen's wife declare that Veblen decided to focus his studies on economic problems after reading *Looking Backward*, but Veblen borrowed some of his memorial phrases from Bellamy. For instance both men speak of "predatory habits"; the relief of "labor of irksomeness"; and the "imbecilities" of "business enterprise" (Edgell and Tilman

1989:1012). Bellamy's influence on Veblen is but one instance of Bellamy's intellectual reach among the critical intelligentsia.

The critique of waste was central to the Bellamy phenomenon. Nationalism was not some wholly moral phenomenon, but a movement that viewed capitalism as irrational. As a statement of principles adopted by many Nationalist Clubs (Morgan 1944) declared, "The present industrial system proves itself wrong by the immense wrongs it produces. It proves itself absurd by the *immense waste of energy and material* which is admitted to be its concomitant" (Nationalist Education Association 1889: emphasis added).

In critiquing the waste of capitalist civilization Bellamy was not merely concerned with humanistic aims of reducing drudgery and providing for all, which socialists could be expected to emphasize. His writings other than *Looking Backward*, demonstrate an advanced awareness of the need to preserve natural conditions and wildlife (Rosemont 1988). In *Equality*, for instance, Julian West has the opportunity to leave the environs of future Boston and he discovers that the forests of America have been restored. The reader learns that, "It was found after the Revolution that one of the first things most urgent to do be done was to reforest the country." This was necessary because, Dr. Leete explains, "Under private capitalism the greed or need of individuals had led to so general a wasting of the woods that the streams were greatly reduced and the land was constantly plagued with droughts." The people of Bellamy's utopia have restored the landscape "according to the natural suggestions of the face of the country and the most effective way of co-operating with them." The mountains, where "nature has furnished effects which man's art could not strengthen," are left wild and rugged—only "facilities for travel and observation" are built there. "The Reforesting," as the project of reviving the landscape was known, was a product of decades work (Bellamy 1934 [1897]:296-7). This passage

demonstrates both an understanding of scientific conservation, with its concerns for the consequences of deforestation on watersheds, and its aesthetic purposes.

There is a mistaken impression that Bellamy was a booster of urban-industrial civilization. This is not surprising since the conventional understanding of Bellamy "consists largely of the most unfounded judgments of his most ill-informed critics," as Rosemont (1988:147,192) demonstrates. Bellamy was not an "incorrigible urbanist with a fanatical faith in technology for technology's sake." Although a great proportion of speculative fiction delves into fantasy about pacifying nature and reengineering the environment for human purposes, there is none of this in *Looking Backward* and *Equality*. The forces pacified in Bellamy's novels are human industry and exploitation. The technological changes described by Bellamy are not on a grand scale. His Utopia is idyllic. Most of the improvements in the human condition he describes follow from changes in social organization rather than technology. In one of the few instance where positive change comes form an imagined technology—the elimination of chimney's and smoke in *Looking Backward*—the effect is to make the environment more natural not less. Bellamy shared the distaste for urbanization that was characteristic of nineteenth century socialists generally. In *Looking Backward* he re-imagines a Boston filled with parks and free of congestion. Its broad streets were "shaded by trees," and "every quarter contained open squares filled with trees" (Bellamy 1960 [1888]:43). In *Equality* the reader learns that the population of cities has shrunk and settlement has been decentralized. With the abolishment of capitalism, rural life flourishes. "[T]he swallowing up of the country by the city," commented Dr. Leete, "was a necessary effect of private capitalism. . . . [T]he shrinkage, decay, and death of the country and country life," and concomitant depopulation of rural districts, excepting "a population serfs and overseers," Leete derides, as a characteristic of empires. "By abolishing the need of markets for the

exchange of labor and commodities," Leete explained, "the facilities of exchange organized in the cities under the private capitalists were rendered wholly superfluous and impertinent by the national organization of production and distribution" (Bellamy 1934 [1897]:292-3).

When Bellamy was given a platform to propagandize on behalf of socialism he often connected the movement with the need for conservation. Asked by the editors of the *The Forum* in 1894 to detail "The Programme of the Nationalists," Bellamy (1894:87) wrote that the national operation of the lumber industry and fisheries had proven a pressing need: "The necessity of preserving what is left of our forests will soon force all the States to go into the forestry business, which may well be the beginning of public operation of the lumber industry. If our fast-vanishing fisheries are to be protected, not merely national supervision, but national operation, will soon be necessary."

Bellamy's own magazine *The New Nation* contained many articles on forest conservation and a few denunciations of the extinction of wildlife (Rosemont 1988). A review of a book of Romeyn Hough (son of the forest conservation pioneer Franklin Hough) states:

> Private enterprise, under the lawless and reckless reign of greed, has denuded many of our mountain forests and brought incalculable injury to agriculture. When nationalism is finally adopted as the ultimate and highest statesmanship, there can be no doubt that our forest wealth will be guarded more zealously than a gold mine, for it is of far more importance to the community (Bellamy 1891d:225).

An article reviewing the methods of forest preservation adopted abroad concluded "it is safe to assume that no system short of municipal, state or national control or ownership will be found adequate to protect the important interests involved" (Bellamy 1891a:383). A review of the report of the New Hampshire state forestry commission concludes by asking, "Could a stronger argument be framed for the immediate inauguration of

nationalism?" (Clancy 1892:406). Another article —titled "Morality Has No Market Value"—approvingly quotes a writer denouncing the needless slaughter and extinction of wildlife and decrying the conditions livestock in slaughterhouses (Bellamy 1891b). An article written by a representative of a Nationalist Club in Coquille, Oregon in rural Coos County, decried a slew of environmental problems, among them: "splendid rivers. . . ruined forever by debris washed down from mines;" the burning of virgin forests for pasture; "acres of rich land. . . converted into barren gravel beds;" depletion of game animals "by professional skin and horn fiends;" and the wasteful manner in which salmon fisheries were exploited ("The early settler, in his extravagance and greed saving only salmon bellies, threw away four fifths of the fish"). J.A. Dean, the writer of this article, observed, "Some seem to think if we nationalize railroads, telegraph lines, and the express, it will be sufficient"—in reference to the program of the People's Party. Then he continued, "Let the lands fall into the hands of few. . . then the people will realize that the evils they encounter at the hands of the railroad, telegraph and express are as nothing. . . . Give us absolute nationalism" (Dean 1891:162). For at least this one socialist follower of Bellamy the conservation problem revealed the need for the wholesale socialization of the natural resources.

In each issue of the *The New Nation* appeared a sort of manifesto for Nationalism titled, "Why a New Nation?" Two lines of this manifesto read:

> In this old nation, year by year, the natural wealth of the land, the heritage of the people is being wasted by the recklessness of individual greed. The forests are ravaged, the fisheries of river and sea destroyed, the fertility of the soil exhausted. . . .
>
> In The New Nation, the wasting of the people's heritage will cease, the forests will be re-planted, the rivers and seas re-populated, and fertility restored to exhausted lands. The natural resources of the country will be cared for and preserved as a common estate, and one to which the living have title only as a trustee for the unborn (Bellamy 1891c:10-11).

In this Nationalist manifesto the conservation issue was thus placed alongside class exploitation, unemployment, women's equality, as one of the pressing purposes of Nationalism.

Conservation and Socialist Politics

Bellamy's Nationalism and the early platforms of the SLP demonstrate that nineteenth century socialists took an interest in conservation, but there were other influences on American socialism that tended to make socialism aloof from conservation, and which impressed themselves as the socialist movement developed subsequently. In particular there were tendencies in American socialism with rigid conceptions of what socialism was and how it would emerge. The Socialist Labor Party, in the years after its incorporation of the conservation planks, provides a striking indication of this.

In 1890 Daniel De Leon joined the Socialist Labor Party, and "within a year," De Leon "was its undisputed leader and master" (Bell 1999 [1952]:32). Like other radicals of the period De Leon became a Marxist after coming to politics through Henry George, first, and then Nationalism. Born in Curçao to Venezuelan parents, he obtained a law degree from Columbia and was employed at the University as a Professor before joining the SLP (Bell 1999 [1952]; Quint 1954).

One of the consequences of De Leon's leadership was the dropping of the "immediate demands," including the forestry plank, from the SLP platform (Bell 1999 [1952]; Coleman 1990). De Leon's brand of Marxism was a strict philosophy (Bell 1999 [1952]; Quint 1954; Coleman 1990). He was insistent on purity, and he viewed all mention of demands short of revolution as unsocialistic. "The overthrow of capitalism," he wrote, "that is a demand—it is THE demand—it belongs in the platform of a true political party of labor." All "intermediary stepping stones" should "be

discarded as soon as possible in the onward March. They have no place in the platform" (Coleman 1990:127). Under De Leon's leadership the SLP was cleansed of reformist and idiosyncratic elements. Individuals who were found not to be 100 percent socialist were purged from the Party, or left by their own volition. One longtime organizer and member of the Party's executive council was expelled for, among other charges, "too wide tolerance for progressive movements outside the Socialist party" (Sotheran 1892:xxvii). De Leon put his policy colorfully: the Party was not to be an "ash-barrel for the refuse of all others" (Coleman 1990:131).

This sort of emphasis on revolutionary purity made the SLP sect-like. Under De Leon's leadership the Party was demonstrating a tendency to turn in on itself, precisely when modern socialism had growing appeal. It stood in stark contrast to the spirit of Bellamy's Nationalism. Bellamy, perhaps overly optimistic, was predisposed to see any advance in popular government or public ownership as signs of the imminence of socialism. Bellamy, for instance, viewed Populism as revolutionary, not because of "any specific declaration of platforms," but because he believed the "tone" of the Populists' press, highlighted "the essential injustice and absurdity of inequities of wealth in a nominal republic"(Bellamy 1892:530). In contrast De Leon and his followers in the SLP regarded the western movement with suspicion (Pollack 1962), and one can safely extrapolate that this was their view of other not strictly socialist movements, such as conservation.

