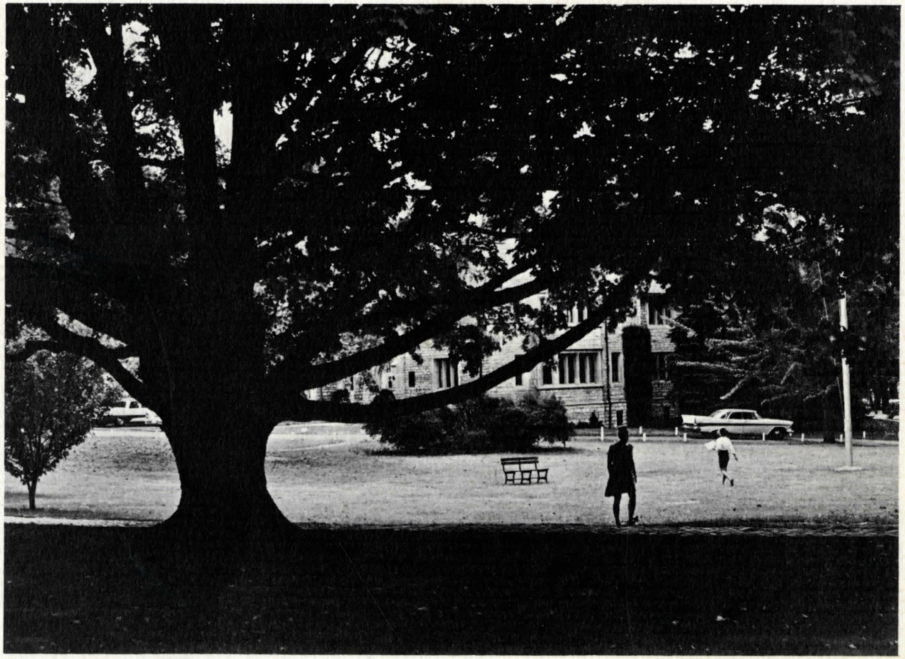
Trees on the Wilson Campus



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While the appearance of its grounds may not have any demonstrable effect on the quality of an institution's educational activities, there can be little doubt that attractive surroundings make the academic life more pleasant. In this respect Wilson College is particularly fortunate. Its campus is both spacious and beautiful, and much of its beauty is due to the selection and care given the College plantings. These plantings, especially the many trees, provide an appropriate setting for collegiate work in each season of the year.

For convenience, the campus may be divided into three general areas as follows:

South Campus — from the main gate south along Philadelphia Avenue to the college boundary and west to the creek and lake. This includes the land around Sharpe House, Anchorage, and Prentis Hall.

Central Campus — from College Avenue to Park Avenue and from Edgar Avenue to the creek. This is the main campus area.

North Campus — between Park Avenue and the President's House and from Edgar Avenue to the creek.

It is the purpose of this article to call attention to some of the more interesting trees in each of these areas —the trees that contribute most to the distinctiveness of the Wilson campus. While locations of the plants will be noted in the text, maps are included to provide more precise information.

South Campus

Anchorage and Sharpe House were, for many years, private estates, and their plantings were not landscaped along with those of the central campus. There are several outstanding specimens of large, old trees near each building.

Immediately south of Sharpe House, standing alone in a loop of the driveway, is a magnificent copper beech. This is a variety of the European beech (*Fagus sylvatica,* var. *atropunicea*) with bronze-green leaves. Like all beeches, it has thin, smooth, metallic-gray bark and very long sharp-pointed buds. Some dead leaves hang on the

The long, sharp-pointed bud of the copper beech is typical of the beech family.

tree most of the winter, a characteristic the beech shares with some species of oaks, its close relatives. There is another copper beech in the lawn back of Anchorage and another directly in front of Warfield Hall on the central campus. All grow more-or-less in the open and produce their lowest branches near ground level.

