

In the Time of Cheston

1951 to present

by Antonia Cuevas, Brent Hailes, Russ Marr,
James McGrory, & Nate Moss

The Man with a Plan: Charles E. Cheston

November 23, 1911 - September 15, 1997

Professor of Forestry & University Forester (1942-1977)

Surveyor, Developer, Cartographer,

Bulldozer Enthusiast

1955-56: Cheston attempted to get accreditation for the University's

Forestry Department - brought in the US Forestry Service

Cheston believed the University was "morally bound to harvest timber," it being irresponsible to have valuable forest assets & not utilize them.

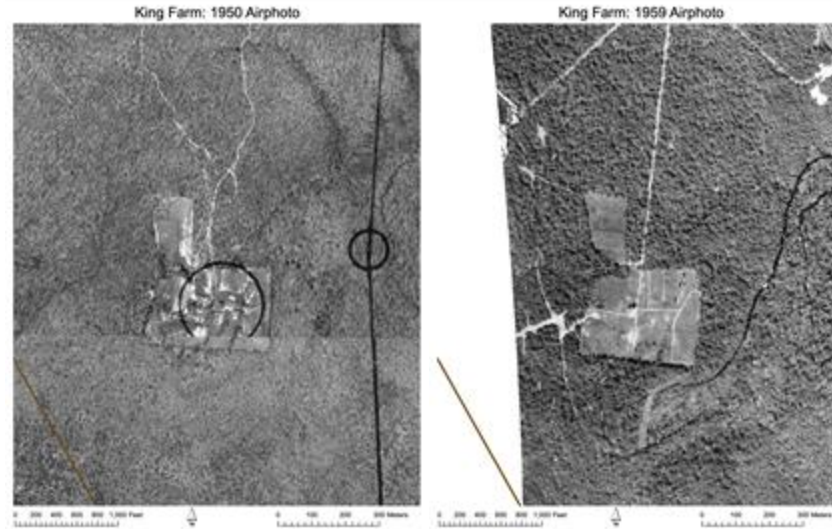
Trained his future foresters for natural resource management and industrial lumbering

"I like to see people go ahead and do things."

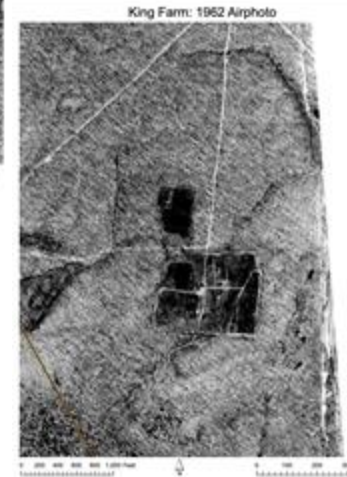


What Happened at the site in terms of human interaction with the land? What do we know about these individuals and the influences that drove their decision-making?

- Cheston did some clearing with a bulldozer at the KF between 1950 and 1959
- Attempted to make the area a wildlife improvement area as well as
- A pine plantation after the clearing showing up in 1962 on aerial image.



Aerial Images of King Farm in 1950, 1959, and 1962 showing clearing and pine plantation.



Between 1954 and 1958, two open areas in compartments 5 and 21, totaling 30 acres, will be planted with southern yellow and white pines. Wildlife habitat will be improved at the same time.

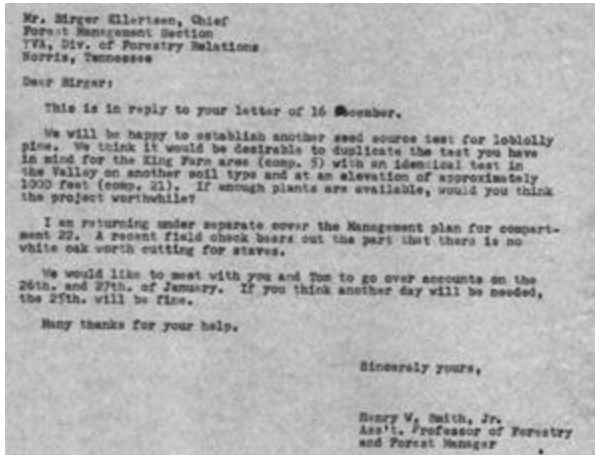
Picture of text from a document from Cheston talking about planting pine and making the area a wildlife management area

What Happened at the site in terms of human interaction with the land? What do we know about these individuals and the influences that drove their decision-making?