De Leon's insistence on revolutionary purity did not simply follow from his rejection of reformism. Bellamy (1934 [1897]:351-2) also opposed the "piecemeal" proposals of reformers. In *Equality* Dr. Leete derides efforts to patch up the defective economic system with so many "poultices for particular evils resulting from the system of private capitalism." He contrived a striking metaphor, comparing capitalism to a tree

bearing rotten fruit. The reformers proposed to pick the rotten fruit from the tree one at time, branch by branch, but "so long as the tree remained standing the evil fruit would be likely to grow as fast as it was plucked." He objected, as other socialists did, that partial reform measures "were quite as likely to to help capitalism to obtain a longer lease of life by making it a little less abhorrent."

Marx and Engels were obviously revolutionary socialists. And yet the demands to abolish child labor and for free public schools in the *Communist Manifesto* were hardly revolutionary. The demands in the SLP's platforms prior to De Leon's intervention, actually, differed little from the Marxist program adopted by the German Socialists at the Erfurt Congress in 1891.

What accounts for De Leon's complete rejection of political action was the crude syndicalist version of Marxism he devised. For De Leon the Socialists had precisely two areas of activity: agitation for future revolution and, in the present, labor organization. The Party's function was to consolidate the revolution by seizing power when the workers were sufficiently organized to take the means of production and operate them themselves (Coleman 1990). At its most crude, syndicalism generally reduced class struggle to its most immediate point, labor at the site of production—rejecting a large area of social life as extraneous to socialism. This is a sharp contrast with Bellamy's broad concerns.

It is interesting to note that De Leonism arose simultaneously with Gompersism. De Leon and Samuel Gompers, leader of the American Federation of Labor, were avowed enemies (Bell 1999 [1952]). And yet there was an underlying philosophical similarity between the outlook's of the socialist laborite and the conservative unionist—such that Gompers' "unionism pure and simple" has been likened to a "conservative syndicalism" (Herberg 1952:491,496). Both subscribed to a rigid historical determinism in which the laws of capitalist development were accepted as immutable social laws. Both accepted

the concentration of economic power as inevitable, along with its corollary—political domination by capitalists. Consequentially both rejected political action, albeit in different ways and for different reasons.

That the sect-like tendencies of De Leon's SLP were a product of syndicalism is significant, because there was a similar element within the party that superseded it, the Socialist Party of America. And its effect was similar—to make the socialists wary of nonsocialist elements, even those with radical or democratic potential.

The founding of the SPA in 1901 must be viewed, at least partially, as a rejection of De Leon's sectarianism. The new party was founded out of a merger of Eugene Debs and Victor Berger's Social Democracy and a splinter from the SLP led by Morris Hillquit. The SPA was predominantly Marxist but it contained some idiosyncratic elements including Christian socialists and Populist elements in the West. Weinstein (1967) states that it would be impossible to give an adequate account in a short space of the diverse elements within the SPA.

As can be expected from a party that included diverse tendencies, there were fundamental differences on many issues. The issue of political action remained a subject of controversy within the SPA. A vocal minority opposed immediate demands, and a smaller faction opposed any electoral activity whatsoever (Weinstein 1967; Bell 1999 [1952]). This division appears to correspond with opinions on whether conservation was a bourgeois or socialist issue. Those Party members whose views corresponded more closely with syndicalism tended to oppose socialist demands for conservation and other immediate demands as moves toward state capitalism (or state socialism—the phrases were used interchangeably.)

However the fact the SPA platforms between 1908 and 1932 included unambiguous calls for conservation—with just a single exception, the 1920 platform (Johnson and

Porter 1973)—suggests that as a group socialists generally identified with conservation, likely because it stood to manage resources democratically and in accordance with scientific principles.[24] The SPA platform of 1908 was the first of the Party's platforms to include a plank calling for "scientific reforestation of timberlands." In the 1912 platform this demand was expanded into a more detailed conservation plank, calling for "further conservation and development of resources for the use and benefit of all the people," through such measures as "scientific forestation and timber protection" and "the stoppage of the present extravagant waste of the soil and of the products of mines and oil wells." An identical plank appeared in the 1916 platform. The SPA platform of 1932 included a particularly advanced statement on conservation. It callied for land-utilization planning and to treat land in manner consistent with its physical characteristics and in terms of multiple social and environmental needs. Specifically it proposed the establishment of land utilization boards "for the purpose of discovering the the best uses" of land, "in view of the joint needs of agriculture, industry, recreation, water supply, reforestation, etc., and to prepare the way for agricultural planning on a national and, ultimately, on a world scale" (Johnson and Porter 1973:66,189-90,211,353). By this time, however, the SPA was a shell of its former self.[25]

The reason socialists identified with conservation should not be surprising. It followed from the socialist's critique of capitalism's irrational wastefulness—along the

[24]The 1900 platform of Debs's Social Democracy party stated, "Human energy and natural resources are wasted for individual gain" (Johnson and Porter 1973:127). Under the criteria selected here, this would not apply as giving support for conservation.

[25]I have not considered Communism here, in part, because the Party went through several dramatic shifts in their attitude towards non-Communists—in the "third period" rejecting non-Communist elements entirely, and later collapsing almost completely into New Deal liberalism (Weinstein 1975). But for purposes of comparison, there is no mention of conservation in the Communists 1924 and 1932 platform. The 1928 platform of the Party mentions reforestation in the context of relief work. In 1936 the Party urged "scientific soil conservation under the supervision of elected representatives of farmers' organizations, with compensation to farmer-owners and tenants for loss of income"—a reference to the New Deal's policy, which was objectionable in that it did not provide support to tenants (Johnson and Porter 1973:358).

lines anticipated by Bellamy. One of the "chief" indictments that the socialists waged against capitalism, wrote a Party intellectual, was "that capitalism involves enormous wastes in material and men" (Laidler 1920:11-2). Algie M. Simons who was a member of the committee that drafted the 1908 and 1912 platforms, was the author of a pamphlet titled "Wasting Human Life" which was serialized in various socialist publications. In it he wrote, "[T]he Socialist indicts the rulers of industry, not so much for their greed, their luxurious idleness and their brutal indifference to human suffering, as for their colossal stupidity as managers of industry" (Simons 1914:14).

When opposition arose to such platform demands it was directed at the idea of political demands, not conservation itself. It is conventional to speak of a right-wing in the Party favoring political action, and a left opposing it, but this does not sufficiently explain the opposition. The source of the opposition was syndicalism. When platform measures were debated at Party conventions, those who subscribed to a syndicalist view of revolution made up the opposition to the inclusion of political demands. Here it is worth noting that when the advanced conservation plank of the 1932 platform was adopted there was no longer an element in the SPA opposed to political action.

That the opposition can be traced to syndicalism was readily apparent at the 1908 convention. When the reforestation measure was being discussed, Stanley Clark, a delegate from Texas, was one of the chief opponents. Clark did not object to reforestation specifically, but made his position known that it was his preference that "every reform that was proposed in this program" be expunged. Clark especially disliked the wording of the forestry clause, however, which called for forestlands "to be retained permanently as part of the public domain." This suggested to him "national administration" which he found objectionable. As he explained earlier during the debate over immediate demands, Clark opposed "a political state" and believed that government should be "organized along

industrial lines"—meaning the syndicalist vision of workers managing industry at the point of production. He believed there was danger in socialists advocating measures that would lead to government in industry. "There is no doubt," he warned, "that the steps we are taking in this convention as to an immediate demand have a strong tendency to lead us to state capitalism" (Work 1908:168,187-8).

Another probable indication of the views on conservation of the SPA's putative "left-wing," is provided by William English Walling, one of the theorists attached to the Party. Walling noted that the tendency toward government management of industry, including such measures as government ownership and direct administration, were worldwide trends, equally applicable to nations with reformist capitalist governments and despotic ones. He theorized that in the US, this tendency was materializing in "the form of conservation (retention of national ownership of natural resources)" (Walling 1913:9). He cautioned that no socialist should confuse such measures as the "nationalization of forests" as socialist. Measures like conservation were, "typical 'State Socialist' (i.e. State capitalist), measures, justifiable and indispensable, but not intimately related with the program of *Socialism*" (Walling 1912:309).

Although Walling called state capitalist reforms "indispensable" he did not mean they were laudable in any positive sense. They certainly should not be interpreted as democratic. The growth of state capitalism was "favored by Socialists as the inevitable result of the formation of the trusts—which they also hailed as a great step forward in the organization of industry. It is as indispensable as a basis for Socialism as were the trusts" (Walling 1913:9). In Walling's view both the growth of trusts and government-by-trust were part of the natural evolution of capitalism, which he believed was unconsciously preparing the way for revolution. Socialists should cheer on such reforms, but their task

was lay elsewhere—outside of the political sphere—in the organization of workers for the eventual seizure of power (Walling 1912).

As with De Leon, the wariness of some socialists to identify with conservation was a product of a specific theoretical conception of socialism. It had little to do with views of how natural resources should be used. There is nothing to suggest that socialists opposed conservation outright. It is accurate to say that a faction of socialists viewed it as a manifestation of "state capitalism," or an emerging corporate state. This was not an unreasonable view in the Progressive Era when corporate support for conservation was evident. However it mattered little how the left within the SPA viewed the conservation movement, because this faction rejected political action generally, and their interest lay mainly in the labor movement. If anything contributed to a obliviousness to conservation in the socialist movement it was this doctrine of revolution.

