the vanderbilt **hustler**

friday
october 31, 1980

Volume 92, Number 19
Nashville, Tennessee

Devins sees SGA changes

By RIK DANIELSON

Neal Devins, a second-year Vanderbilt law student who directs the Tennessee Public Interest Research Group, has four proposals for the Student Government Association which he says will give it greater continuity and allow it to undertake larger and more beneficial projects.

Devins has already taken one of his ideas, a proposal that SGA establish an Experiential Educational Center, before the Undergraduate Legislative Council and has had limited success in getting the ULC to listen to him.

Projects Devins is planning to present for student government consideration would establish Kirkland Watch, a consumer bureau similar to Congressional Watch; Students of Vanderbilt, Inc., a student organization designed to pump money into student government; and a Vanderbilt chapter of PIRG that "would work independently of student government, but provide it with continuity through its organization and ongoing projects."

These projects would be established by SGA but would be large and permanent enough that they could operate independently and still benefit SGA.

"Student government can be effective, but it can't be effective as student government is now," Devins said. "The only way for student government to be effective is to take on long-term projects."

"We are trying to anticipate administrative activities since they've caught us with our pants down several times recently, so I think a Kirkland Watch-type proposal could be a good idea," said Randall Hanson, president of the Engineering Council and head of SGA's current issues committee.

"I can see how the other projects could be advantageous, but I think there would probably be some reservations. SGA would have to take their time and digest it. He'd have to do a tremendous selling job."

(See SGA CHANGES, page 7)

The opening session of "Fifty Years After," the symposium celebrating the 50th anniversary of the publication of "I'll Take My Stand" packed Sarratt Cinema yesterday. Two sessions will be held today, with one at 9 a.m. and another at 2 p.m. Tomorrow's session, which features a panel discussion session, at 9:30 a.m. in Underwood, features A panel discussion with the three surviving Agrarians, Robert Penn Warren, Lyle Lanier, and Andrew Lytle.

Agrarians here for anniversary

By SIDNEY ANDERSON

"Fifty Years After," a symposium celebrating the anniversary of the Agrarian publication of "I'll Take My Stand," began yesterday with the first of four sessions.

The Agrarians were a group of 12 men, 10 of them connected with Vanderbilt, who believed in the strength and importance of an Agrarian South in the face of industrialization. "I'll Take My Stand" contains 12 essays defending the basic tenets of the movement.

Robert Penn Warren, Andrew Lytle, and Lyle Lanier, the three surviving Agrarians, are on campus this weekend to participate in the symposium — along with authors, critics, and professors from around the country who are experts on Agrarianism.

Warren, Lytle and Lanier will participate in a panel discussion tomorrow in what is perhaps the most important of the four sessions. "The Agrarian-Industrial Metaphor: Culture, Economics and Society in a Technological Age" will be moderated by Cleanth Brooks, emeritus professor of rhetoric at Yale University.

Symposium participants include "the people most intimately associated with the Agrarians, people who have done the most work on the men and the movement," William Havard, professor of political science and co-director of the symposium, said.

Walter Sullivan, professor of English, is the other director and organizer of the event.

The Agrarian movement began as a reaction to the vicious attack on the South during the Scopes trial. The political involvement made a transition from the purely literary Fugitive movement to the Agrarian movement. Warren, Donald Davidson, John Crowe Ransom, and Allen Tate were members of both movements.

"The Agrarian movement is important in two

See AGRARIANS HERE, page 4A)

Divinity school cuts its deficit

For the first time in 14 years, the School of Divinity has reduced its budget deficit, mainly because of a matching-funds campaign with the University, divinity dean Jackson Forstman said yesterday.

Vanderbilt's smallest of nine academic units, the D-School reduced its deficit from $437,000 to $284,000 over the past year. Forstman, however, does not see the school operating in the black for at least two or three years.

"It certainly is our intention to try to bring the budget in line with the costs," he said, "but I don't see it happening too fast. We were delighted to reduce the deficit, but it wasn't really a major achievement."

The divinity school is the only Vanderbilt school operating in the red. It has an annual budget of about $2.25 million.

"Very few" budget cuts were required to bring the allotted funds in line with costs, Forstman noted. "It was mostly just equipment cuts and that sort of thing."

Over $1 million was added to the D-School coffers in a matching-funds program with the estate left Vanderbilt by Harold Sterling Vanderbilt. The divinity school raised about $250,000 and received $750,000 in return from the estate.

"Of course, (the budget deficit) is critical," Forstman said. "One can easily see that that kind of increasing deficit cannot go on."

President Emmett Fields praised Forstman's budget-trimming efforts at a press gathering Tuesday afternoon.

"Dean Forstman has been very effective in encouraging the flow of gifts and restraining unsensible expenditures," Fields said. "This year's deficit cut of 17 percent compares with a rising deficit of 28 percent the year before."

In other press conference topics, Fields said:

— The search for a vice president for business affairs to replace the retired Don McDowell and University treasurer should be finished by January.

Fields will be hosting "two or three" candidates in the middle of this month. "An inside appointment is still eligible for consideration," he said, "but I doubt that there will be an inside appointment." The president declined to name the final candidates for the post.

The Investments investments committee of the Board of Trust just started its search for a successor for former treasurer Alfred Morely. The committee, headed by Fields, has just started to receive nominations and applications.

— He endorsed the general aims of the proposed Arts and Science distribution program.

"I like the general aims of it," Fields said. "It has a sharper appreciation for other cultures, and I would be pleased to see the added vigor to the foreign languages."

History should probably be given more emphasis, Fields added, "but then again I have to realize I stand on personal grounds. Whether the proposal is adopted depends on the College

(See DIVINITY, page 3)

VU women engineers top national percentage

By STEVEN W. WAY

The School of Engineering this year boasts a freshman class with a 30-percent female population — a percentage that gives Vanderbilt the distinction of being No. 1 in the nation in female enrollment.

Although the engineering school has been a leader in female recruitment since the early 1970s, dean Paul Harrawood said Vanderbilt faces ever-increasing competition for qualified women students in coming years.

"One of our chief assets in attracting good women is being part of a university community," Harrawood said. "Unlike a school like Georgia Tech, where technical study is all that is offered, Vanderbilt gives women a chance to be part of a well-established social community while studying what they are interested in."

Harrawood attributed the rise in female enrollment to the tremendous career opportunities for engineering graduates and a diminishing cultural stigma against women's participation in the sciences.

