

Yale University Library  
Yale Divinity Library

# Guide to the Sewanee Controversy Papers

RG 186



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2002

409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 432-5301

[divinity.library@yale.edu](mailto:divinity.library@yale.edu)

<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Yale Divinity Library  
409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 432-5301  
divinity.library@yale.edu  
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

**CALL NUMBER:** RG 186

**TITLE:** Sewanee Controversy Papers

**DATES:** 1867-1988

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2 linear feet (4 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Sewanee Controversy Papers include the official documents surrounding the event, as well as personal correspondence and collected material. From 1952 to 1954 there was great controversy over the admission policies of the School of Theology at the University of the South at Sewanee, an Episcopal Seminary. On June 6, 1952, the Board of Trustees rejected a request by the Synod of the Fourth Province to "open the existing seminaries in the South to students of all races." The Board of Trustees concluded that "the admission of Negroes, or men of any other race...is inadvisable." This resolution sparked a flurry of responses, most notably the resignation of eight faculty members in protest. In June 1953, the Board of Trustees voted to change its policy.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.186>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.186>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box  
f. folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of R. Lansing Hicks.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Preferred Citation

Sewanee Controversy Papers (RG 186), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Date	Event
1950, Jan 25	○ Francis Craighill Brown installed as Dean of the School of Theology at the University of the South (Sewanee)
1952, June	○ Sewanee Board of Trustees rejects proposal to admit African American students. Eight faculty members protest, threatening to resign by June, 1953, unless the decision is overturned.
1952, November	○ The eight faculty members resign, effective June, 1953.
1953, January	○ Bishop Daindrige is elected Sewanee's new dean, 4 other new faculty members are appointed
1953, February	○ Rev. Dr. James Pike declines to speak at Sewanee's graduation ceremony because of its admission policies.
1953, June	○ Board of Trustees votes to disregard race in considering applicants. First African-American student is admitted at Sewanee.

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## Scope and Contents

The Papers include the official documents surrounding the controversy, as well as personal correspondence and collected material. The material dates primarily from 1952 to 1954, although there is some material from before and after that timeframe. The collection provides valuable documentation of a specific instance of racial discrimination in the American South during the early 1950s.

Series I contains relevant official documents about the events including Proceedings and Reports of the Board of Trustees and Board of Regents, faculty responses, and other statements. It also includes documents that refer to the wider discussion of the controversy, including statements of support from universities and students, discussions of the issue, miscellaneous notes, and background. The papers address the controversy of 1952-1953 but also include papers about the following school year, including remarks by students. It also includes a few historical accounts, including a thorough history called the "Sewanee Story."

Series II contains relevant correspondence about the Sewanee events. The bulk of the correspondence was written to and from Dean F. Craighill Brown on behalf of the faculty. Most are letters of support. The response to some of the letters to Brown/faculty were written by other members of the faculty, notably R. Lansing Hicks (who was later on the faculty at Berkeley Divinity School and Yale Divinity School and from whom these papers were received by the Library.) Where possible and logical, the correspondence of specific individuals has been sorted out of this collection, including correspondence of Bishop R. Bland Mitchell, Morgan Cartledge Williams (a trustee), Vice-Chancellor McCrady, C.F. Peniman, and Bishop Edwin Penick. The responses of Members of the Board of Trustees in June and July of 1952 are separated out from the rest of the correspondence to Dean Brown. Series II also contains the correspondence of Professors R.Lansing Hicks, Richard Hooker Wilmer, and Thomas Govan, a professor of History at Sewanee. This series also contains letters of student support and correspondence about media coverage of the events.

Series III contains Collected Material from a variety of sources. Most of the articles/clippings were collected by R.Lansing Hicks and Dean F. Craighill Brown. They are in chronological order and span from 1950-1954. There are also complete journals and publications from the same time span, including the

*Episcopal Church News*, *The Living Church*, *The Sewanee Alumni News*, and *The Theo-log*. There is also a large article from the *New Oxford Review* about Bishop Pike from 1976.

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## **Arrangement**

- I. Documents, 1867-1988
- II. Correspondence, 1949-1954
- III. Collected Material, 1950-1976