- This site was also used to dump trash along the road coming into the site.
- Pines not harvested from plantation
- Loblolly planted for seed source test



Picture of Pine still remaining at King Farm



Document of why loblolly pine was planted at the King Farm



Picture of post from some sort of study



Picture of bulldozer pile along road



Pictures of trash along road leading into our area of the king farm

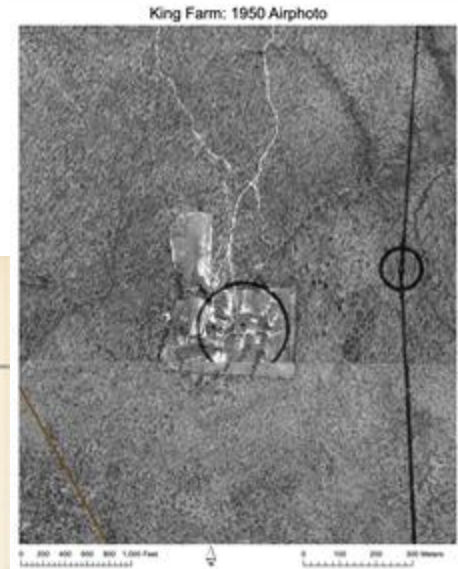


Why was this remote place chosen as a site for these different land-use in the Cheston Era (1950-Present)

- This site was already cleared from past land users when Cheston got to the site
- Sites that are already clear are desired for different reasons in terms of land-use
- The tenant lease was canceled in 1951 just 3 years after the 5 year lease was established.



Document of lease cancellation in 1951



Aerial Image of King Farm in 1951 showing the land was cleared when Cheston got there

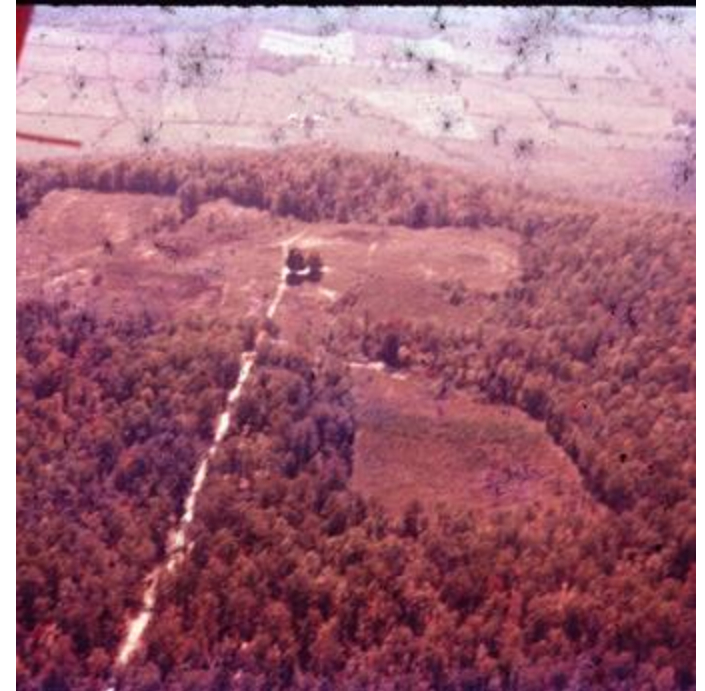
1952 Gailor Hall opened - dormitory & dining hall

Boarding houses being demolished



In each time period how was the KF location connected to the broader landscape through roads, railways, and commerce. Who were the nearest neighbors and what was their likely interaction?

