

# Forest History Society



## Library and Archives

701 William Vickers Avenue

Durham, North Carolina

27701-3162 USA

Phone: (919) 682-9319

Fax: (919) 682-2349

Email: Cheryl Oakes, Archivist/Librarian

URL: <http://www.lib.duke.edu/forest/>

## Guide to the Biltmore Forestry Fair Collection, 1908 - 1909

Collection of seven articles published in American Lumberman magazine from September 1908 to January 1909 reporting on the Forest Festival held 26 - 29 November 1908 at the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. The festival was hosted by Estate forester and Biltmore Forest School founder Carl Alwin Schenck (1868 - 1955), who invited industry representatives, foresters, and lay persons interested in forestry from across the southern United States to attend the festivities. Tours of plantations, herbaria, experimental plots, and nurseries on the Estate highlighted thinning operations, reforestation and logging activities, and conservation measures in use by foresters on the Estate. Schenck explained scientific forestry techniques to guests on the tours and provided entertainment in the form of a possum hunt, luncheons, and dinners. An event organized to celebrate twenty years of professional forest management and ten years of operating the Biltmore Forest School on George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate, the 1908 Forest Festival helped spread the notion of scientific forestry across the southern United States in the first decade of the twentieth century.

**2003**

## Guide to the Biltmore Forestry Fair Collection, 1908 - 1909

### Descriptive Summary

**Collection Title:** The Biltmore Forestry Fair Collection, 1908 - 1909

**Creator:** American Lumberman (lumber trade journal)

**Extent:** 7 articles (17 pages total); less than one linear inch

**Location:** For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Forest History Society Archivist/Librarian, Cheryl Oakes (coakes@duke.edu)

**Processed By:** Elizabeth Arnold

**Date Completed:** August, 2003

**Encoded By:** Michele A. Justice

### Information for Users

**Restrictions to Access:** This collection is open for research.

**Provenance:** The articles comprising this collection were published in issues of the lumber trade journal American Lumberman dating from September 1908 to January 1909. The Forest History Society Library holds an almost complete run of American Lumberman dating from 1899 to 1960. Prior to 1899 the journal was published under the title Northwestern Lumberman. The name of the publication changed to Building Materials Merchandiser in 1961 and again to Home Center in 1972.

**Preferred Citation:** [Identification of Item], Biltmore Forestry Fair Collection, Library and Archives, Forest History Society, Durham, North Carolina.

**Copyright Notice:** The Forest History Society does not own copyright to this collection. Individuals obtaining materials from the Forest History Society Library and Archives are responsible for using the works in conformance with United States copyright law as well as any donor restrictions accompanying the materials.

**Processing Information:** The seven trade journal articles comprising this collection were keyed by hand into Microsoft Word 2000 word processing files. The Word files were then converted into Adobe Acrobat .pdf files for the final output.

### Historical Note

In 1898 German forester Carl Alwin Schenck (1868 - 1955) left his native country to take up the position of chief forester on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. That same year he founded the Biltmore Forest School and served as its sole director until the school closed in 1913. During his tenure as chief forester on the Estate, Schenck introduced many of the German silvicultural techniques he had learned as a forester in Germany and sought to teach scientific management philosophy to both his forestry school students and to members of the broader forestry community.

To celebrate the twentieth anniversary of professional forest management on the Biltmore

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Estate and the tenth anniversary of the Biltmore Forest School, Carl Schenck organized a forest fair to promote the idea of scientific forestry to other foresters, timber owners, trade journalists, and lay persons in the southern United States. Held 26 - 29 November in 1908, the Biltmore Forest Festival showcased silvicultural methods, experimental forestry techniques, reforestation and regeneration efforts, and plantation forest management in use on lands owned by George Vanderbilt around the city of Asheville, North Carolina. The trade journal *American Lumberman* produced an in-depth report of the fair, which it published in numerous issues from September 1908 to January 1909. The forest festival allowed Schenck to encourage those associated with forest industries to adopt professional forest conservation techniques to ensure sustained production from healthy forests.