Charles Whitnall: Conservation and Regional Planning under Milwaukee's Socialist Government

One of the strongholds of the Socialist Party was in Wisconsin, specifically the city of Milwaukee. This branch of the Party was strongly oriented to political action, and was uniquely successful in having candidates elected to office. Victor Berger, the local Party boss, was one of two Socialists elected to the House of Representatives. Socialists had tremendous success at the municipal level. Milwaukee elected three Socialist mayors, Emil Seidel, Daniel Hoan and Frank Zeidler, who ran the city government for a combined 36 years (1910-1912, 1916-40 and 1950-1960 respectively.)

That socialists who emphasized political action supported conservation is demonstrated by the Wisconsin branch. The state Party platform of 1912 called for the extension of forest reserves and state operations of timber mills (Walling et al. 1916:218-

19). This was a state, afterall, whose economy was thrown into disorder by the exhaustion of its timber resources. Carl Thompson—who I mentioned above in connection with the Public Ownership League—was the Wisconsin Socialist nominee for governor on this platform. He also served in the state legislature as a Socialist.

In Milwaukee where the Socialists actually wielded power, they got to demonstrate their interest in conservation in a more material way than merely issuing paper demands. Socialist city planner Charles Whitnall's pioneering efforts helped to preserve nature within the environs of the Milwaukee metropolitan area through efforts to reduce crowding, develop parks, and exercised control over development. As we will see, Whitnall had an advanced understanding of natural systems, which he combined with socialist concerns (Platt 2010). His contributions to park design, zoning and regional planning were pioneering (Platt 2010; McCarthy 2006). His efforts paralleled and in some ways preceded the planning program being developed by MacKaye's colleagues in the Regional Planning Association of America.

Whitnall, a florist by profession, was a charter member of the Socialist Party of America, and greatly involved in Milwaukee politics in a number of capacities. He served briefly as City Treasurer and was the founder of a cooperative bank, the Commonwealth Mutual Saving Bank of Milwaukee (De Leon 1925). Through appointed positions on several boards and commissions over the years—including the Metropolitan Park Commission, the Board of Public Land Commissioners, the Housing Commission, the City Planning Commission and the Milwaukee County Park Commission—Whitnall acted as the City's de facto planner for several decades, and left an indelible mark on the city's development (McCarthy 2006). He was the acknowledge "patriarch" of Milwaukee's planning program (Still 1948:542).

Whitnall's work was an elemental aspect of the Socialist vision of the Milwaukee Party. Within the socialist movement the Milwaukeeans were known as "sewer socialists" by counterparts who believed that they were too wrapped up in municipal politics (Bell 1999 [1952]:159). This epithet was ironically a fitting description of the socialist program. The Socialists were concerned about the urban landscape, over-crowding, sanitation, and substandard housing. They inaugurated a program to relieve congestion, clean the city and protect the health of its residents. They were demonstrably proud of the efforts to sanitize the city. In his memoir mayor Emil Seidel, responded to the "sewer socialist" label and explained the motivating concerns of the socialists:

> Yes, we wanted sewers in the workers' homes; but we wanted much, oh—so very much more than sewers. We wanted our workers to have pure air; we wanted them to have sunshine. . . we wanted a chance for every human being to be strong and live a life of happiness. . . . And, we wanted everything that was necessary to give them that: playgrounds, parks, lakes, beaches, clean creaks, and rivers, swimming and wading pools, social centers (Platt 2010:781).

Whitnall's city plans embody this vision. He believed the modern congested city an abomination, and he was no less repulsed with sprawling suburbs. Congested settlement was his chief nemesis. "Concentrated development," he observed, hinders the "automatic functionality" of the "natural environment." He believed that the obstruction of light, air pollution and artificiality of the urban environment was harmful to health and mind. Nature, he wrote, is "a sanitarium, a place of refuge, for those who are able to use it as a remedy for such of their ills as congested civilization inflicts" (Platt 2010:781). Consequentially his plans sought to decentralize the city and preserve the contours and functionality of the natural landscape, both within and beyond the city's the boundaries (Platt 2010; McCarthy 2006).

Whitnall's preference for the natural environment set him apart from contemporaneous park planners (Platt 2010). When environments "function naturally," observed Whitnall (1931:97), "we impulsively call them beautiful." This was the aesthetic equation Leopold would make between beauty and land health. Lorne Platt (2010) has demonstrated how Whitnall's approach differed with that of the City Beautiful movement. That movement had attempted to "construct nature within the city," writes Platt (2010:782), whereas Whitnall "was concerned with preserving the natural topography and contours of the landscape." Whitnall wrote that parks with man-made topography and landscaping were "an artificial attempt to create a natural influence." He viewed them as being "far less potent and much more expensive than natural or native landscape areas, which had been vitiated by the supposed necessity of our business and social progress" (Platt 2010:782).

In describing the origins of Milwaukee's planning program, Whitnall recounted that it commenced when a group of his associates decided "that it was a pity cities leveled off hills and filled in valleys and later developed artificial parks on the same land" (Still 1948:543). In 1906 Whitnall wrote a self-published report that expressed incredulity at how landscaped parks were affixed to heavily developed areas as an afterthought. "Why do we spend so much in destroying the nature which should be assimilated during our development and attempt to retrieve it only in spots, for what is a park but an island of normal atmosphere surrounded by physical disintegration?" he asked. In the same report he declared that the preservation of natural environments within municipalities was a neglected aspect of conservation: "The destruction of our forests by lumbermen is no more serious than the robbing of our soil by municipalities." This early report proposed a "comprehensive program of parks," and helped precipitate the establishment of a

Metropolitan Parks Commission, under which Whitnall did his early work (McCarthy 2006:46).

This perception of the need to preserve the natural environment from development led to one of Whitnall's great achievements: the development of 84 miles of greenways along the waterways of Milwaukee county (Platt 2010; Still 1948). This plan was conceived as a means of environmental protection and to secure the enjoyment of natural landscapes for urban workers. Three rivers and four main streams pass through the Milwaukee county and drained into Lake Michigan, the source of the city's drinking water (Whitnall 1935). Whitnall's plan for "watercourse parkways" (Whitnall 1941:39)—a park belt flanked by boulevards—got the go ahead, he wrote, once "the City of Milwaukee concluded to keep its sewage out of Lake Michigan" (Whitnall 1935:329).

Oscar Ameringer (Ameringer 1983 [1940]:287-8), a journalist and an organizer for the Socialist Party, observed the greenway's development first-hand and wrote about it in his memoir:

> The Socialists captured Milwaukee under the slogan, 'Make Milwaukee a better place to live.' Now, to make any city a better place in which to live requires city planning. In the pursuit of this goal our administration had, under the direction of C.B. Whitnall, worked out a city plan. The Milwaukee river, following almost through the center of the city, had become an open sewer. Its banks were littered with dilapidated ice and slaughter houses. The places between them harbored offal, ashes, tin cans and rubbish. The river stank to heaven from the sewage of half the city. There was also danger that some day the banks would be lined with factories, the smoke of their towering chimneys destroying the beautifully wooded heights framing the valley. The plan worked out by the Socialists was to buy the river valley and the high land adjoining it, then to convert the open sewer, along with the ice and slaughter houses and dumps, into a city park.

The greenway plan however was much more expansive than what Ameringer implies. Whitnall was determined to preserve, "every bit of natural water that had not suffered what may be called civilized vandalism" (Whitnall 1941:39). In a 1923 he mapped out the

location for parkland along all of Milwaukee County's rivers and streams (see FIGURE 2) (Platt 2010). The majority of the land was outside of the jurisdiction of the city and he had to work with the county to bring his vision into fruition. The work of acquiring the land proceeded slowly before there was an commitment on the part of the County to Whitnall's far-reaching plan (Whitnall 1941). By 1929 the 84 miles of parks had taken definite shape (Still 1948). The resulting greenways provided some of the amenities that Seidel described above, providing attractive parks, as well as keeping sewage out of the storm water and vice versa.

Underlying Whitnall's work was the belief that congestion constituted a "menace," not just because of its physical effects, "but on account of the inflated land values which it created and the large indirect tax which it imposed and which is borne unconsciously by the community" (Whitnall 1935:328). This view intimates at something McCarthy (2006) confirms, that Whitnall was an admirer of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. Behind the congestion of population and the growth and centralized organization of cities, and the spillover of suburban sprawl, Whitnall saw the drive to appropriate an "unearned increment, so much cherished by the landlords and real estate brokers generally" (Whitnall 1935:328). This perspective colored his views of the real estate trade.