A woman engineering graduate, he said, can expect to make anywhere from $21,000 to $27,000 in their first year out of school. Although these sky-rocketing salaries are responsible for increasing engineering enrollment nationwide, they are also the chief reason that there are no women professors to be found.

"We employ two full-time women engineering professors," Harrawood said. "And believe it or not, that is statistically more than our share."

Engineering registrar Roger Webb said that as long as the demand for engineers cannot be filled by America's technical schools, starting salaries will remain at record levels — discouraging talented women and blacks from going to graduate school and maintaining the chronic shortage of minority professors.

Engineering administrators maintain that "success will breed success," that if women professors like teaching at Vanderbilt, word will get out and one happy female faculty member will bring forth another.

"There is an awful lot of courting going on among the few women and black professors there are in engineering," Harrawood said. "For example, (minority engineering director) Professor William Mills could leave whenever he wanted to, but he likes what he is doing and is pleased here."

"One of the things we have to do is get the best faculty we can get our hands on. But the better faculty we have the more courted they are. One thing we make sure of is that no other school has an advantage on what Vanderbilt offers its faculty."

Harrawood sees no point in the near future in which the demand for women engineers might subside; but he said that simply being a woman would not help a graduate beyond her first job.

"There is no way that engineering schools can meet the needs of this country," he said. He cited as example the General Motors and Ford corporations, both of which have recently suffered the greatest third quarter losses in American industrial history, but have not cut back on their technical personnel.

Engineering senior Linda Dulin, president of Tau Beta Pi, said she has never noticed a tremendous recruitment of women at Vanderbilt.

"Women seem to come here, you don't have to bring them here," Dulin said. "I have never felt like I have been discriminated against, and there is no stigma at Vanderbilt about being a female engineer."

Dulin has worked for Exxon during the past two summers and plans to get her MBA degree after graduating from Vanderbilt. She is one of a growing number of women engineers seeking management positions.

Vanderbilt's major rival for female percentage of enrollment is Duke University, where present enrollment at the engineering school is 25 percent women.

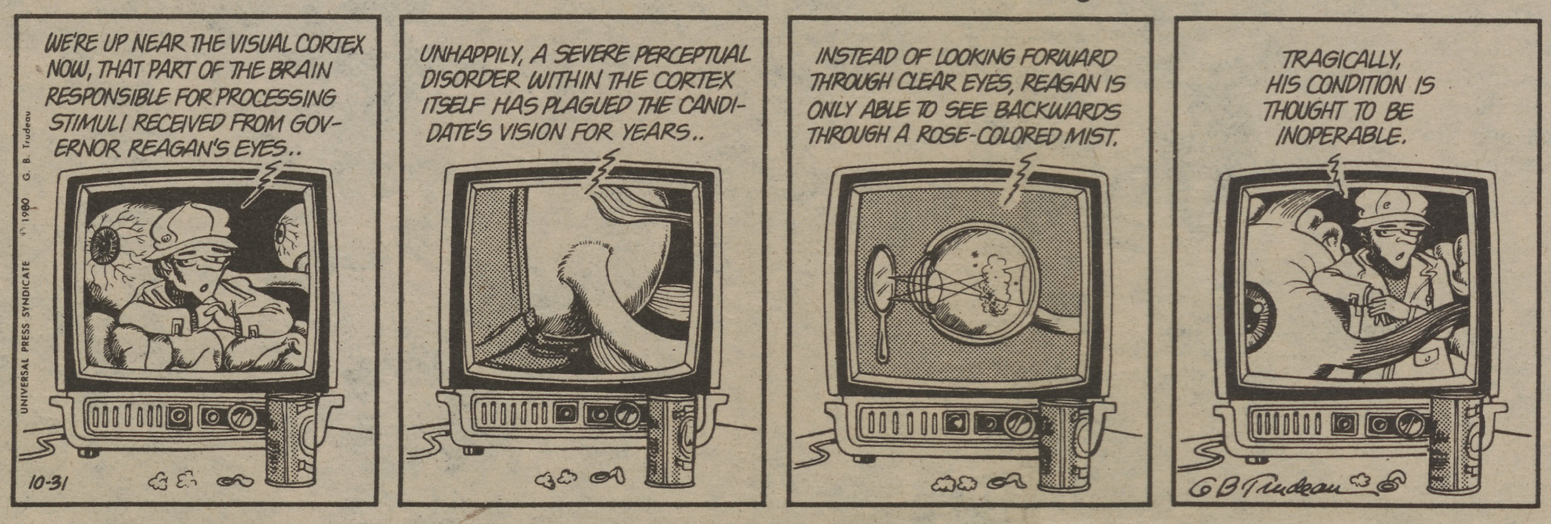
"The primary reason Duke and Vanderbilt are able to attract such a large number of women is that at each of our schools engineering constitutes only a small part of the university community," Merion Shepard of Duke said.

"Women here can join the same sororities as our ladies in Trinity College, and they can spend as much time being non-technically trained as they do being technically trained," he said.

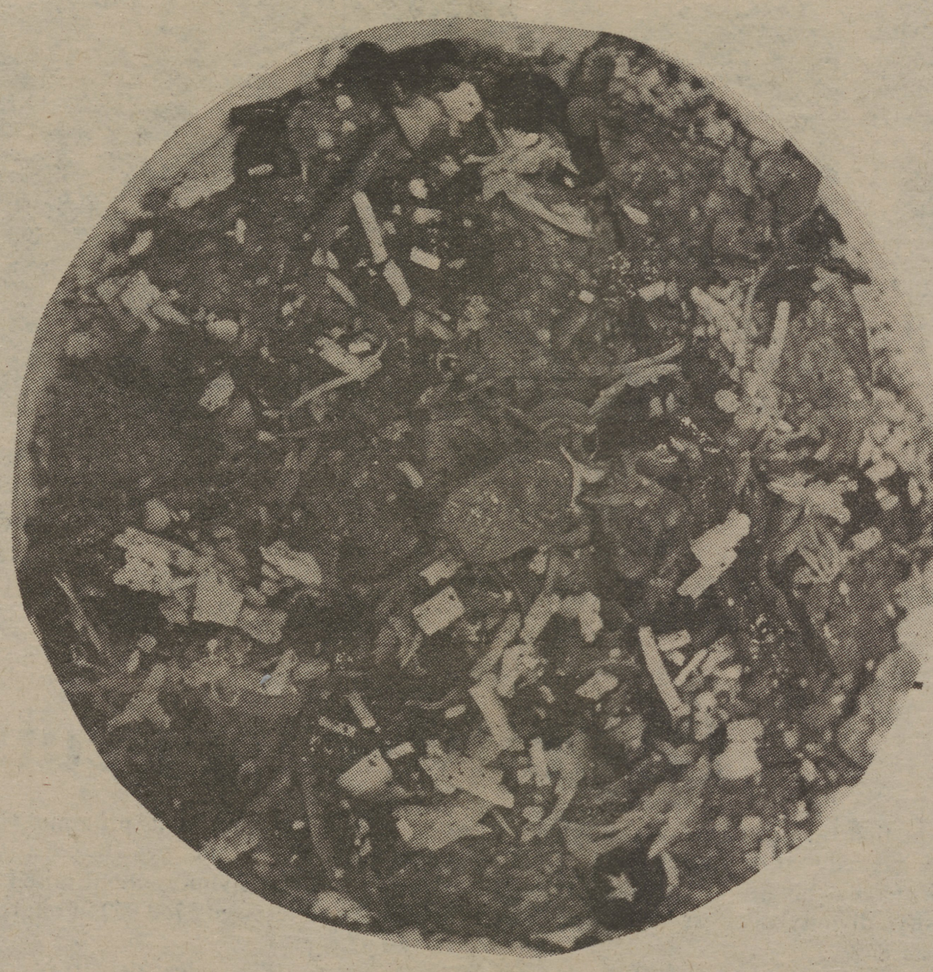
"We are really the only two American schools that offer engineering in a primarily liberal arts atmosphere."