Schenck left George Vanderbilt's employ in 1907 and disbanded the Biltmore Forest School in 1913 due to declining enrollment. In the 1910s the Vanderbilts sold portions of land comprising their Biltmore Estate in Asheville, and parts of the forested tracts were later incorporated into the Pisgah National Forest. The 1908 Biltmore Forest Festival highlighted the historical importance of the Biltmore Estate, which was the first property in the United States managed by a professionally trained American forester (Gifford Pinchot) and home to the first American forestry school (the Biltmore Forest School). The festival promoted forest conservation in the United States by showcasing model forests on the Biltmore Estate that exhibited the positive effects of professional scientific forestry. It thus played a significant role in the establishment and evolution of early professional forestry in the United States.

### Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of seven articles published in issues of the lumber trade journal *American Lumberman* dating from 12 September 1908 to 16 January 1909. The articles report details about a forest festival held 26 - 29 November 1908 on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate near Asheville, North Carolina. Largely organized and hosted by Biltmore Estate chief forester and Biltmore Forest School founder Carl Alwin Schenck (1868 - 1955), the event served as an opportunity for Schenck to showcase practical forestry applications being implemented on the Biltmore Estate. Timber company owners, foresters, educators, journalists, and persons specifically interested in scientific forestry were invited to attend this event celebrating the twentieth anniversary of forest management on the Estate and the tenth anniversary of the Biltmore Forest School.

The Forest Fair included tours of forest plantations, herbaria, and nurseries managed by Biltmore Estate staff or Biltmore Forest School students. Estate foresters and Biltmore students assisted Schenck in guiding visitors through various stations set up to highlight specific management techniques and silvicultural methods. Festival attendees saw first-hand experimental plots of non-native tree species; trees damaged by bark beetles and other insect pests; stands of regenerated forests, examples of improvement cuttings; thinning operations; and experimental pruning techniques. Outdoor luncheons, hikes through forests and to the top of Mount Pisgah, a possum hunt, and dinners held at Carl Schenck's Estate residence and at the Battery Park Hotel in Asheville complemented lectures delivered by Schenck in the field during the tours. The festival concluded on 29 November 1908.

The editors of *American Lumberman* magazine advertised the event in their 12 September 1908 issue and published lengthy descriptions of festival activities in six weekly issues dating from 5 December 1908 to 16 January 1909. Through ensuring media coverage of the 1908

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Biltmore Forest Festival, Carl Schenck was able to promote the idea of scientific forest management and forest conservation to a wider audience than he was previously able to easily reach. The festival was thus a means for encouraging public and private forestry enterprises in the southern United States to adopt such silvicultural methods to ensure continuous growth and production of forest resources.

### Organization of Collection

The collection contains a single series labeled *American Lumberman Articles*. The descriptions for each of the seven items in this series include hyperlinks to full text transcriptions of the articles in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format.

### Online Catalog Headings

Biltmore Estate (Asheville, N.C.) -- Anniversaries.

Biltmore Forest School -- History.

Festivals -- Asheville (N.C.)

Forest conservation -- United States.

Foresters -- United States -- Biography.

Forestry schools and education -- North Carolina.

Forests and forestry -- North Carolina -- History.

Forests and Forestry -- United States -- History.

Schenck, Carl Alwin, 1868 - 1955.

Vanderbilt, George Washington, 1862 - 1914.

## Detailed Description of Collection

### Series I: *American Lumberman* Articles, September 1908 - January 1909

#### Series I Scope and Content Note

This series comprising the entire Biltmore Forestry Fair Collection consists of seven articles reporting details about the Forest Festival held 26 - 29 November 1908 on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. Published in issues of the lumber trade journal *American Lumberman* dating from September 1908 to January 1909, the articles provide in-depth descriptions of: the organizational planning behind the event; persons who attended the festival; the background history of the Biltmore Estate and the Biltmore Forest School; on-site lectures given by estate forester and Biltmore Forest School director Carl Alwin Schenck (1868 - 1955); and the various forest management techniques and experimental silvicultural methods employed by foresters and students on the Estate that guests observed first-hand.

#### Item 1: *American Lumberman* Article, 12 September 1908 [\[See Transcription\]](#)

**Description:** Titled "Forestry School at Biltmore to Hold Unique Celebration", this one-page article advertises the four-day forestry festival organized by Carl Alwin Schenck (1868 - 1955) on George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, scheduled for 26 - 29 November 1908. The article describes plans for allowing invited guests to: (1) inspect plantations; (2) examine second-growth forests; (3) tour an herbarium and nurseries where reforestation work was then being practiced; (4) view logging operations in Pisgah Forest via carriage tours of the woods; and (6) hike to the top of Mount Pisgah. The article appears on page 54 in the 12 September 1908 issue.