At the back of Sharpe House stands a fine specimen of Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*). This species is the common street tree in much of Chambersburg, but in street-side locations it seldom develops the symmetrical form of this individual. The five-lobed palmate leaves proclaim it a maple; the milky sap exuding from a cut petiole indicates this species. Another clue to its specific identity is seen in the tight clusters of double fruits, or samaras, each of which when intact appears to have two broad, green wings extending at right angles to the fruit stem. Other Norway maples grow along Philadelphia Avenue in front of Sharpe House and a reddish-leaved variety may be seen at the entrance to Norland Hall near the main college gate.

Standing beside the Norway maple just mentioned is a smaller specimen of the sycamore maple (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). Like the Norway, this is a Eurasian species that adapts well to North America. It may be distinguished from the preceding by its rougher leaves, whitish on the underside, and by the long, dangling clusters of fruits whose wings droop from the stem instead of being fully outstretched. A number of these trees are planted along the College Avenue sidewalk of the main campus, and another, somewhat larger, individual stands south of the rock outcrop in the lawn behind Sharpe House.

Several black locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) also are to be seen at the rear of Sharpe House. This tree is one of the most abundant fence row trees in the agricultural country around Chambersburg. A native American, it is justly popular for its beautiful light green compound leaves and, in late

May, its enormous clusters of fragrant white blossoms, each flower of which resembles a small white sweet pea. The relationship to the peas and beans is further emphasized by the slender pod-like fruit. The smaller twigs of the black locust often bear prickles, but it is never as formidably thorny as its larger relative, the honey locust (see last paragraph).

A large and symmetrical fir tree (*Abies sp.*) occupies the central lawn area behind Anchorage. Its unusual, bright green coloration enlivens this spot throughout the year. It is worthy of mention both because of its size and because there are few firs on campus.

The spire-like conifer near the parking lot in back of Prentis Hall is a bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), a native of the South that does fairly well in Pennsylvania. The name, "bald" refers to the deciduous nature of the plant; unlike most conifers it sheds its branchlets with their double row of pale green needles (the combination resembling a green feather) every fall. This is normally a swamp tree, and our specimen is not very far from the creek. If it grew in the water, it would develop a buttressed trunk and, possibly, protruding "knees".

The tree closest to the cypress is a large willow oak (*Quercus phellos*). Although it is a true oak, its leaves closely resemble those of a willow, being narrow, leathery, and pointed at both ends, totally unlike the typical oak leaf. This species is native to the southern United States, where the very similar live oak also grows.

Just south of Laird Hall, immediately outside of the auditorium windows, stands an attractive little goldenrain-tree, or Japanese varnish tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*). Its leaves, flowers, and fruit are all impressive. The leaves are large and compound; the flowers are brilliant yellow and grow in huge clusters (panicles); the fruit is a big, papery, three-sided capsule that contains three black seeds. This plant is a native of the Orient, and its fruit very appropriately conveys a strong sugges-

The leaves of the willow oak are much like those of a willow.

The fruit of the Japanese varnish tree is a large, papery, three-sided capsule that contains three black seeds.

tion of Japanese lanterns.

Central Campus

The area from Main Hall and the Stewart Library to College and Edgar Avenues is the heart of Wilson College. Here are most of the more outstanding trees, some large and very old, others recently planted. Some have conspicuous spring blossoms, while their neighbors may compensate for small flowers and a poor spring showing with striking autumn coloration. Although most of the large trees are deciduous, enough evergreens are present to sprinkle the area with green in mid-winter.

Immediately in front of Warfield Hall's west wing are two of the largest campus trees. Both represent native species. These are a large sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) with its widespread branches overhanging part of the brick walk, and a tall pin oak (*Quercus palustris*). It looks as though the campus had been planned around these patriarchs, for they occupy a central position and command attention. Rutherford Platt has said that the sugar maple as a species is a contender for the title of the most beautiful tree in the world. After one has noticed the symmetry of this specimen together with the shapely precision of its leaves in their blazing autumn display, one is inclined to agree with him. The pin oak is a favorite ornamental with deeply-cut, angular leaves and small acorns. The name is said to refer to the tough pin-like twigs that formerly were sometimes used instead of nails to hold boards together in rough buildings such as barns. There are other pin oaks and sugar maples on campus, the greatest concentration of the latter being just inside the main gate.