There are also traces of Bellamy's and Veblen's distaste for the wastefulness of commercialism in Whitnall's view of city life. In an article on zoning, he remarked that people were generally "uninterested in the indirect methods of exploitation"—under which he categorized speculation and advertising: "They consider a newspaper cheap for three cents, but do not realize that they pay for the thousands of dollars of daily advertising by spending car fare and hours of time and unrest perambulating through the skyscraped streets in response to these ads, contributing at every turn to the inflated values

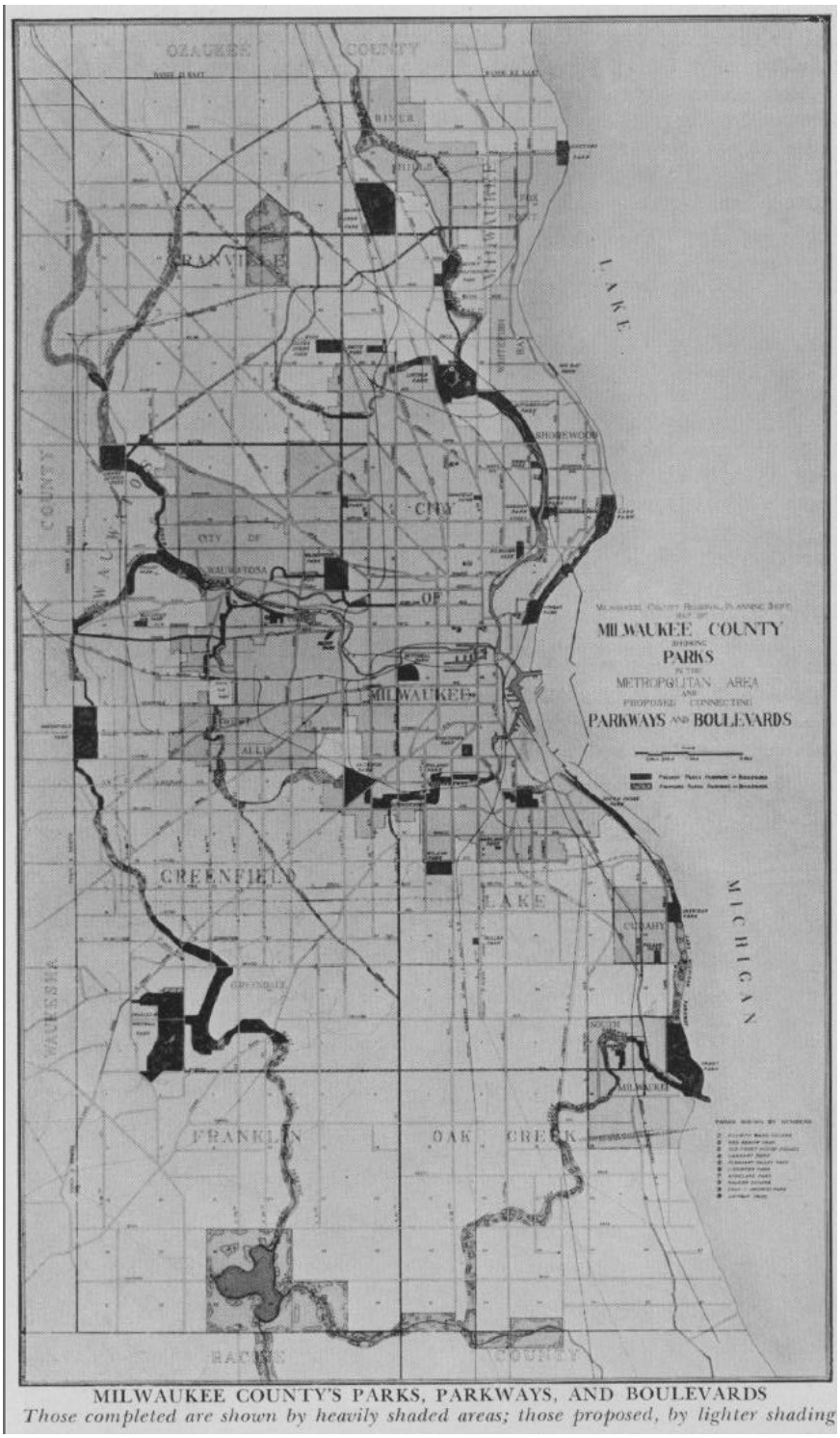

FIGURE 2. Whitnall's 1923 Greenway Park Plan (Whitnall 1941:40).

of 'downtown property."' The planner, he wrote, "should cater to those who do the living rather than those who do the exploiting" (Whitnall 1931:96-7).

Given these views it is not surprising what a journalist visiting Milwaukee in 1910 reported: "He is called the Ruskin of the Milwaukee branch [of the SPA] because of his stand for the beautiful as that which makes for the most good" (Kaliszewski 2013:70). This mix of influences—George, John Ruskin, socialism—do much to account for his approach to planning.

The Milwaukee government was very much concerned with controlling speculation in real estate. Mayor Hoan was adamant that the real estate industry did not serve the majority of the population.

> Even in most prosperous times the building industry has not supplied new housing which could be afforded by two-thirds of our population. This vast majority of our population has been forced to occupy the housing abandoned by the more fortunate. The opportunity for unlimited private profit, together with a blind desire for size regardless of humanitarian considerations, prompted the conversion near cities of miles of surrounding cornfields into hunting grounds for subdividers and land speculators. Here, under the guise of 'investment,' enough land was subdivided to house half of the urban population over again and enough business frontage was laid out to serve ten times this population. In short, our land and housing policy in the past has been an appalling example of anarchy, waste, and lack of the planning which is so necessary for any sound growth (Hoan 1936:256).

Shortly after WWI, Hoan appointed a Housing Commission, of which Whitnall was a member (McCarthy 2006). The Commission's first recommendation was 'The elimination of speculative land values." Its second was a zoning ordinance (Kaliszewski 2013:81). To control speculation the government changed how they assessed properties for taxation, up-valuing land and down-valuing improvements. This measure was devised to disinsensitivize speculative land purchases and encourage rebuilding of derelict properties. It was a method of assessment pioneered under the mayorship of Tom Johnson

in Cleveland, a politician with an intimate relation to Henry George (Gaffney 2014). The city also experimented with municipal housing, developing "Garden Homes" modeled after Ebenezer Howard's idea—a project Whitnall was involved in (McCarthy 2006; Kaliszewski 2013). A third area that the Milwaukee socialists pursued was zoning. The city adopted one of the first comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1923 (McCarthy 2006), which allowed the city to place restrictions on the height of buildings, the number of inhabitants per unit, and the location of industry. This was followed a year later, at Whitnall's urging, by a county-wide zoning ordinance. Under the ordinance the Board of Public Land Commissioners exercised control over how subdividers platted their property. They utilized this authority to preserve open space and protect streams. The county ordinance was among the first of its kind (McCarthy 2006).

Whitnall initially saw zoning as a means of reducing urban congestion and encouraging decentralization (McCarthy 2006). Over time he perceived its usefulness in controlling the spill-over of population outside of the city. Looking back at his work in 1941 he discussed how his early plans were designed to "induce decentralization of the city." But with automobilization it became more a matter of controlling the flood of people to the suburbs. He wrote, "the automobile has aroused the intuitive sense of the people of every large city; so that, in place of inaugurating the decentralization move, we find ourselves better prepared for it than most counties. In place of our luring the people, we are being pushed" (Whitnall 1941:40-79). To explain the importance of "the conservation of these natural influences in the areas beyond the cities," Whitnall (1931:97) referred to verse he claimed to often repeat:

> I'm glad you city people
> Love the city as you do,
> For if you should desert it
> You'd spoil the country too.

This phase of Whitnall's work progressively brought into focus larger geographic and political units. After expanding zoning to the county level he again sought legislation to take it further. As he explained at a planning forum in 1935:

> We felt that we had done a pretty good job in Milwaukee County, but soon realized we could not stop there, that we must reach out beyond the county line. Our Milwaukee River comes to us after flowing through three other counties, and . . . we found that our authority ended at the imaginary county line. . . . So we went to the legislature once more and asked for the creation of a State planning board. This we obtained (Whitnall 1935:332).

The state legislation granted planning authorities the power to "regulate, restrict, and determine the area along natural watercourses, channels, streams and creaks in which trades and industries and the location of buildings, for specified uses may be prohibited" (Whitnall 1941:40). This was an advanced step, and probably the first effort of its kind.

Whitnall had followed the course of the river upstream and arrived at the idea of "state zoning by valley units" (Whitnall 1931:98). Under state auspices work proceeded like it did in Milwaukee, mapping out the courses of waterways for preservation (Whitnall 1941). Whitnall explained, "All of the natural forces on which we are so dependent for our welfare function without reference to political boundaries of village, town, city, or county" (Whitnall 1935:332). The preservation of these "natural forces" was necessary "to guarantee to every man, woman, and child the protective influences of the sun's power, and to maintain the world's water and atmospheric systems." There was a hint of his socialist beliefs in his discussion of state zoning. The measure, wrote Whitnall, "bespeaks a more general appreciation of economy and conservation, in contrast with the waste resulting from exploitation. It bespeaks an effort on the part of the state to adjust all mand-made laws to harmonize with natural laws" (Whitnall 1931:98).

In connection to developments at the state level Whitnall contacted Benton MacKaye in June of 1931. The governor of Wisconsin had authorized the establishment

of a State Regional Planning Committee. This body was to undertake the survey of watersheds. This was work Whitnall believed MacKaye might undertake. In his letters to MacKaye Whitnall writes enthusiastically about the prospects of "going further in zoning that has ever been done so far as I know." He believed that he might be able to "require all sub-dividers to show on their blue prints any natural stream and the dedication of the flow easement measured at high water so as to preserve these natural influences rather destroy them and then undertake to build an artificial park"—the very lines he pursued in Milwaukee. It was a crucial time to pursue this work. As he wrote, "The trend towards decentralization has become visible, and I feel that we must hasten to preserve the country before too many of the urban civilization move into it."[26]

The work Whitnall proposed to undertake was in perfect alignment with MacKaye's interests. After going through the Forest Service, to the Labor Department where he did his work for Post, MacKaye had become an integral personality in the Regional Planning Association of America (Anderson 2002). MacKaye's (1990 [1928]:134,146,168) book *The New Exploration* had explored some of the terrain Whitnall hoped to cover under the auspices of the State Regional Planning Committee. MacKaye had written about the need to control "the metropolitan invasion" and to preserve "the environment" as a "natural resource" in its own right. The word "environment" did not yet have its ecological connotation and MacKaye was one of the first conservationists to use it (Anderson 2002). The sort of planning MacKaye's book envisioned was to work in cooperation with nature. The planners job, "was not to inflict a plan of his own, but to uncover nature's plan." MacKaye was interested in the work Whitnall was undertaking but from the documentary record I was unable to piece together why the job did not materialize for MacKaye. What is more significant is that the correspondence between Whitnall and MacKaye (and

[26]Whitnall to Zon 5/26/1931, Whitnall to MacKaye 6/10/1931, box 166, folder 9, BMP.