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Documents, 1867-1988

b. 1, f. 1	Lambeth Conferences on Race; and Documents about racial issues at Sewanee predating June, 1952	1867-1948, 1952
b. 1, f. 2	Proceedings of the Board of Trustees, Board of Trustees Resolutions	1952, June 6
b. 1, f. 3	Faculty Response; Statement by Bishop Mitchell, Vice Chancellor McCrady's Response, Faculty Statement of Clarification	June 9-21
b. 1, f. 4	"Is There a Race Problem at the University of the South?" an open letter by Prof Kayden and responses	1952, June 18
b. 1, f. 5	"What is the Issue at Sewanee?"; notes on discrimination	1952
b. 1, f. 6	Board of Regents, reports	1952, July 31, Oct 8-10
b. 1, f. 7	Faculty resignation and related correspondence	1952, Oct
b. 1, f. 8	Recommendation of the 4th Province Synod and Vice Chancellor McCrady's response	1952, Nov
b. 1, f. 9	Statements of support from other colleges, seminaries and divinity schools.	1952, fall
b. 1, f. 10	Statements of student support	1952, fall
b. 1, f. 11	"The Troubles of Sewanee", Rev. Bayard H. Jones	
b. 1, f. 12	Report of the Special Committee of the Board of Trustees; Report of the Vice-Chancellor to the Board of Trustees	1953, May, June
b. 1, f. 13	"The Sewanee Story"	1953, March
b. 1, f. 14	Miscellaneous notes	
b. 1, f. 15	Milton Crum's notes on summer school of Theology; compilation of student/faculty impressions of Sewanee	1953, 1954
b. 1, f. 16	Sewanee Class roster	1953-1954
b. 1, f. 17	Proceedings of the Board of Trustees	1954, June
b. 1, f. 18	Action of the 140th Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina	1956, May 9
b. 1, f. 19	Letter with history from Wayne Holman to Hicks; "20th century witchhunt" by Francis Russell	1984, 1988
b. 1, f. 20	Information about the collection of the Sewanee papers	

**Series II: Correspondence, 1949-1954**

b. 2, f. 21	Correspondence of Dean F. Craighill Brown/Faculty	1952, June
b. 2, f. 22	Correspondence of Dean F. Craighill Brown/Faculty	1952, July–Oct
b. 2, f. 23	Correspondence of Dean F. Craighill Brown/Faculty with Trustees/Board of Regents	1952, June–Oct
b. 2, f. 24	Correspondence of Dean F. Craighill Brown/Faculty	1952, November
b. 2, f. 25	Correspondence of Dean F. Craighill Brown/Faculty	1952, Dec to 1953, Jan
b. 2, f. 26	Correspondence of Dean F. Craighill Brown/Faculty	1953, Feb–March
b. 2, f. 27	Correspondence of Dean F. Craighill Brown/Faculty	1953, April – 1954
b. 2, f. 28	Correspondence with Bishop R. Bland Mitchell	1952, June – 1953, Jan
b. 2, f. 29	Correspondence with Morgan Cartledge Williams (“Quill”), a trustee	1952, Oct–Dec
b. 2, f. 30	Correspondence between Dean F. Craighill Brown and Vice-Chancellor Ed McCrady	1952, Fall
b. 2, f. 31	Letter from Dean Pike to McCrady	1953, Feb 10
b. 2, f. 32	Correspondence between F.C. Brown, Arthur Walmsley and Dean McCrady	1953, March
b. 2, f. 33	Correspondence of C.F. Penniman	1952, Fall
b. 2, f. 34	Correspondence with Bishop Edwin Penick	
b. 2, f. 35	Correspondence re: journalism/articles	1949-1953
b. 2, f. 36	Letters of student support	
b. 3, f. 37	Correspondence of R. Lansing Hicks	1952, Jun–Oct
b. 3, f. 38	Correspondence of R. Lansing Hicks	1952, Nov –1954
b. 3, f. 39	Correspondence between C. Breck Wilmer, Professor Kayden, and Richard H. Wilmer	1952, Jun–Dec
b. 3, f. 40	Personal correspondence of R.H. Wilmer and Bishop Danridge	1952, June–Dec
b. 3, f. 41	Correspondence of Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer	1951 – June, 1952
b. 3, f. 42	Correspondence of Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer	1952, July–Dec
b. 3, f. 43	Correspondence of Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer	1953, Jan–1954
b. 3, f. 44	Letter from Thomas Govan (History professor) to Clifford Morehouse (editor of the Living Church and president of Morehouse–Gordham Public College)	1952, Nov
b. 3, f. 45	Biography of Thomas Govan	
b. 3, f. 46	Other miscellaneous correspondence	

**Series III: Collected Material, 1950-1976**

b. 4, f. 47	Articles	1950 – 1953, Feb
b. 4, f. 48	Articles	1953, Mar – 1954
b. 4, f. 49	Articles	
b. 4, f. 50	<i>The Episcopal Church News</i>	1952, Jun– 1953, Jun
b. 4, f. 51	<i>The Living Church</i>	1952, Jun– 1953, Feb
b. 4, f. 52	<i>Sewanee Alumni News</i>	1952, Aug– 1953, Aug
b. 4, f. 53	<i>The Theo-log</i>	1953, Mar–Dec
b. 4, f. 54	Article in the <i>New Oxford Review</i> : "The Death and Life of Bishop Pike"	1976
b. 4, f. 55	Miscellaneous collected material	



## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

African Americans -- Education (Higher)

### **Geographic Names**

United States -- Race relations

### **Corporate Bodies**

Episcopal Church (Education)

University of the South. School of Theology --  
History