Female enrollment at the nation's most prestigious technological school, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, stands at a mere 18 percent.

Doonesbury By G.B. Trudeau



PIZZA!
PIZZA!
PIZZA!
PIZZA!
PIZZA!
PIZZA!
PIZZA!
PIZZA!



EAT IN OR HAVE IT DELIVERED!
SUB STATION II
© SUB STATION II, 1978
"The South's Most Savory Sandwich"
327-0242
327-0242

AGRARIANS 50 Years Later

Background of book subject of Agrarian symposium

Vanderbilt's symposium, "I'll Take My Stand: Fifty Years After" opened yesterday with two lectures providing a background to the book written by the Agrarians in 1930.

Charles Roland, alumni distinguished professor of history at the University of Kentucky, spoke on the historical and cultural South in which the book was written.

John Shelton Reed then identified various elements of the Agrarian movement which place it in a nationalist political tradition. Reed is professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The South of the 1920s was, according to Roland, "an enigma, in and of the United States, but distinct from it at the same time." Southerners, he added, knew that their history was distinct from that of the rest of the country and that they were traditionally looked upon as the "poor cousins" of the affluent American society.

The South, at the time "I'll Take My Stand" was written, was a colonial economy that provided Northeastern industry with raw materials and cheap labor. Such a relationship, combined with the fact that the South was the most rural part of the country, to put the region far behind the rest of the nation economically as well as socially.

"The cultural characteristics that distinguished the South from the North were marked heavily by religious elements. Southern religion was dominated by a very real and personal God," noted Roland.

Other elements of Southern culture were bringing the region closer to the national mainstream. "New South" journalists and sociologists advocated economic imitation of Northern industry as the means to social and cultural advancement.

Concurrently, though, the South's national image emphasized the anti-modernist elements in Southern culture.

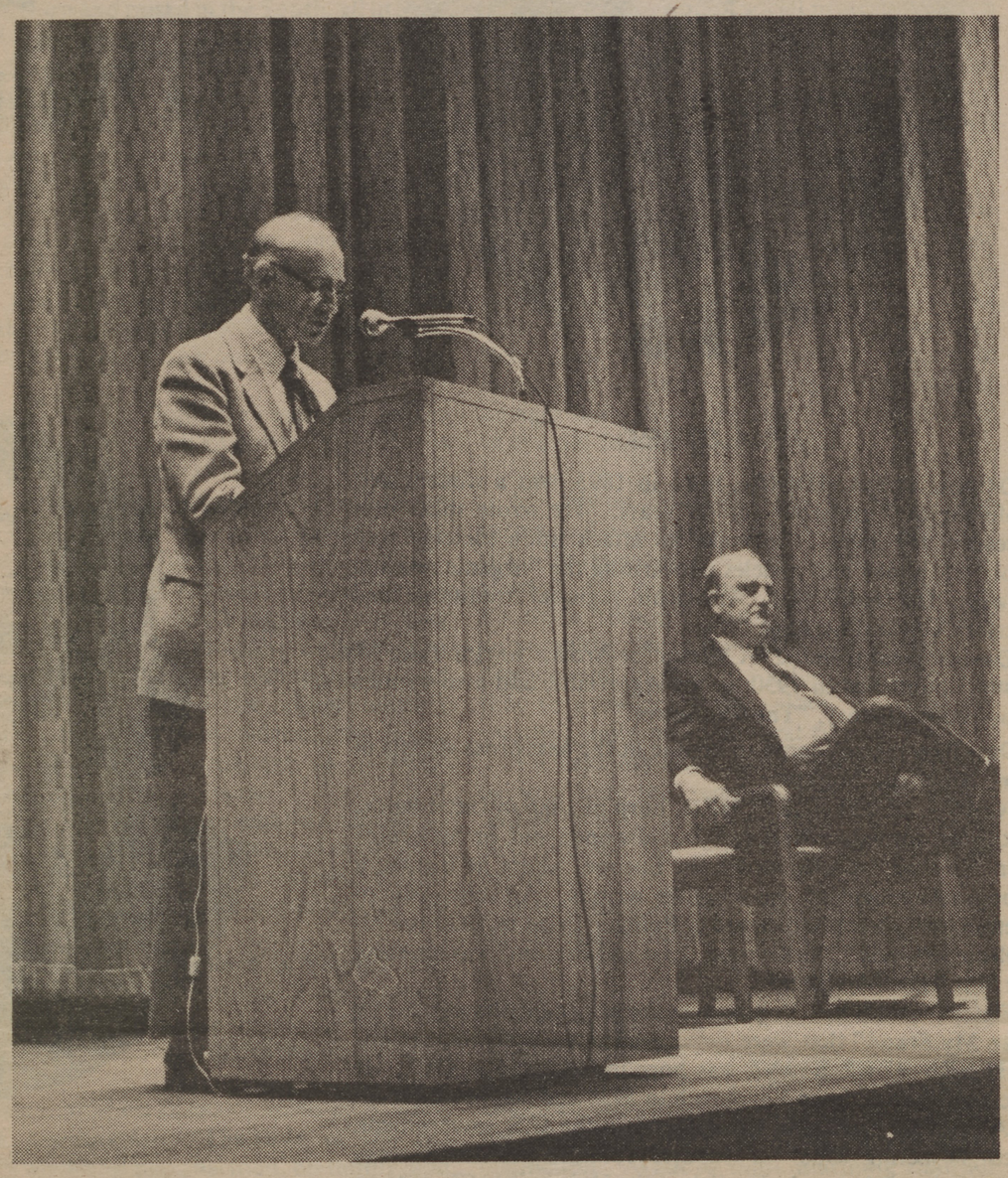
The Dayton, Tennessee "Monkey Trial," in which John T. Scopes was convicted of teaching Darwinian evolution rather than Biblical theories of creation, led journalists such as H.L. Mencken to heap derision upon the region.