Raphael Zon who suggested that Mackaye was an appropriate candidate to carry out the work) demonstrates a remarkable similarity in outlook.

MacKaye wrote to Whitnall that his "approach to the problem makes me feel very much at home." From the literature Whitnall sent—newspaper clippings, Whitnall's (1931) article in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, a copy of act establishing the Regional Planning Commission—Mackaye was able to see the kinship between his and Whitnall's work: "You make clear that 'natural influences' (environment or the influence form *without*) form a natural resource in themselves. . . . You speak of adjusting 'man made laws to harmonize with natural laws.' This to my mind is the essence of planning—to *seek* the plan already made by nature rather than design a dogma of our own."[27]

Whitnall and MacKaye arrived at the same place from different starting points—in MacKaye's case, Pinchotist Forestry and the conservation problem, and in Whitnall's, Milwaukee's municipal Socialist politics. They would have briefly been residents of the same city in 1920, when MacKaye, unable to unable to find work in forestry or planning, considered becoming a journalist and took a short stint working at the *Milwaukee Leader*—the newspaper of Socialist Party-boss Victor Berger (Anderson 2002). Individuals associated with the RPAA were certainly aware of the work of Hoan's Housing Commission. Charles Harris Whitaker, an RPAA member (Sussman 1976), wrote that it was the first housing report, "that squarely and fairly attacked the problem at its roots." Another RPAA member, Clarence Stein, corresponded with the Commission (McCarthy 2006:48). But MacKaye and Whitnall did not know each other, and their correspondence does not show any indication that they were familiar with each other's

[27]MacKaye to Whitnall 6/13/1931, box 166, folder 9, BMP.

work. It is therefore interesting to speculate on how Whitnall and MacKaye came to similar views about conservation and regional planning.

What seems to be clear is that the two occupied similar milieus of political radicalism. In the person of Whitnall the Socialist movement could claim a genuine conservationist, and one on the forefront of the advanced area of regional planning. The planning that took place in Milwaukee is significant because Socialists were rarely a governing party, and in this one important instance, Socialists have a demonstrable record as conservationists.

The case is significant for one more reason. The Public Ownership League was very much a product of Milwaukee Socialism. Carl Thompson, POLA's secretary, had been long active in the Milwaukee branch of the Socialist Party.[28] The program of the Public Ownership League, with its emphasis on public ownership of utilities, followed directly from Milwaukee's municipal socialism. By the time of the conference Thompson was no longer a member of the SPA, having departed the Party with some of the more well-known members (e.g., Upton Sinclair, Charles Edward Russell, Jack London, and Simons and Walling who are mentioned above) who left the Party because of its antiwar stance (Bell 1999 [1952]). But Thompson was still connected with what was happening in Milwaukee, as indicated by the fact that both Victor Berger and Daniel Hoan delivered speeches at the 1917 conference. Whitnall himself was a dues paying member of the League. Given the League's connection to Milwaukee Socialism and its conservation record, it is not surprising that Thompson would have sought out the involvement of Gifford Pinchot.

[28]In Still's (1948:317) history of Milwaukee Carl D. Thompson is listed as one of the "capable directors" of the Socialists' "smooth-running political machine," alongside Berger, Hoan, Seidel, and Whitnall.

Radical Foresters and the Radical Undercurrent

The preceding historical review gives an indication of the various lines of radicalism that could have been brought more fully into conservation. It is also instructive to look at the political affiliations of the individual foresters who made up the radical faction. One of Pinchot's oldest forestry associates was Colonel George P. Ahern, who was Pinchot's senior by six years. Ahern took an interest in forestry while in the Army and practiced forestry in that capacity. He was the organizer of the Forest Service of the Philippines. Ahern and Pinchot together formed the leadership of what Edward C.M. Richards called the "militant group" in forestry.[29] Ahern was the author of *Deforested America* and *Forest Bankruptcy in America*, published in 1928 and 1933, which publicized the failure of the Forest Service's cooperative policies to halt the tide of forest destruction. Robert Marshall (1928:218) wrote that the impact of *Deforested America* was "like a bombshell" in the complacent atmosphere of late twenties conservation. The frank depiction of industry's failure to practice forestry probably had much to do with the tough stance the Forest Service took afterward in the Copeland Report.[30]

Ahern described his politics in a letter to Marshall: "I am a firm believer in Industrial Democracy." He was also a believer in planning. In the early thirties when Technocracy was briefly in vogue he declared his sympathy for this peculiar and somewhat misunderstood offshoot of socialism, and for the ideas in Thorstein Veblen's (1921) book *The Engineers and the Price System* that informed it. Expressing his support for the ideal of a planned social order, he wrote: "Industry individually and collectively must evolve a program as wisely planned as possible. The only way in which man can

[29]Richards to MacKaye 2/17/1928, box 158, folder 27, BMP.

[30]*Deforested America* was originally self-published with money furnished by Pinchot (Miller 2013). A second edition (Ahern 1929) was published as a Senate document after being placed into the record by Senator Arthur Capper.

save himself from his machine is to make the machine work for the benefit of all and not for the profit of a few."[31]

Raphael Zon was another of Pinchot's longterm associates (Miller 2013; Schmaltz 1980a,b). Zon was a radical before he had anything to do with conservation and forestry, and he was not the sort of person to compromise his views. Zon was born in Simbirsk, Russia (present day Ulyanovsk[32]) in 1874. As a student he was arrested for organizing workers and sentenced to a ten year prison term. He escaped and fled to England were he became acquainted with the leaders of the Fabian Society. In the US he studied forestry and after being hired by the Bureau of Forestry in 1901 became friends with Pinchot. Zon made a name for himself in forestry as scientist. He was one of the leading figures in forestry research, and he is considered the father of the Forest Service's experiment station system. He was also known for spreading "socialistic" ideas in the Forest Service. Something he wrote in a 1945 letter to Pinchot gives an idea of how Zon viewed the relationship between conservation and socialism: "To me, who came to this country somewhat 'tainted' with social 'heresies' (but heresies no longer), your conservation program provided a concrete and realistic channel for translating those social ideals into actual life" (Schmaltz 1980b:92). It is recognized that after Pinchot's termination from the Forest Service, Zon's radical views halted his rise within the agency. Between 1907 and 1915, Zon supervised Forest Service research as the director of the Office of Silvics. But when Forest Service research agencies were reorganized in 1915, chief Henry Graves placed Earle Clapp ahead of him. Later when the uniformly pro-industry William Greeley took charge of the Service, Zon was moved out of the Washington office and given the

[31] Ahern to Marshall 5/31/1930 box 5, folder 3, and Ahern, "Technocracy – What is it?" 1/23/1933, box 5, folder 4, RMP.

[32] Zon was acquainted with Ulyanovsk's namesake. Both he and Vladimir Ulyanov attended the same gymnasium.

post directing the Great Lakes Experiment Station in Minnesota. Although this was a position that gave him free reign to pursue scientific research, it was also a means of marginalizing Zon from Forest Service policy (Schmaltz 1980a).

When Benton MacKaye took up the study of forestry he was probably already a radical. While attending Harvard's forestry school, as part of its first class in 1902, he shared a room with his older brother James, an idiosyncratic sort of socialist philosopher. While they resided James MacKaye was writing a treatise, *The Economy of Happiness*, that combined together Bentham's utilitarianism, Marx's political-economy, Thoreau's call for the simple life, and Bellamy's Utopian vision (Anderson 2002). Benton later acknowledged that his brother greatly influenced his outlook. This is an interesting admission because James's book attacked President Roosevelt as a "pseudo-socialist" for his "acquiescence" to "private monopoly" (Anderson 2002:50). Later scholars who shared this perspective on Roosevelt's trust policy would cite conservation as an example of this acquiescence. And yet Benton MacKaye, despite his brother's political influence, was "one of Pinchot's young men," in the words of his friend Lewis Mumford (MacKaye 1990 [1928]:xi). In fact he was probably attracted to forestry because of Pinchot's conservation crusade (Anderson 2002). It is also interesting to note that James MacKaye's book took on capitalism's destructiveness of natural resources and purposeless production. He wrote:

> In the modern world the prevailing production-madness goads the capitalist, who has everything to gain from 'skinning' the country, into opening up and 'developing' its resources, and what is the final result[?]—abandoned farms where once were virgin soils—treeless wastes where once stood great forests—huge water-filled caverns in the earth where once was valuable ore. The resources are certainly 'developed,' but what has the nation to show for it[?]—a vast and increasing surplus of misery. . . . Such a policy as this may please a few capitalists in one generation, but what of posterity?(MacKaye 1906:405).