- I 24 completion date (mid 60's), interstate killed small scale farming but allowed for larger scale production of timber to meet national demand
- Rail service no longer primary source of transportation
- Cheston bulldozes road to get to KF
- Extremely Isolated
- Most interactions are with the University
- Post WWII → 3 million people leave Appalachia
- Lack of jobs and education opportunities



What were the broader regional, national and international historical trends drivers of land-use decision-making in each period?

-In the early 1950s, farm consolidation was a significant trend. Many small-scale farms were no longer financially viable, and farmers were either selling their land or transitioning to new forms of land use.

-The interim Vice chancellor of the University Edward McCrady Facilitates the Lease of the King Farm ending and the land rights are turned over the University

- industrial forestry was becoming a key part of the U.S. economy, driven by the growth of the timber and paper industries

-The Southeast, including Tennessee, was a major hub for pine timber production. As the timber industry boomed in the 1950s, landowners began to see commercial pine plantations as an opportunity to capitalize on the increasing demand for timber products

- The university's land management decisions were shaped by both economic and ecological considerations, including a desire to make the land productive while also serving as a model for sustainable forestry and conservation.

-After World War II, the U.S. Especially the southern United states experienced a massive wave of suburbanization, with millions of people moving from urban centers to newly developed suburban areas. This Expansion of the suburbs only made the Demand for timber Products Higher



How were these different land-uses sustained given the location and poor soil conditions? How did each of the landowners make money from the land?

-Charles Cheston planted stands of Loblolly and White pines in the cleared area of the King farm , with the intent of harvesting it as Natural Resource as well as educating students on maintaining timber as a viable Natural Resource

- There were Economic incentives to Convert the farm from a subsistence farm to to the land use of Timber

-By the 1950s, the government was increasingly promoting professional forestry management, which included planting and maintaining timber stands for future harvest. The university already had a connection with the US Forest Service or state forestry departments to develop such plans, receiving subsidies or grants to offset the costs of planting and maintaining pine stands.

-In the Early 1980s the Cumberland plateau became victim to a Large infestation of the southern Pine Bark beetle

-the southern Pine Bark Beetle decimates the Pine population on the plateau and renders a high percentage of the King farms Pines as unusable

- Specifically the white pines on the farm however were generally less susceptible to the pine bark beetle so the white Pines that were plantes still would have likely been Completely Useable timber but yet were still not harvested

-Whilst the University foresters had no way of predicting the the infestation of The pine bark beetle it is clear that the priorities of the Institution have changed after Charles Cheston Retires in 1977

-None of the Cheston Planted pines Have Ever been Harvested on the King Farm



Then and Now

How is the current forest community a product of the ecological legacies generated by this land use history?

Then

- - Cropland
- - Pasture
- - Kitchen Garden
- - Dumpsite
- - **Wildlife area**
- - **Pine Plantation**



Now

- - Abandoned Pine Plantation
- - Abandoned Dumpsite
- - Campsite

The image depicts a road separating a pine plantation on the left and a mature upland hardwood forest on the right.

Ecological Legacies

How is the current forest community a product of the ecological legacies generated by this land use history?



- Soil nutrients have not returned to their pre-agricultural concentrations which could contribute to the unique assemblage of species as well as the density and richness inside the farm.
- Pine trees were never cut leading them to slowly spread around the property through wind blown seed dispersal. Pink lady slippers are only present due to the planting of pine.
- Disturbance indicators such as tulip poplar and red maple are found in abandoned agricultural sites but in low abundance or not at all in non-agricultural sites.
- Chinquapin Oak were only able to colonize due to Blue Jay dispersal during the time of clearing and the calcium soil ammendments.
- Charles Cheston reintroduces deer in the late 40s early 50s.

Figure 4. Plots depicting land use during the King Family era. Soil calcium pH and magnesium are also included (Block 2013).