"The cultural characteristics that distinguished the South from the North were marked heavily by religious elements. Southern religion was dominated by a very real and personal God."
— Charles Roland

In such a climate, "bearing the heavy burden of national scorn and realizing that some people were poised to have a national society at any cost to traditional values," as Roland said, "I'll Take My Stand" was written.

Reed's talk emphasized the political context in which the Agrarians' work can be seen.

Within its place in a nationalist political tradition, there were several specific goals and recommendations in "I'll Take My Stand," as each contributor sought a unique vision of what Reed called "the counter-myth."



Charles Roland, alumni distinguished professor of history at the University of Kentucky, spoke at the opening session of the Agrarian symposium "Fifty Years After" yesterday in Sarratt Cinema. Roland gave a lecture on the background of "I'll Take My Stand."

National media to cover symposium; Agrarians still cause stir with critics

By MARY BETH PENDLEY

It has been referred to as a gathering for the academic elite, but the Agrarian symposium this weekend is drawing a good deal of attention in the national press. Few books written 50 years ago still raise the eyebrows of both literary critics and the mass media.

The editor of the Sewanee Review in 1930 assailed the Gararian manifesto, "I'll Take My Stand," as "the most audacious book ever written by Southerners"; today's editors — local and national — find an equal amount of controversy "Fifty Years After."

The book, written in a period when "man was losing contact with the natural world, with aesthetic and religious reality," is summed up by Louis D. Rubin, Jr.: "the result (of industrialization) could only be dehumanizationos."

In today's technological world, writers and critics look to the three surviving Agrarians to determine if the Southerners' stance remains the same or if time and technology have forced the Agrarians to modify their views.

Melvin Mattocks, a freelance writer from Boston, has been hired by Time Magazine to find out what changes, if any, have occurred concerning the basic tenets of the Agrarian manifesto. Mattocks will cover the weekend symposium with Slick Lawson, a local photographer who is especially noted for his work with People Magazine.

"We've been in contact with quite a few people, but it's difficult to get a commitment from anybody," said Julie Cruz, the University's contact with public relations firm Holder-Kennedy.

The New York Times and The New Yorker seem interested in the symposium, but they have not yet made a commitment to cover the event.

"A lot of people seem very interested. We've been in touch with Newsweek, the Christian Science Monitor, the Wall Street Journal, the Nation, and Enquiry. We just worry that the symposium follows right on the heels of the election," Cruz said.

Both newspapers and the radio seem to be giving the symposium fair play, and Associated Press and the Mutual Broadcasting Network will conduct telephone interviews with Andrew Lytle, Lyle Lanier, and Robert Penn Warren to be released on radio shows around the country.

Local public radio station WPLN plans to air a one to two hour special on the Agrarians, put together by broadcaster Molly Howell.

"The program will definitely run in Nashville in about a month, and it's possible that it could run on National Public Radio, but that's not definite," Howell said.

Book editor of the Tennessean, Robert Wyatt, will cover "Fifty Years Later," though he questions the current importance of the symposium.

"I think there is good historical importance in the gathering of the Agrarians, but it is not a current movement, so it won't get the kind of coverage (contemporary authors) Tom Wolfe or Norman Mailer would get," Wyatt said.

"These people have been saying the same thing for the last 40 years," he commented.

Walter Sullivan, professor of English, and William Havard, professor of political science, co-directors of the symposium, invited "selective relatives and friends of the group," including authors such as Eudora Welty, Walker Percy, and Peter Taylor.

The symposium is a public event and there has been general publicity to make the event known locally, regionally and nationally.

"This is probably the most outstanding event of the year in literary circles," Sue Atkinson, another Holder-Kennedy official, said.

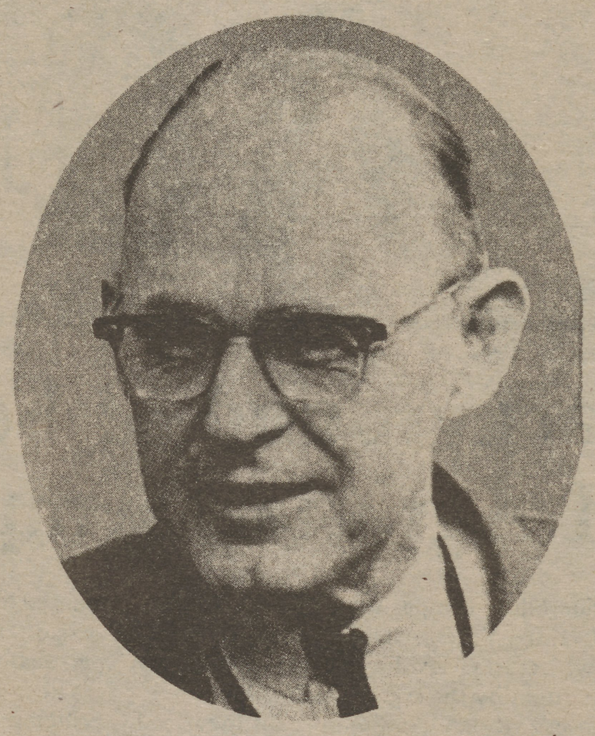
C. Vann Woodward, noted Yale historian and frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books, plans to attend the symposium and may possibly cover the event.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

TODAY
Sarratt Cinema, 2 p.m.
Walter Sullivan, presiding
Louis Rubin, "The Literary Background of 'I'll Take My Stand'"
George Core, "The Influence of the Agrarians on Literary Criticism"
Louise Cowan, response

TOMORROW
Underwood Auditorium, 9:30 a.m.
Rob Roy Purdy, presiding
Lyle Lanier, Andrew Lytle and Robert Penn Warren
Panel discussion on "The Agrarian-Industrial Metaphor: Culture, Economics and Society in a Technological Age"
Emmett Fields, closing remarks

Twelve Southerners and Their Lives



Lyle Lanier

DONALD DAVIDSON, born in 1893, was a student and professor at Vanderbilt for 50 years. He wrote that "it is necessary for poets ... to make an attack upon society," and wrote textbooks and articles concerning the "organic relation between the individual, American regional tradition, and Western cultural heritage."