James MacKaye (1906:479) proposed that the "vast waste" of capitalism could be reduced if industry were ran under the system described by in "the twenty-second chapter of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*."

Benton, like his brother, was an idiosyncratic socialist. Although he possessed a membership card from the Socialist Party—which he received after taking work at the *Milwaukee Leader*—he considered himself an independent radical. To him a "radical" was someone who "agreed that the existing capitalistic, competitive organization of society has outlived its usefulness—if it ever had any usefulness." Because he was something of a maverick he had a varied career as a forester, regional planner, and wilderness advocate, and was employed (always for short periods of time) in a number of government agencies (the Forest Service, Labor Department, Tennessee Valley Authority, Rural Electrification Administration, and others)—serving as a resident philosopher where he went (Anderson 2002:130).

One of his more interesting stints was as a researcher for Howard Scott's Technical Alliance—the precursor to Technocracy, Inc. The job was a direct result of MacKaye's connections in the radical community. MacKaye was one of two paid staff members under chief technocrat Scott during the organization's short life. The other staff member was MacKaye's close friend Stuart Chase (Anderson 2002), an accountant and, soon to be, popular writer on economic topics, whose work followed the model of Veblen but in a more accessible manner. Chase's (1927) first book *The Tragedy of Waste*, an inventory of the wastes of capitalist production, used Belllamy's description of the predominant waste streams as its starting point.

One of the socialist organizations that had an affinity with some of the radical foresters was the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). LID was an unofficial affiliate of the SPA under the direction of Norman Thomas (the SPA's perennial presidential

candidate in the post-Debs era) and Harry Laidler (an economist who served as LID's research director.) It was founded as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society (ISS) in 1905 by a group that included Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, William Walling English and others, "for the purpose of promoting an intelligent interest in Socialism among college men and women" (Weisenberg 1955:5-6). After WWI the ISS was reorganized into LID, with a new mission: "education for a new social order based on the principle of ownership and production for public use and not for private profit," to be carried out among the general public, rather than strictly college students. To fulfill this enlarged mission it established of research bureau, that was headed by Laidler (League for Industrial Democracy 1921:6). The vision underlining LID's propaganda and research program was public ownership of industry and joint management by workers, technicians and consumers for public benefit.

There are some significant connections between LID and the radical foresters. In 1928 Laidler approached Edward C.M. Richards to write a booklet from the perspective of the movement for a national forestry policy.[33] It was Marshall (1930) who ultimately wrote the booklet titled, *The Social Management of American Forests* and published by LID. When Marshall was a graduate student, he became active in LID's John Hopkins' affiliate chapter and began contributing financially to the group (Glover 1986). It was the brand of socialism associated with LID that Marshall initially took to.[34] Two individuals close to Benton MacKaye were also active in LID: James MacKaye and Stuart Chase both were members of LID's national council (League for Industrial Democracy 1921), and Chase was LID's treasurer.

[33]Richards to MacKaye 2/7/1928, box 158 folder 27, BMP.

[34]Marshall, untitled, 3/24/1933, carton 2, folder 39, RMP.

Marshall's booklet was published as part of a LID literature series on the "movement toward social ownership in industry." Other titles in this series include John Ise's "Our Vanishing Oil Resources," Stephen Raushenbush's "The People's Fight for Coal and Power," and Laidler on "Public Ownership Here and Abroad" (Marshall 1930:3). The subject of Laidler's pamphlet was the same as his talk, "A Survey of Public Ownership throughout the World," at the Public Ownership League Conference in 1917. LID also published an early version of Stuart Chase's *Tragedy of Waste*, though it was not listed as part of this particular series.[35]. These publications give an indication of how conservation factored into LID's overall outlook. The LID thought highly of Marshall's booklet. Norman Thomas wrote Marshall that it was "one of the best" the LID put out.[36]

The reorganization of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society into LID followed post-WWI developments closely. Reformers, the labor movement and farmers organizations were pushing for what they termed "reconstruction" at the time. A number of reforms were put forth under this heading. The organizing idea was that wartime regulations had revealed the limitations of private enterprise. Various bodies formed to in the hope that this gave them an advantage. The National Popular Government League held a "Reconstruction Conference" in January of 1919.[37] This coincided with a "Farmers' National Conference on Reconstruction" (Marquis 1919). Afterward the Railroad Brotherhoods (the unions representing this industry) established a People's Reconstruction League, to push their plan for government ownership of railroads, known as the "Plumb Plan" (Marsh 1953). On the heels of the Plumb Plan, followed

[35]Chase (1927), *The Challenge of Waste*

[36]Thomas to Marshall 2/5/1931, box 8, folder 7, RMP.

[37]After this conference *The Public* reported, "In the past six months probably a hundred reconstruction organizations of one kind or another have been launched. They have every possible end in view from municipal ownership to the establishment of a Soviet form of government" (*The Public*, February 1, 1919, p.101).

the "Miners' Program" devised by the Nationalization Research Committee of the United Mine Workers of America (Ricketts 1996). Of the reconstruction programs the Plumb Plan and the Miners' Program were the most fully developed programs. The railroad workers and miners both sought public support for nationalization and management of their respective industries by technicians with worker representation, on the grounds that these industries were mismanaged at considerable cost to the public—and in the case of coal, considerable waste. The LID was very active in the Miners' Program (Ricketts 1996). The Nationalization Committee worked with a Bureau of Industrial Research to get dig up facts on the industry and get them before the public in order to so that the public could be shown the benefits of nationalization. A LID vice president, Arthur Gleason, was on the the staff of the Bureau, and the work being undertaken appeared to be the model Laidler had in mind in establishing the research and educational program at the LID.[38] It gave substance to the mission LID had laid out for itself as an organization that would research and propagandize in favor of production for use, not profit.

Another "reconstruction" organization also showed an affinity for conservation. This was the People's Reconstruction League, or as it became known after 1928, the People's Lobby. The League was originally established as a lobby by the railroad workers, other unions, and farmers organizations. Its main purpose initially was to promote the Plumb Plan. Benjamin Marsh, formerly of the NYCCP, was made its executive secretary. As the twenties wore on, however, the unions that provided the League's financial backing grew increasingly conservative and by 1927 unions ceased making contributions. Marsh then reorganized the League as the People's Lobby and built

[38]There was at the time a proliferation of industrial research bureaus, hoping to provide technical expertise to labor and maybe develop something more. On top of the Bureau of Industrial Research, there was the Howard Scott's Technical Alliance, and following its dissolution, the Labor Bureau, Inc. headed by Chase. The I.W.W. believed that the Technical Alliance its own Bureau of Industrial Research (Chaplin 1948; Tyler 1963), but they were one of several clients. MacKaye wrote a report for the I.W.W. on the lumber industry in his stint there (Anderson 2002).

up an individual membership to support its work. At this time John Dewey was brought in as the organization's president. The People's Lobby's program was "pragmatic," as Marsh (1953:8) described it, but it was decidedly left-wing. Its program pushed public ownership, antimonopoly measures, conservation, progressive taxation, economic planning, and opposed American military intervention (Marsh 1953).

Robert Marshall was a financial contributor to this group also. He gave two talks at People's Lobby events in 1937. In April, at a dinner that presented the People's Lobby program, he spoke on "Public Ownership of Natural Resources." At the end of the next month he participated in a luncheon sponsored by the Lobby, addressing "What Private Ownership of Forests Means" over a live radio broadcast.[39]

The April dinner was also attended by Alfred Bingham, editor of the radical magazine *Common Sense*. Bingham wanted to publish the talk in his magazine and was in discussion of how to edit it in the last year of Marshall's life.[40] *Common Sense* was a promoter of a non-Marxist, Americanized socialism that they hoped to realize through a new farmer-labor party. The magazine functioned as an organ for John Dewey's League for Independent Political Action and Bingham was executive secretary for the Farmer-Labor Political Federation, later renamed the American Commonwealth Federation after the Canadian socialist political party (Schlesinger 2003). It published writing by the likes of critical intellectuals like John Dewey and the journalist, poet, and *New Masses* editor, James Rorty; individuals associated the Harold Loeb wing of the Technocratic movement (i.e., Loeb, Walter Polakov, Stuart Chase, etc.); and politicians sympathetic to the idea of a farmer-labor party (Floyd Olson and Thomas Amlie) (Bingham and Rodman 1934).

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[39]See (Marsh 1937:8); Marsh to Jackson 1/11/1940, box 79, folder 9; and program for People's Lobby dinner dated 4/20/1937, in box 61, folder 8, GJP.

[40]Marshall discussed publication with *Common Sense* editor Alfred Bingham in correspondence dated 2/21/1939, 2/24/1939, 3/2/1939, 3/13/1939, and 6/10/1939, box 6, folder 4, RMP.

These various connections provide a sense of the political milieu the radical foresters inhabited.

What Type of Radicalism?

In an exhaustive comparative-historical study of the discourses of environmental movement organizations, Robert Brulle (2000:158-9) defines a conservation organization, as one that defines its "objective as conserving or rationally developing our natural resources to meet long term human needs." This is paraphrased from Pinchot's definition of conservation (i.e., use for the greatest good for the longest time), and Brulle's historical review of the development of the conservation movement emphasizes the central role played by Pinchot. And yet not one of the groups Brulle includes in his sample of organizations representing the conservation tradition embodies what Pinchot stood for in any shape or form. There are eight organizations in this sample—American Farmland Trust, American Forests, Elm Research Institute, Izaak Walton League of America Inc., National Arbor Day Foundation, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Scenic America, and the Trust for Public Land. The one organization on this list with which Pinchot had any kind of relationship with was the American Forestry Association (since named American Forests). This was a group that he and his supporters resigned from in disgust over its capture by industry (Steen 2001; Fry et al. 1974:198).