Directly in front of the library, standing by itself, is a medium-sized cucumber tree (*Magnolia acuminata*) —a species of magnolia native to the central and northern Appalachians rather than the South. The erect, spire-like form of this specimen is particularly appealing. Because the greenish-yellow flowers emerge with or after the leaves, its blossoming is not as con-

spicuous as that of the many exotic magnolias on campus. The common name is derived from the fruit—a cone that resembles a small cucumber. Some introduced types of magnolias are reported to grow best when grafted onto the rootstocks of this species. Other noteworthy magnolias on campus are *Magnolia kobus,* found across the drive in front of Norland Hall, exhibiting white flowers in spring and hairy, pussy-willow-like flower buds in winter, and *Magnolia tripetala,* the umbrella tree, two of which grow in the center of the campus and may be identified by their enormous leaves up to 2 feet long.

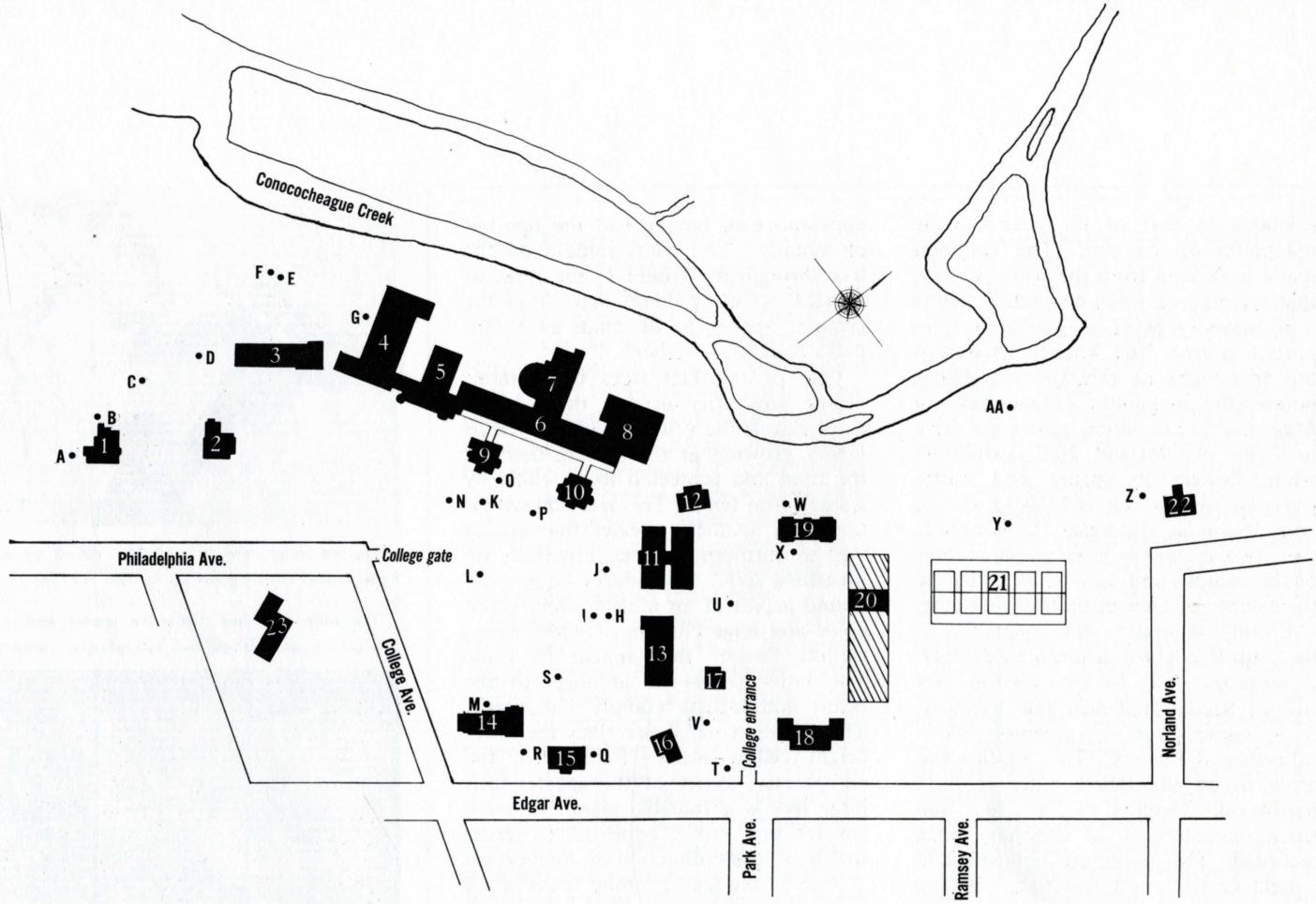
Closely related to the magnolias is the tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). A large one may be seen on the west side of Riddle Hall near the driveway. It is named for its greenish-yellow, tulip-shaped flowers. This species can grow to be the tallest native eastern hardwood. Heights to 198 feet and trunk diameters of 12 feet have been recorded. The leaves are unmistakable —light green, broad, squarish, with the appearance of having had the tips cut off bluntly. The fruits remain on the tree through the winter in the form of upright, splintery cones that, from the ground, appear to be made of toothpicks fastened together.