Davidson contributed "A Mirror for Artists" to **"I'll Take My Stand,"** published in 1930 by the Agrarians, and also wrote a two-volume history, **"The Tennessee."**

Davidson is considered to be one of the best prose stylists in all of American literature.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER, born in 1886 in Little Rock, Arkansas, attended Harvard, but dropped out in his senior year. He then traveled widely in Europe, where he formed a strong attachment to the Fugitive writers. An innovator of poetic style, Fletcher recieved a Pulitzer Prize in 1938 for his "Selected Poems." "Education, Past and Present" was his essay for **"I'll Take My Stand."**

Fletcher and Stark Young were the only contributors to **"I'll Take My Stand"** that were never associated with Vanderbilt.

HENRY BLUE KLINE was born in Nashville in 1905. He received his B.A. from Vanderbilt in 1928 and stayed on for his M.A. in 1929. He held several jobs in the U.S. government, once as acting chief of reports for the Atomic Energy Commission. He taught English at the University of Tennessee for 10 years and wrote for the Tennessee Valley Authority. His essay in **"I'll Take My Stand"** was "William Remington: A Study in Individualism." He died in Washington, D.C. in 1951.

LYLE LANIER was born in Madison County, Tennessee in 1903. He graduated from Vanderbilt in 1923 with a B.A. and attended George Peabody College for Teachers for his M.A. From 1928 to 1938 he was an assistant professor of psychology at Vanderbilt and was the editor of "Psychological Bulletin" from 1947 to 1952. His contribution to **"I'll Take My Stand"** was the essay "A Critique of the Philosophy of Progress."

The essay ends by Lanier defining Agrarianism:

"This program is not concieved in a spirit of pathological regression to the past, stimulated by repugnance toward contemporary conditions; it is the definition of a concrete social aim. The instrumentalities of intelligent political leadership, informed social science, and a definitive social philosophy could have no more important problem than that of trying to effect a synthesis, in some sense, of the unified manner of living inherent in the agrarian family and community with the energy and inventiveness which have been diverted into industrialism."

Born in 1902 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, **ANDREW LYTLE** graduated from Vanderbilt in 1922. He was the editor of the Sewanee Review from 1941 to 1942. He wrote "The Hind Teat" for **"I'll Take My Stand"**

Lytle has most recently published "~~Reflections~~ of a ~~Ghost~~," containing an echo of the Agrarian theme with "I can't believe any society is strong which holds physical comfort as its quest."

Lytle is well-known as a good storyteller. **"The Long Night"** and **"The Velvet Horn,"** two of his novels, are thought to be masterpieces of the narrative form.

FRANK LAWRENCE OWSLEY, born in 1890, was assistant professor of history at Vanderbilt from 1920 to 1924.

Robert Penn Warren

After receiving his Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Chicago, Owsley returned as an associate professor of history at Vanderbilt from 1924 to 1927, professor of history from 1927 to 1949.

Owsley felt that agrarianism permitted "art, music, and literature to emerge from the dark, cramped holes were industrialization, in insecurity and insensitiveness, have often driven them."

Owsley wrote several books on Southern tradition, including **"Plain Folk of the Old South"** in 1949, **"State's Rights in the Confederacy"** in 1925, and **"King Cotton Diplomacy"** in 1931. Owsley also wrote a series of essays called "The Pillars of Agrarianism."

JOHN CROWE RANSOM, born in 1888, received his B.A. from Vanderbilt in 1909 and was a member of the Vanderbilt English Department until 1937, when he became editor of the Kenyon Review. As a poet, teacher, critic and editor, Ransom had the reputation of being one of the most significant poets of his generation.

In 1930 Ransom wrote **"God Without Thunder,"** a book that showed his belief in the "mythic" way in which man should regard nature, and that God is "possible in an agrarian society." In **"The World's Body"** (1938), Ransom attacks science, saying "what we don't know as scientists is the world which is made of whole and indefeasible objects, and this is the world which poetry recovers for us."

Ransom also wrote essays that show his interest in economic and social issues. Some of these are "The South Defends Its Heritage" and "The Aesthetics of Regionalism."

HERMAN CLARENCE NIXON was never as active a member in the Agrarian group as was John Crowe Ransom,

Andrew Lytle

Davidson or Allen Tate. Though absent during much of the agrarian interval, Nixon was well-informed on the economic background of Southern problems. He wrote books such as **"Forty Acres"** and **"Steel Mules"** and **"Lower Piedmont Country"** that were socio-economic-political studies including interpretations of the rural and village South. His book, **"Possum Trot,"** was a plea for social planning in the South.

Nixon taught history at Vanderbilt from 1925 to 1928 and returned in 1940 after receiving his doctorate from the University of Chicago, retiring from Vanderbilt in 1955.

Nixon was director of the New Deal Louisiana Rural Rehabilitation Corporation and chairman of the Southern Policy Commission in 1935. He also lobbied in Washington for farm tenant legislation.

ALLEN TATE believed in the superiority of an "organic, agrarian Southern culture" over a fragmented Northern society. He wrote such poems as "Ode to the Confederate Dead" and "The Mediterranean," and published his **"Collected Essays"** in 1959, a book that exhibits his commitment to "absolute" standards and his attack on "scientism."

Tate emphasized a great concern for the decline of religious humanism in modern society; "the social structure of the South began grieviously to break down two generations after the Civil War; for the social structure depends on the economic structure, and economic conviction is the secular image of religion," wrote Tate.

JOHN DONALD WADE, born in 1892, joined the Vanderbilt English Department in 1928. Wade was a believer, as were the other Agrarians, in old Southern tradition: "My own conviction was that a remedy lay in our own tradition rather than in socialism." In 1924 he wrote **"Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, A Study in the Development of Culture in the South."**

Between 1930 and 1940, Wade wrote many critical essays on Southern culture and literary figures. In 1944 he founded the Marshallville Foundation to support the arts and culture in Georgia, his native state.