This sample reflects the apolitical subject conservation has come to represent since the days of Pinchot. But even if we were to look back to the early part of the twentieth century, it would not be different. This does not mean that Pinchotism lacked support, but it does suggest that the objective of public ownership and control of natural resources was too radical of an idea for the institutional conservation movement.

This suggests a hypothetical limit to environmental movement organization behavior. It is interesting to note, however, that while there have not been radical conservation groups, radical preservation groups abound. It is also interesting that the regulation of pollution has not provoked the same kind of controversy as questions of land utilization. It is public control over utilization of private property that comes against the inviolable privileges of ownership. Perhaps the difference is that pollution damages the property of others, whereas it is generally accepted that the owner can do with his own property what he will.[41]

That there were other forces supportive of such an agenda is demonstrated by the coming together of some of these elements under the banner of the Public Ownership League. That organization's mission statement with its reference to democratic management and curbing plutocracy was consistent with what Pinchot stood for. This suggests a more natural constituency for Pinchot's brand of conservation on the political Left. It should also give pause to those who have construed conservation as inherently associated with corporate reform. There was indeed a corporate element in the forestry movement. It was represented by the American Forestry Association and other bodies with little to do with Pinchotism.

Groups like the the Public Ownership League, the League for Industrial Democracy and the People's Lobby, and the political tradition they represent, are not typically associated with the conservation movement, but the latter two of these groups gave Marshall a forum to promote public ownership of forests and other resources. The organized Left was able to take stances no major conservation organization would take. For instance, acting on behalf of the People's Lobby, Marsh protested to Forest Service Chief Lyle Watts against the "trainloads of timber" used in advertisements,

[41]Preservationist groups, however, did support forestry regulations. For instance the National Parks Conservation Association, whose long serving president was a former secretary to Pinchot (Miles 1995).

and proposed that the Forest Service take steps to restrict this usage (Marsh 1953:178). While Marsh could easily take such a radical position, the Wilderness Society was not even able to declare itself in support of regulating lumber companies over Aldo Leopold's objections.[42] Significantly we do not see in the People's Lobby the sort of worship of technology and growth Leopold and his associates attributed to left-wing anthropocentrism. When Leopold's friend William Vogt published his book *The Road to Survival*, documenting the limits to growth, Marsh (1948) recognized it as an important statement, and wrote a positive review of the book for the *People's Lobby Bulletin*.

If the Left is the more natural constituency for the program Pinchot came to advocate we have to ask what type of Left? This historical review gives some indications to this question. One prominent strain is the somewhat amorphous radicalism centering around land reform which had a long history in the US. Pinchot, as was shown, adopted some of the posture and rhetoric of this tradition, in sharp contrast to the scientific conservation that existed in his day. The same is true of John Wesley Powell, who anticipated what was to become Pinchotism. And while Pinchot and Powell tapped into this strain, Pettigrew provides an converse example. His case demonstrated that radical populism was something amenable to conservation, at least a democratic form of it.

Socialism presented another possibility. The socialists' vision of a rational social order was complimentary to conservation. From time to time the idea of conservation was used to provide a concrete instance of the kind of world the socialists hoped to realize (for instance, in the Socialist Party platforms). One cannot doubt the influence of socialism on the more radical formulations of conservation. It is significant that a core of radical foresters—ones involved in the fights over the profession's identity and politics—were socialists.

[42]Leopold was the lone dissenter on the Wilderness Society board to a resolution in support of regulation in 1947, and the Wilderness Society worked through consensus (Fox 1981).

Socialism, however, also exhibited a capacity to be aloof from conservation. This was especially true of its more revolutionary versions. Marshall who was pulled in a revolutionary direction had misgivings about the mild, middle class socialism of the Norman Thomas and LID variety, although the LID had published a pamphlet of his. He considered Norman Thomas's middle class, collegiate socialism uninspiring. He did not believe that capitalism could be "overthrown by piecemeal socialization"—i.e., a reform movement for public ownership, like the conservation program he fought for. But he recognized that "in the case of natural resources piecemeal socialization is desirable" because otherwise a socialist society would inherit an impoverished earth.[43] This distinction, however, of why conservation was to be treated different from other immediate demands would have been difficult to get across in the polarized sectarian debates of the socialist movement.

The most important conclusion to draw from this review is that conservation was emboldened to be radical because it developed in an era in which the political-economic status quo was not taken for granted to the same degree as today. As Charles Beard (1913:1) wrote in 1913 it was "an age when Socialism is admittedly shaking the old foundations of politics the world over and penetrating our science, art and literature." The sorts of economic heresies that could be accepted by a thinking person are well demonstrated by Beard himself. In 1934, Beard was asked to provide a depiction of the type of world he would like to inhabit. He responded that he envisioned:

> a workers' republic. . . without degradation of poverty and unemployment on the one side or the degradation of luxury, rivalry, and conspicuous waste

[43]Marshall was aligned with what was known as the "Militant" faction within the Socialist Party. In fact his correspondence indicates that he and Edward C.M. Richards debated the merits of public ownership of forests versus regulation of the forests at the house of Andrew Biemiller, one of the leaders of the Militant faction. This conversation convinced Marshall that public ownership should be prioritized (Marshall to Richards 6/17/1933 box 9, folder 10, and "Untitled" notes on socialism, 3/24/1933, carton 2, folder 39, RMP).

> on the other… . In this workers' republic the vast aggregate of asphalt, brick, steel, masonry, and slums known as our congested cities will simply disappear form the earth. Industry will be widely decentralized, and factories and fields will be united in new relations. In this transformation the whole of the United States will become one vast park of fields, forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, roads, decentralized communities, farms, ranches, and irrigated deserts. Immense productive energies now wasted in competitive duplications of effort will be devoted to the production of non-competitive non-consumable goods of beauty and taste—goods that give delight to the eye and aspiration to the heart (Beard 1934:333).

His answer is remarkably like the "rural civilization" envisioned by Pinchot's followers. This is not surprising because, after all, they were of the same milieu. Beard's vision of change indicates what was an important part of the sorts of radicalism extant of the times: they were characterized by a more visionary quality than our own.

The Pinchotist foresters seemed to accept that if their objectives were to be realized it would come from a more broadly organized social movement than conservation alone. During the debates over forestry policy after WWI, SAF President Olmsted (1920b:598) declared that he thought a national forestry policy might have been adopted as part of "a systematic and comprehensive program of reconstruction," envisioned "in the days following the armistice." This was in reference to the labor, farmer and reform bodies that took up the slogan "reconstruction"—a grouping that centered on public ownership and control of industry. But as it happened, "This hope proved futile," and foresters found "themselves fighting not only against the particular private forest interests concerned, but also against a general wave of reaction and indifference such as this country has seldom witnessed."

If this is was the most likely model by which conservation could have been actually adopted, then it reveals an important element about conservation's decline. The sort of conservation Pinchot advocated was very much a pre-WWII phenomenon. Its last gasp was during the nineteen-thirties and forties. Hays (1989) observing this attributed

conservation's decline to the fuller ecological conception that characterized post-WWII environmentalism. But as we have seen, this is not a satisfactory explanation because it exaggerates the utilitarian-preservationism divide (Sutter 2009). The changing political environment between the two periods may provide a better explanation. Hays would not accept this explanation because he rejected the political interpretation of conservation, but that interpretation is also at odds with the evidence. The decline of conservation might reasonably be accounted for in the decline of the sort of radicalism that gave impetus to consideration of public control. The decline of both was concurrent.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: LAND-USE AND DEMOCRACY

Nine years after publishing his article on the "Conservation Ethic" in the *Journal of Forestry*, Aldo Leopold reprised a theme from this earlier essay for an article in *Audubon Magazine*. The title of this article was "Land-Use and Democracy," and by implication we might say it represents Leopold's thinking about what a democracy is and how the conservation problems relates to it.

The article presented a simple three piece "formula" for conservation: "learn how to tell good land-use from bad. Use your own land accordingly, and refuse aid and comfort to those who do not." This time around Leopold acknowledged some of the obvious difficulties of his scheme. He mentions that it may be hard to identify the products of good land-use from those of the bad; that good choices may not be available to the ethical consumer; and there would be the deceptions of the "professional advertiser" and "trained hoodwinker" to contend with. Just the same he asserted, "many products of land-abuse can be identified as such, and can be discriminated against. . . Conversely, the products of good land-use can often be singled out and favored" (Leopold 1942:259,260,265).

Earlier I cited Leopold's ethic to demonstrate that there was concern about the socialistic tendency developing in conservation. Now it is worth reexamining it as a foil to the Pinchotists. These differences, as is evident, revolve around property and democracy. Leopold presents a specific idea of the "functions of government in conservation" in a democracy. Government, he writes, should arbitrate "fact vs. fiction" in advertising; it should sponsor research; it should perform the role of custodian on "land which, for one reason or another, is not suited to private husbandry." Leopold raises a legitimate concern that governmental capabilities are limited in the field of conservation, and that

this can lead to a false sense of security that the conservation problem is being taken care of. "Government lands are a minor fraction of our land area," he writes, "Therefore government neglects things that need doing, and does the inferior things that it can do." But he does not consider that the capacity of government can be augmented and that it could be enabled to do more. Instead he asks why people expect the government to do things for them, which they can theoretically do themselves. "If we don't like the way landowner X is using the natural resources of which he is owner, why do we buy his products?... Why do we tell our government to reform Mr. X, instead of doing it ourselves?" (Leopold 1942:259,263,265). Leopold does not propose why people should not use the machinery of political action if it is available. His reasoning appears to implicitly fall back on the assumption that this is not how it should be done in a democracy.

