



## Mississippi Forests and Forestry

*James E. Fickle*

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From prehistory to the present, people have harvested Mississippi's trees, cultivated and altered the woodlands, and hunted forest wildlife. Native Americans, the first foresters, periodically burned the undergrowth to improve hunting and to clear land for farming.

*Mississippi Forests and Forestry* tells the story of human interaction with Mississippi's woodlands. With forty black-and-white images and extensive documentation, this history debunks long-held myths, such as the notion of the first settlers encountering "virgin" forests.

Drawing on primary materials, government documents, newspapers, interviews, contemporary accounts, and secondary works, historian James E. Fickle describes an ongoing commerce between people and place, from Native American maintenance of the woods, to white exploration and settlement, to early economic activities in Mississippi's forests, to present-day conservation and responsible use.

Viewed over time, issues of conservation are rarely one-sided. *Mississippi Forests and Forestry* describes how the rise of "scientific" forestry coincided with the efforts of some early lumber companies and industrial foresters to operate responsibly in harvesting trees and providing for reforestation. Surprisingly, the rise of the pulp and paper industry made reforestation possible in many parts of the state.

*Mississippi Forests and Forestry* is a history of individuals as well as industries. The book looks closely at the ways the lumber industry operated in the woods and mills and at the living and working conditions of people in the industries. It argues that the early industrial foresters, some lumber companies, and pulp and paper manufacturers practiced utilitarian conservation. By the late 1950s, they accomplished what some considered a miracle. Mississippi's forests had been restored.

With the rise of environmentalism in the 1960s, popular ideas concerning the proper management and use of forests changed. Practices such as clear-cutting, single-age management, and manufacturing by chip mills became highly controversial. Looking ahead, *Mississippi Forests and Forestry* examines the issues that remain heated topics of conservation and use.

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