ROBERT PENN WARREN was born in 1905 in Guthrie, Kentucky. He graduated from Vanderbilt in 1925 with a B.A. and then went on to Berkely for his M.A., Yale for his Ph.D., and Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. His book, **"All the King's Men,"** won a Pulitzer Prize in 1946, and his collection of poetry, **"Promises: Poems 1954-1956,"** won him his second Pulitzer in 1957. He founded the Southern Review with Cleanth Brooks, with whom he collaborated to produce two widely-used

STARK YOUNG was born in Como, Mississippi in 1881. He attended the University of Mississippi and Columbia University. Young became a drama critic and playwright, and served as a critic and writer for The New Era. During his years with the magazine he contributed more than 500 articles, reviews and essays. "Not in Memoriam, but in Defense" was his contribution to **"I'll Take My Stand."**

"If a community, or a section, or a race, or an age, is groaning under industrialism, and well aware that it is an evil dispensation, it must find the way to throw it off. To think that this cannot be done is pusillanimous. And if the whole community, section, race or age thinks it cannot be done, then it has simply lost its political genius and doomed itself to impotence." By Twelve Southerners

1930: 'I'll Take My Stand' gets mixed reviews

By PAUL KINGSBURY

When "I'll Take My Stand" first hit the bookshelves in the winter of 1930-31, it was not unanimously hailed as a masterpiece of modern Southern thought. Indeed, in several book reviews, apparently not meriiting singular treatment, it shared billing with other new books on the subject of the South and its problems.

And on those few occasions when the tome was alone in the spotlight, it was often given the third degree, as if the reviewers were waiting for a confession of general foolishness from the Agrarians.

One of the gentlest indictments of the work was its first in the Nov. 17, 1930 edition of The Tennessean. There, Nashvillian James I. Finney, in a review bloated with tedious political rhetoric, summarily praised the book as a "sincere and emphatic" protest "against the tendencies in a material age," yet quarrelled with the authors' choice of timing their protest.

In Finney's opinion, the time to take a stand was during the bitter days of Reconstruction, not during the thoroughly industrial 30s, when the South had already become acclimated to and entrenched in industry. In the rest of his review, Finney did not dwell on his quarrels with the book, perhaps because he was writing under the eye of a book review editor who had a vested interest in the book: one of the twelve, John Davidson. He instead soliloquized on the state of the South in an abstract and distracted manner.

It is interesting to note, though, that Finney did work up just a little bit of enthusiasm for one article: "A Mirror for Artists."

Of this selection, Finney burbled effusively that "this essay evinces long and conscientious study, the most serious contemplation and, without any implication that the other articles do not have that merit, there is a depth of conviction running through its every line that must command the respect of even those who do not share its conclusion." Davidson wrote the article that received this praise.

The critics in national magazines and journals had less muffled differences of opinion with the Agrarians. In Nation, author, editor and tennis afficiando Henry Hazlitt began his essay, "So Did King Canute," amicably enough, allowing that the Agrarians' "pleas for that cause are eloquent and touching, and recall much that was gracious, and even precious in the Southern ways and values that now seem forever doomed to defeat."

But midway through his essay, Hazlitt dispensed with token praise for the sake of professional courtesy and aired his gripes with a vengeance, concluding that "in short, the real objection to the ideals of these typewriter agrarians is not that these ideals are quixotic or visionary, but that they are stupid. Our aim must be to humanize industry, not to exterminate it."

The scourge of Babbitry, H.L. Mencken, had similarly scanty praises and major criticisms for "I'll Take My Stand" in the review column of his magazine, American Mercury.

"They all seem to be intelligent and earnest fellows, and they have produced a book which deserves attention," Mencken said. "It is full of defects, but all the same it reveals a free and bold spirit, and that is surely something."

However, Mencken was quick to add that although the state of affairs in the South in 1930 was "a sad picture ... I have some doubt that it is really as sad as the twelve elegists seem to think, nor do they convince me that a return to an 'agrarian, conservative and anti-industrial' civilization would materially improve it... What the South needs is not fashioners of utopias, but leaders who are competent and ready to grapple things as they are.

"The present authors," Mencken wrote, "for all their sincerity, show in their own persons most of the worst weaknesses that now afflict their homeland. There is something dreadfully literary and pedagogical about their whole discussion.

"The present book, as I have hinted, has some merit, but it is largely a kind of merit that belongs to the cloister. The factitious, drug-storish superiority of the professional pedagogue hangs about it."

Southerner Gerald W. Johnson was even less circumspect than his northern colleagues in his appraisal of the book in Harper's; he blasted the book and the authors without reservation:

"At first blush it seems incredible that twelve men, all born and raised in the South, all literate and of legal age, could preach such a doctrine without once thrusting the tongue in cheek or winking the other eye. Not only have these done so, but here and there all over the South others are arising, usually — to do them justice — very young men, to assert that industrialism ... has been the damnation of Dixie.

"Of such a philosophy one can only say that it smells horribly of the lamp, that it was library-born and library-bred, and will perish miserably if it is ever exposed for ten minutes to the direct rays of the sun out in the daylight of reality.

"It is part of the Southern credo that before the war we possessed a civilization which was one of the ornaments of the world. This is, of course, sentimental tommyrot. Our civilization at that time was based on human slavery, which is to say, it was economically rotten.

"It was so rotten," Johnson wrote, "that, in fact, it was swiftly crumbling into ruin long before the blast of war struck it. And when the war came, the fact that, although she had magnificent troops and the ablest military leadership ever known in America, the South lost the decision, is eloquent of a feeble economic and social structure."

While in most cases journalists tended to lambast the book as the impractical musings of the closet Quixotes, academic reviewers tended to have considerably more sympathy for the work.

In the Yale Review, Ullrich B. Phillips, then professor of American history at Yale, crooned: "In Dixie land twelve take their stand and shed their ink for Dixie. In a single volume they do it very well."

He then went on to make much of Andrew Lytle's contribution: "The tale of the old fellow's work and play, his food, his family, and his critters exalts the sturdy yeoman's way of life, and it strongly smacks of the soil.

"The other essays of J.C. Ransom, Donald Davidson, F.L. Owsley, Allen Tate, J.D. Wade and the rest do not smell of the lamp overmuch. The book on the whole is an interpretation and advocacy of the historic Southern scheme of life to be reckoned with by any student of America."