One of the first trees the campus visitor sees after driving through the main gate is the yellowwood (*Cladrastis lutea*) growing at the second bend in the road and protected from traffic by a small iron fence. This is a representative of a southern species that adapts well to northern climates, especially on limestone soils. It produces large compound leaves of an unusual light green color and huge clusters of white wisteria-like flowers that appear in June. The latter reveal its affinities to the beans and locusts (family Fabaceae). The common name describes the hard, bright yellow wood. Because of the comparative rarity of the species, this large tree is a valuable plant. A much smaller one grows opposite it, across the drive in the direction of Anchorage.

Also in the locust family is the small

The umbrella tree is easily identified by its huge leaves which grow up to two feet long.

The tulip tree has distinctive leaves and, in the spring, greenish-yellow, tulip-shaped flowers.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Philadelphia Ave.
College gate
College Ave.
College entrance
Norland Ave.
Edgar Ave.
Park Ave.
Ramsey Ave.

A. European beech
B Norway maple
C. black locusts
D. fir tree
E. bald cypress
F. willow oak
G. Japanese varnish tree
H. pin oak
I. sugar maple
J. cucumber tree
K. magnolia
L. umbrella tree
M. tulip tree
N. yellowwood
O. Kentucky coffee tree
P. catalpa
Q. empress tree
R. sweet gum
S. mountain ash
T. larch
U. ginkgo
V. Douglas fir
W. Turkish hazelnut
X. Amur corktree
Y. silver maple
Z. silver bell tree
A.A. white oak

1. Sharpe House
2. Anchorage (Spanish House
3. Prentis Hall
4. Laird Hall
5. Thomson Hall
6. Main Hall
7. Dining Hall
8. Gymnasium
9. Norland Hall
10. Edgar Hall
11. Stewart Library
12. Biology Building
13. Warfield Hall
14. Riddle Hall
15. South Hall (French House)
16. Infirmary
17. Harmony Cottage
18. Alumnae Hall
19. Lortz Science Hall
20. Site of the science center
21. Tennis Courts
22. President's House
23. Kenwood (German House)

The Kentucky coffee tree is a Southerner. Its generic name, Gymnocladus dioica, means "naked branch," an apt description much of the year.