Leopold had little in common with other foresters who opposed expanded public ownership and regulation, who were generally apologists for industry. He had no illusions that there was any economic incentive for conservation or good husbandry. That the "economic cards" were "stacked against" conservation (Leopold 1933:639), was a fact that he believed needed to be directly confronted. On this he was on the side of the radicals. In so far as he viewed capitalism as part of the problem, his idea of a "land ethic" has a radical tinge to it. "We abuse land," he wrote in the classic, oft-quoted expression of the idea, "because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we begin to see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect" (Leopold 1966 [1949]:x). This plea for a communal relation to land, in contrast to a merely exploitative one, amounted to a plea to overcome the logic of capitalist land utilization by means of moral suasion. This is what might be termed *cultural radicalism*, or the belief that environmentalism posits a radical change in culture.

Its focus is on values and ethics that are at odds with the dominant culture. While it neglects politics, it often expresses a compelling critique of the trajectory of human civilization.

It is from the idealistic point of view of a green cultural radicalism that evaluations of conservation have been made. For instance, a sociologist (Brulle 2000:160) gives a characteristic assessment of conservation as a "discourse" or "worldview" whose limitation was its anthropocentrism: "It focuses on the natural world and its value for human activities. Other beings are not considered worthy of consideration in their own right. Thus, conservation cannot provide a basis for the protection of aspects of the natural world that do not serve human purposes." Although history is read from this perspective, there is a failure to to take account of its actual development. Pinchot's biographer, Char Miller, notes that evaluations of Pinchot typically freeze him in time in the Progressive Era, while judging him from the standards of a later era. From a more historical perspective we might recognize Leopold's call for a more ecological husbandry as a development on the wise use of an earlier generation. Leopold, after all, was two decades younger than Pinchot. And if Pinchot's own development is actually examined, it can be recognized that he actually embraced ecological principles later in life. As Miller (2013:336-7) shows, in 1937 Pinchot revised his book *The Training of a Forester* (written to interest youngsters in the craft of forestry) to incorporate a more ecological perspective, in keeping with the times. This new edition emphasized the need for an awareness of the "communities" of life in forests, and the forest's "animal citizens," in order to intelligently maintain "the balance of nature."

A more fundamental break with the idealistic interpretation is possible if we examine conservation as political program, rather than a discourse or nature philosophy. From this point of view, Samuel Hays's (1959) account of how conservation originated

from the technical subjects of applied resource management, was an advancement on the superficial histories that equated conservation vaguely with progressivism. But Hays failed to observe the controversies in forestry, which speak to the different directions this program could have taken. These controversies revolved around the the system and approach of land and resource administration that evolved in relation to public land.

Marshall (1933:219), better than anyone else, elucidated the democratic potential of public resource administration. "The time has come," he wrote in the *People's Forests*, "when we must discard the unsocial view that our woods are the lumbermen's and substitute the broader ideal that every acre of woodland in the country is rightly part of the people's forests." This "broader ideal" meant that forests were not merely to be a source of private gain, but instead a public good. As a public good their value was multifaceted and included both material and non-material dimensions. A forest could be a permanent object of labor for a community, a refuge from urban life, and many more things. Marshall's view posited that private ownership was not only destructive, but that public ownership would derive for the people benefits that private ownership could not.

The principle difference from Leopold's outlook is that Marshall saw the subject of how a forest or other resource was used as a matter of collective democracy. Leopold, for all his talk of seeing land as something more than a "commodity belonging to us," was wedded to individual ownership of land. Leopold's view is essentially negative. The public can enforce standards through the boycott—at least theoretically.[1] But they have no authority to see to it directly that the land is used in the collective interest. Although

[1]One legitimately wonders if Leopold actually knew if his wool socks were not the result of overgrazed hillsides, or the leather from his boots? Leopold's view that the products of good husbandry can be "singled out and favored," stands in contrast with Marshall, who believed that "Waste of natural resources under private ownership is the general rule" (Marshall "Public Ownership and Development of Natural Resources" *ibid*).

Leopold may have had a critical view of the trajectory of civilization, he would not grant the people political recourse to control their own fate.

Here one can see the advantage of the Pinchotist conception of the "common good" in the conservation resources. Pinchot (1998 [1947]:506) identified conservation as an issue of collective importance. It was "the application of common sense to the common problems for the common good." Its "great" purpose was not just to "use, protect, preserve, and renew the natural resources of the earth" but also "to see to it that the rights of the people to govern themselves shall not be controlled by great monopolies through their power over natural resources." This was a positive conception of economic democracy, in sharp contrast with Leopold's preference for limited government in conservation.

The vision that I have denoted as a "rural civilization" gives a sense of the potentiality of a such an approach to conservation. In Leopold's conception science is passive. Its purpose is to distinguish good land-use from bad. It does not, however, reveal how the public might attain the full social benefits (both material and otherwise) from the land. This is impossible except under some form of democratic planning. Planning would comprise a more active science. Far from being undemocratic, planning can elucidate the possibilities to which land could be used, so that the people can have a legitimate choice. Without a machinery of democratic planning, private enterprise controls how resources are used, and more fundamentally how civilization develops.

The innovation that appeared to be developing from radical Pinchotism might be called a *people's conservation science*, with a nod to Marshall's *People's Forests*. This is a science of the relationship between the land and the collective good. Powell's *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region* anticipated this area. MacKaye (1968) and Mumford (1963 [1934]) would call this subject "geotechnics," a word coined by Patrick Geddes. Such

a science could provide a means of devising a superior adaptation to the environment. A new people's conservation science would not necessarily be like the old one, but it would have to develop an understanding of the importance of the collectivist function of planning. It is difficult to conceive of how else such an adaptation could take place.

The preceding study offers some hints of how a people's conservation science could actually develop. The conservation movement developed initially as a movement to preserve the public domain, and the more radical conception of conservation was an outgrowth of public land management. We might say that it was an offshoot of a the scientific management of the commons, or that there is a potentially symbiotic relationship between public land and publicly oriented land management. The goal of the radical faction in forestry was to establish a new public domain through public acquisition. Had such a course been followed it could have bolstered public forestry and with it further progress. As it happened, however, the ranks of industrial forestry were bolstered through legislative subsidies. This led to the marginalization of the public element in the profession. It follows that something like the old Pinchotism might be regenerated by efforts to enlarge the commons in the present.

The radical element in forestry, however, was not an automatic development of public land management. Pinchot and others waged a concerted propaganda campaign in the public about the social mission of forestry, and in forestry about the public obligation of the profession. The controversy surrounding the editorship of the *Journal of Forestry* shows the weight the Pinchotists attached to propaganda. The persona of Pinchot was also extremely important. His authority gave legitimacy to the radicals. Opposition came in the form of claims that the "zeal" and "crusading" in forestry was unprofessional. If any similar democratic ethos emerges among technicians, its proponents will have to be prepared to defend their approach with similar fervor.

Environmental sociologists often theorize about environmentalism and social change as if this were a subject that could be considered in isolation of the broader political environment.[2] Pinchotism did not originate, nor did it radicalize, in a political vacuum. It is doubtful any analogous attempt to increase the degree of substantive public control in environmental matters would either. The experience of Pinchotism demonstrates that it is doubtful that a genuinely radical form of environmentalism could expect to get any support from the organized environmental movement. And yet some organized movement is necessary, or else there would be no hope of any advancement. This organized support would probably have to develop from the radical Left.

These considerations suggest the need for a new radicalism is of principle importance. Obviously I mean a genuine political radicalism, as opposed to a mere cultural radicalism. The chief function of this radicalism is to stimulate an environment where political-economic heresies can be successfully promulgated. We will not see any rise of interest in a program of public control over actions that effect the Earth unless economic orthodoxies come under challenge. Not all forms of radicalism would be equally conducive, however. Over the decades in which Pinchotism was a factor, radicals largely accepted the idea of planning. Liberals even did, at least to a certain extent. Today the idea of planning may be even more heretical than socialism. And yet it is difficult to conceive of any genuine environmental improvement without planning.

[2]See Brulle's (2000) study of environmental discourse, which makes no real attempt to relate environmental discourses to political ideology.

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Archival Collections Consulted:

- the Robert Marshall Papers, designated in-text as *RMP*
- the Benton MacKaye Papers, designated in-text as *BMP*
- the Aldo Leopold Archives, designated in-text as *ALA*
- the Gardner Jackson Papers, designated in-text as *GJP*

Note: The first three collections are comprised of the papers of professional foresters and provide a window into the world of the conservation professional. Gardner Jackson, was a friend of Marshall and Raphael Zon, and a trustee of Marshall's estate. He is known, in his own right, for his work as publicist for the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense and Memorial Committees, and for the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, and as a reformer within the Department of Agriculture during the New Deal. I utilize his archive in my examination of the Marshall estate.

Secondary Sources: In addition to the archival sources and historical periodicals cited in the text, I have relied extensively on some secondary historical sources that should receive special credit. Recent biographical studies on Marshall, MacKaye, and Pinchot (Sutter 2009; Anderson 2002; Miller 2013), have been crucial. Steen's (2004 [1976]) history of the Forest Service has also been useful, as well as Roy Robbins (1976 [1942]) history of the public domain, and William Robbins (1982) political-economic history of the lumber industry.

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