Praise for "I'll Take My Stand" also appeared in the Saturday Review of Literature from the pen of the editor of the Sewanee Review, W.S. Knickerbocker, who gushed:

"This symposium is the most audacious book ever written by Southerners. Important as a vigorous declaration of social protest, it is even more important as a prescription for current economic evils. Its earnest, intelligent treatment of profound questions, its note of determined conviction, touched with emotional zeal, will make it an exciting experience for Southerners and non-Southerners alike.

"The superficial reader may regard it as the swan song of the Old South; the more excitable reader may suppose that it marks the re-opening of the Civil War; but the calmer reader will see in it the newest phase of Reconstruction: reconstruction of the entire framework of American society on the basis of an agrarian policy suggested by the small farm of the old Middle South."

As early as 1930, "I'll Take My Stand" was earmarked as a text to excite academicians and tickle pragmatists. As the clerisy so rightly averred, the book had a major impact on Southern thought, particularly in university communities, for it reminded Southerners just how ephemeral their old values could be, and that to squander those values, for whatever reasons, could mean cultural suicide.

"I'll Take My Stand" may have been a factor in preventing that senseless waste, although it had little effect on the political and economic structure of the South, as journalists as predicted.

In the New York Times Book Review in 1930, Arthur Krock closed his noncommittal review of "I'll Take My Stand" rather flippantly, saying that he "would like timidly to point out to the Twelve that, if Southern culture and tradition assay to a fraction of the estimate, and if Southern people are really as individual as described, industrialization will be absorbed by the South without a loss of sectional distinction. What is more alarming than all this, to the oversigned, is that Southern audiences in town, city and at the forks of the creek, enjoy the shoddiest movies precisely as do audiences in Lowell, Mass., Herrin, Ill., or in the Bronx, N.Y."

MASQUERADER

The cover of the December 1933 Masquerader caricatures Donald Davidson, Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom as "three little Agrarians in their chosen element."

Publication features poets; magazine unmasks 'Agrarians'

On April 18, 1930, The Hustler carried a small notice at the bottom of the front page that a book on the South was forthcoming, to be written by a group of Southern men of letters. "The central idea is a return to the South's agrarian heritage," reported The Hustler.

The paper did not review the book when it was published, and no article ever appeared concerning the authors of "I'll Take My Stand."

But in 1933, The Vanderbilt Masquerader, a precursor to today's Versus, devoted an entire issue to the Agrarians, Fugitives and "younger poets."

Gaston Werm, a caricaturist who lived in Nashville at the height of the Agrarian movement, contributed a cartoon that became the cover of the December 1933 Masquerader.

The scroll in the left-hand corner of the page describes the caricature of Donald Davidson, Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom; "Here we have three little Agrarians in their chosen element. By the happiest accident the Tree of Civilization grows in their orchard; but alas! it has vermiculated."

An article called "Agrarians in Wonderland" likened the idealists to Alice.

"It's this way," said the Hatter, pouring himself a second cup of tea. "Our farmers produce too much wheat, our factories too many manufactured articles, our machinists too many machines. We're so efficient that we're miserable. Surely you understand that?"

"I'm afraid I don't," said Alice, "for if there's plenty of food and other things, everybody should be comfortable." And the rational Alice dismisses the matter with a shrug.

In the simple clarity of her anlysis, Alice is supported by a formidable group of equally logical individuals, the Agrarians, the Masquerader proclaimed.

The issue contained "campus quotables" of the Agrarians.

John Donald Wade, "in a classroom bull session," is reported to have said, "Sometimes I feel a sort of ecstatic exaltation at the thought of my kinship with the fish." The Scopes trial had taken place seven years before.

John Gould Fletcher, "in autobiographical lecture, locally," said, "I am the greatest poet in Arkansas."

Edwin Mims, "advocate of the Advancing South, in the hotbed of Agrarianism," said, "Like Brer Rabbit, I was born and bred in the briarpatch and the main source of my happiness has been to teach Southern youth for 30 years."

In a Western Union telegram addressed to Masquerader editor Jack Harris and signed "Louis Untermeyer," the Fugitives and Agrarians received this praise: "undoubtedly John Crowe Ransom is a powerful and convicning dialectician, Donald Davidson a fighting Agrarian, Allen Tate the most brilliant of younger critics, and Merrill Moore the richest and most spontaneous of improvisers."

The combination of dry wit and serious poetry rounded out the issue devoted to poets.

In 1956, the Fugitives held a reunion. The group of poets included four men who also belonged to the Agrarians. Pictured left to right are Allen Tate, Merrill Moore (Fugitive only), Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, and Donald Davidson. The photograph was made at the home of Jesse Wills, a fellow Fugitive.

Agrarians here...

(From page 1)

ways," Havard said. "With the Fugitives, the Agrarians were key parts of the Southern literary renaissance.

"Aside from the New England Transcendentalists of the 19th Century, the Southern literary renaissance of the 20th Century is the most major development in the history of the arts and literature in the United States. It is amazing that the movement came out of a small provincial university," Havard said. "It just happened that genius came together."

Havard also said the movement is important because "it didn't transform or put programs into effect, but the pertinence of the book to America's problems today is the same as when it was written. Some of the essays read as though they were written yesterday."

Yesterday's session featured two presentations focusing on the historical background of the book and the importance of a Southern identity. (See story on page 1A). Charles Roland, professor of history at the University of Kentucky, and John Shelton Reed, professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina, read papers on the subject.

Chancellor Alexander Heard and B.J. Stiles, director of State Programs for the National Endowment for the Humanities, gave welcoming addresses.

The symposium is financed by the NEH, the chancellor and the University.

This morning's session focused on the importance of "I'll Take My Stand" in the realm of letters in a paper read by Lewis Simpson, professor of English at Louisiana State University. Robert Heilman, emeritus professor of English at the University of Washington, presented a paper on the Agrarian movement's relations to European culture.

The literary background of the book and its influence on literary criticism makes up this afternoon's session. Louis Rubin, professor of English at the University of North Carolina, will speak, and George Core, editor of the Sewanee Review, will present a paper in Sarratt Cinema.

This afternoon's session is followed by a wine and cheese reception for English majors and participants in the symposium. The gathering at the afternoon session is invited to the reception.

"This is primarily our arrangement for interested students," Havard said. "This is a public event, but we wanted to encourage students to take advantage of the program," he said.

Following each session, excluding this afternoon's, is a roundtable discussion with the men who presented the papers. "We want public involvement. We want to know the conceptions people now have toward the Agrarians," Havard said.