The unusual fruit of the catalpa remains on the tree through the winter.

tree growing beside the walk in front of Norland Hall. It is small only because it is young and is growing as a replacement for a gigantic individual of the same species that was removed some years ago. This is the Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*), another Southerner, but one that does occur naturally as far north as New York state. Relatively rare as a wild plant, it is used extensively as an ornamental. The leaves are enormous and branched, with numerous leaflets; they appear very late in the spring, and the generic name, meaning "naked branch" was obviously bestowed as a description of the tree's appearance during much of the year. The swollen, woody pods contain 6 to 8 hard brown seeds. It is not certain whether the common name denotes the actual use of these seeds as a coffee substitute by early settlers or whether it merely calls attention to their similarity in appearance to coffee beans.

Another pod-producer, but in a very different family, is the catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*). One stands near the walk that crosses the drive in front of Edgar Hall. It has heavy twigs whose cup-shaped leaf scars show to advantage in winter. The large, heart-shaped leaves develop glands in the axils of the major veins. The irregular flowers are purplish-white and grow in erect clusters as much as 10 inches tall. The fruit is a long, slenderly cigar-shaped capsule that remains on the tree all winter, and inside of which are flattened seeds with tufts of long hairs on two sides.

Closely related to the catalpa, as its very similar foliage suggests, is one of the most interesting campus plants, the empress tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*). A medium-sized one stands just to the north of French House, somewhat overshadowed by the large elms along the street. In late spring it produces enormous clusters of purple flowers. These develop into fruit clusters made of groups of round brown capsules that look like bunches of grapes growing erect and which remain on the branches

through the winter. Of oriental origin, empress trees have been widely planted in parks and other public grounds throughout eastern United States. They have been able to spread from cultivation and establish themselves as part of our flora, much as the *Ailanthus* and white mulberry have done. A larger *Paulownia* stands at the north side of the President's House.

Between French House and Riddle Hall is a spreading sweet gum tree (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), named for the sweet, gummy resin exuded from the bark. The leaves are the most star-like of any of our native tree leaves, with five distinct points. They become a beautiful wine-red in autumn. The fruits grow together as they develop, forming round, hard, prickly balls on the tree in late summer. The older twigs produce raised, corky ridges. These features make the tree one of the easiest to identify. In the wild it is largely a swamp-dweller, but it has been widely planted as an ornamental. Its fruit architecture and its affinity for water suggest its fairly close relationship to the American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), many of which grow all along the banks of the Conococheague, where their great size and white inner bark are conspicuous features of the local scene.

A recently-planted mountain-ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) enhances the area across the drive near the front of French House. With its glossy, compound leaves in summer and large clusters of orange-red fruit in fall, it demands attention. The common name is misleading; it is more nearly akin to the roses and apples than to the true ashes. Near it stands a medium-sized catalpa.

The central campus includes a number of fine evergreens or Gymnosperms —trees that produce exposed seeds never enclosed in a typical fruit. Some of them are not really "ever green," for they drop their leaves annually. Important among the latter are the larches (*Larix decidua*) and the ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*). There are two beautiful larches between the infirmary and

Barrel-like spurs identify the larches.

All of the fan-shaped leaves of a ginko tree usually fall within a 24-hour period.

the railroad track that crosses the campus. They have slender drooping branchlets punctuated by numerous barrel-like spurs. On the spurs tufts of soft green needles form each spring. Small cones seem to match the small needles. Unlike many campus trees, the larch is a northern plant, the various species reaching their greatest proliferation in the mountains and bogs of the great circumpolar boreal forest. The ginkgo, on the other hand, scarcely exists today in the natural state. It is truly a living fossil—a plant that owes its popularity as an ornamental to the Chinese priests who preserved the species for centuries through cultivating it in monastery gardens. It is absolutely unique. It has fan-shaped leathery leaves that turn yellow in the autumn. On any tree almost all of the colored leaves fall within a single 24-hour period. The leaves grow on spurs like those on the larch. Pollen develops on short catkins, while the foul-smelling seeds look like tiny plums that grow in pairs on erect stalks. Although the fossil record is rich in ginkgos, the present species is the only survivor of a large group of plants. Despite its ancient lineage, or, perhaps, because of it, the ginkgo adapts well to modern civilization and is a superior street tree as well as a most intriguing garden plant. A fine example of the ginkgo may be seen beside the parking lot at the rear of Warfield Hall.