Tomorrow morning's sessions will be held in Underwood, with several other rooms in the law school set aside for overflow. Warren has spoken in Underwood before, so the overflow has been anticipated and taken care of with audio and possibly visual coverage for those who are unable to get a seat in the auditorium for the 9:30 session.

Brooks, who is moderator of the discussion, was the moderator at the 1956 reunion of the Fugitives.

Although he is not an Agrarian, Brooks was an undergraduate at Vanderbilt during the movement's greatest activity and was closely associated with the Agrarians. Brooks, along with eight Agrarians, published a follow-up book to "I'll Take My Stand" in 1936. "Who Owns America?" did not cause the stir throughout literary circles that the first book did.

Only a few seats will be reserved for distinguished guests, widows and families of the Agrarians, and friends and scholars associated with the men and the movement.

"I'm not sure how many we're saving," Havard said. "It will be a small number, perhaps 50 to 75 for people who really need to be there; we're not depriving the public."

Agrarian tradition maintained in English dept.

By SIDNEY ANDERSON

Allen Tate always said that the University owed him lots of money because every time he lectured, Vanderbilt was mentioned.

The publicity that all of the Agrarians, including the three surviving ones, have given Vanderbilt in the past 50 years is manifested in the excellent reputation of the English department nationwide.

The English department may have "more reflected glory from the Fugitives than the Agrarians, but the University as a whole is more widely known for the Agrarians than the Fugitives," Walter Sullivan, professor of English and co-director of the Agrarian symposium, said.

"The tradition established by the Fugitives and Agrarians has helped give Vanderbilt a productive English department," Sullivan said. "They set up a standard; you come to this department and you are expected to write and publish," he said. "This was true long before 'publish or perish' became a threat at other universities. There is no threat of perishing because we have always published."

The reputation the Agrarians established has helped in hiring faculty and attracting students, in addition to providing a core of loyal alumni who return to Vanderbilt to perform and visit when they won't go to other institutions," Sullivan said.

"The Agrarians gave momentum ... it's almost mystic," Sullivan said. Besides having a faculty that regularly publishes, "we turn out regularly publishing writers, fine prolific writers.

"The rich literary tradition of the Agrarians and Fugitives has been maintained. It's a living tradition, and for so small a department in a school this size, we have had more than our share of publishing writers," Sullivan said.

"There hasn't been any movement or consertive effort since the Agrarians; various people are doing various things, but this was true at the time of the Agrarians, too.

"There was a healthy, intellectual tension, a dialectic operating then as there is now. It's operating here. A department is dead without such tension."

During the Agrarian era, Edwin Mims, professor of English for more than 30 years, and Chancellor James Kirkland were intensely opposed to the Agrarians. "The Agrarians ran counter to the prevailing spirit of Vanderbilt in 1930," Sullivan said. "Mims was philosophically liberal and believed in the New South, a South saved by technology, industry, and he had the faith in the doctrine of progress.

"Kirkland responded to the Scopes trial by insisting that Vanderbilt build new laboratories. There was disagreement. The administration said progress, and the Agrarians took the stand on the other side," Sullivan said.

Every generation of professors here has had brilliant scholars, Sullivan noted, citing Walter Curry, a nationally-known medieval scholar; Richmond Beatty, who wrote several critical biographies; and Claude Finney, who wrote a monumental biography of Keats.

Sullivan included several professors here now: Donald Daive is an internationally-known poet; Jack Aden, James Kilroy, Roy Gottfried are doing important work; and Sullivan himself has a short story included in the O'Henry Best Short Stories of 1980 collection.

Library collection 'preserves' Agrarians

By ANN ROBISON

Robert Penn Warren turned down a teaching position at the University of Southern California because it required teaching "four freshman courses in composition," a task which Warren writes he "could not face despite a generous salary."

The original manuscript of "I'll Take My Stand" featured an essay entitled "The Negro and the Agrarian Community," which was later changed to "The Briar Patch," a less controversial title.

These facts and more can be found in the Jesse E. Wills Fugitive/Agrarian Collection located in the Vanderbilt Archives.

The Wills Collection, which opened in 1969, is the result of collaboration of many interested contributors, but was made possible especially by Jesse Wills, chairman of the Library Board of Trust from 1967 to 1976 and a Fugitive himself.

Wills had worked earlier with Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson and John Crowe Ransom, the four Fugitives who also were associated with the Agrarian movement.

When he was asked to help in the planning of the Fugitive Reunion of 1956, Wills' interest in his poetry was rekindled, as was his interest in the Fugitive/Agrarian movement at Vanderbilt in general.

Therefore, when an addition was planned for JUL in the late 1960s, Wills, along with others, saw that a Fugitive/Agrarian area was built into the plans. Wills himself took the trouble to procure the photographic portraits of the twelve Agrarians (Tate, Warren, Davidson, Ransom, Frank Lawrence Owsley, John Gould Fletcher, Lyle H. Lanier, Herman Clarence Nixon, Andrew Lytle, John Donald Wade, Henry Blue Kline, and Stark Young), which cover the main wall of the entrance area.

The manuscripts which compose the collection are a combination of donations and purchases. Many of the first documents and books were bought from the public library which had been the receptical for such items when Vanderbilt did not have the space for them.

The original manuscripts of "I'll Take My Stand" are, perhaps, the most significantly valuable items in the collection, and they were purchased from the library in this initial endowment.

Today the collection contains 600-700 published volumes. Personal letters, original manuscripts, first edition books, other books and 150 doctoral dissertations on the subject are included.

The items are separated by authors and, as an example of how much material has been collected from each Fugitive and Agrarian, the papers of Donald Davidson alone take up 14 linear feet.

The massive interest in the Fugitive/Agrarian movement, as attested to by the 150 dissertations, is a result of what curator Maurice Wolfe describes as "an inane interest" in the simple, agrarian way of life proposed. There are dissertations from around the world. Japan, France, and Britain have each shown an interest in the subject and the collection.

Wolfe described a recent visit to the collection by a Japanese group — one member of the tour took pictures of everything on the walls and in the cases.

The most recent contribution is from the Friends of the Library who designated $20,000 to fill out the book collection. As a result, the Wills Collection boasts of having every book-length work by the Fugitive/Agrarian group. Future plans look toward enhancing the collection's holdings of anthologized materials, but Wolfe said that there is still a long way to go toward that end.

The collection is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and is located in the addition in front of JUL on 21st Avenue South. The cases, which contain old letters and manuscripts, and the photographs which line the walls, make a visit well worth the time of anyone interested in this aspect of Vanderbilt's past.