The campus also boasts a variety of more conventional evergreens, but only one will be mentioned. This is the Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*). A rather small specimen of this tree may be seen beside the drive just north of the infirmary. In the West they are second in height only to the coast redwoods. It is not a true fir, though the broad-based needles resemble those on the fir. The most characteristic feature is the cone, with its long three-pronged bracts projecting far out between the scales.

North Campus

The area from Park Avenue to the boundary line at Penn Hall, includ-

ing the sports fields, is larger than either of the other campus divisions but contains comparatively few specimen trees. Most of these are on the margins, especially around Lortz Hall and near the President's house.

An eye-catching tree is the Turkish hazelnut (*Corylus colurna*) situated across the drive opposite the rear door to Lortz. The true home of the species is in southeastern Europe and western Asia. The regular, pyramidal form of the tree is noteworthy, as are the thick, shiny dark green leaves. The large staminate catkins develop in fall and hang all winter like brown tinsel on the twigs. In March they elongate tremendously before shedding their yellow pollen. This particular individual seldom produces many female flowers and in consequence develops very few hazelnuts.

On the other side of Lortz Hall, by the brick walk, is a single Amur corktree (*Phellodendron amurense*) not to be confused with the cork oak—the source of commercial cork, and not represented on campus. This is another Asiatic plant, coming from the region of the Amur River. It is cultivated as an ornamental chiefly for its handsome foliage. It is also somewhat aromatic and is placed in the same family (*Rutaceae*) as the citrus trees.

The lone tree in the tennis court area is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*)—a native maple with deeply cut leaves having U-shaped notches between the lobes and a silvery-gray color on the undersides. The species does best where there is plenty of water. It grows quickly but has the disadvantage of being brittle and easily storm-broken. This individual produces an abundance of tiny red flowers in late February and early March, long before the leaf buds open. Other, larger, silver maples occur in the center of the main campus near the flagpole.

In the garden west of the President's house one may see a beautiful southern American—the silver bell tree (*Halesia carolina*). It is also called the snowdrop-tree because of the similarity of

The large staminate catkins of the Turkish hazelnut develop in the fall and decorate the tree through the winter.

The Amur cork tree is cultivated as an ornamental because of its handsome foliage.

the white blossoms to the garden flower of that name. The blossoms hang from the twigs like little bells and mature through the summer into fruits with four winged ridges down their sides. These are relatively small trees, seldom exceeding a height of 40 feet.

At a rocky outcrop on the brow of the little hill west of the drinking fountain stands a lone white oak (*Quercus alba*). It serves as a reminder of the days when what is now the Wilson campus, the town of Chambersburg, and the fertile farmland of the surrounding valley was covered with a forest composed largely of such trees. Vestiges of white oak forests remain across College Avenue in the Kenwood section near the German House, in the yard of the Mennonite Church one-half mile north on Route 11, and in many old woodlots in nearby farms. If a single tree were to be selected to symbolize the college, this white oak should certainly receive careful consideration.

In concluding, some comment should be made about the trees in the college woodlot on the alluvial soil along the Conococheague Creek. Mention has already been made of the sycamores, many of which are quite large, but there are other important trees, too. The largest trees in the woods are three huge honey locusts (*Gleditsia triacanthos*); they tower above the other trees, and in fall and early winter, their outsize, curled fruiting pods may be seen for some distance. Most of the woodlot trees are elms and ashes, but there is a sprinkling of mulberry (*Morus alba*), swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), silver maple, various willows (*Salix sp.*), hawthorns (*Crataegus sp.*), and river birch (*Betula nigra*).

These trees, and the undergrowth beneath them, flourish in a virtually untended situation and provide both the setting and the materials for valuable field studies of plants in their natural environments. Thus, while not as attractive as the developed areas of the campus, this area, also, plays its part in the educational process.