#### Item 2: *American Lumberman* Article, 5 December 1908 [\[See Transcription\]](#)

**Description:** Titled "Three Days' Forest Festival on the Biltmore Estate", this three-page article is the first installment of a six-part series describing in detail the various lectures, social activities, and site tours offered to guests at the 1908 Biltmore Forest Fair on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. This article appearing on pages 35 - 37 in the 5 December 1908 issue specifically: (1) provides a brief history of the Biltmore Estate; (2) traces the development of the Biltmore Forest School; (3) lists festival attendees; (4) describes the forest conservation lectures given by Carl Schenck (1868 - 1955) while hosting tours; and (5) explains the planning behind the festival.

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### Item 3: *American Lumberman* Article, 12 December 1908 [\[See Transcription\]](#)

**Description:** Titled "Three Days' Forest Festival on the Biltmore Estate", this two-page article is the second installment of a six-part series describing in detail the various lectures, social activities, and site tours offered to guests at the 1908 Biltmore Forest Fair on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. This article appearing on pages 43 - 44 in the 12 December 1908 issue describes topics addressed on the tours at the festival, including: (1) aesthetic features of Asheville, the industrial activities that drive the city's economy, and the role of lumberman George Willis Pack (d. 1906) in shaping the city's forest economy; (2) the growth of oak, pine, and poplar on the Biltmore Estate and in Asheville's woods; (3) methods of thinning and other measures used to encourage tree growth; (4) the hospitality offered during a luncheon held at Schenck's home on the Biltmore Estate during the festival; and (5) Carl Schenck's perceptions of local forests.

### Item 4: *American Lumberman* Article, 19 December 1908 [\[See Transcription\]](#)

**Description:** Titled "Three Days' Forest Festival on the Biltmore Estate", this three-page article is the third installment of a six-part series describing in detail the various lectures, social activities, and site tours offered to guests at the 1908 Biltmore Forest Fair on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. This article appearing on pages 43 - 45 in the 19 December 1908 issue describes topics addressed on the tours at the festival, including: (1) insect foes of forests, specifically the bark beetle; (2) description of plantings at Browntown plantation; (3) improvement cuttings on oak and pine forests; (4) experimental pruning; (5) tree planting by festival attendees; (6) features of the grounds of the Biltmore Estate surrounding Biltmore House; and (7) a lengthy biography of Carl A. Schenck (1868 - 1955).

### Item 5: *American Lumberman* Article, 26 December 1908 [\[See Transcription\]](#)

**Description:** Titled "Three Days' Forest Festival on the Biltmore Estate", this three-page article is the fourth installment of a six-part series describing in detail the various lectures, social activities, and site tours offered to guests at the 1908 Biltmore Forest Fair on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. This article appears on pages 50 - 52 in the 26 December 1908 issue and describes the Thanksgiving banquet held the first day of the festival at the Battery Park Hotel in Asheville. Includes a description of the meal provided as well as the full text of speeches given by Carl Schenck (1868 - 1955) and others in attendance at the banquet.

### Item 6: *American Lumberman* Article, 2 January 1909 [\[See Transcription\]](#)

**Description:** Titled "Three Days' Forest Festival on the Biltmore Estate", this two-page article is the fifth installment of a six-part series describing in detail the various lectures, social activities, and site tours offered to guests at the 1908 Biltmore Forest Fair on George

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Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. This article appearing on pages 54 - 55 in the 2 January 1909 issue describes: (1) the journey taken by guests from Asheville across the French Broad River to the Biltmore Estate to begin the festival on the second day; (2) the good roads on the Estate; (3) the raising of chickens, cows, and pigs on the Biltmore Estate; (3) how George Vanderbilt gained title to the lands comprising his Estate; (4) the several small furniture factories operating on the Estate; (5) railroad freight rates for transportation of lumber from Asheville; (6) tanning activities on the Estate and revenue derived from them; and (7) merchantable timber species grown on Biltmore lands.

### **Item 7:** *American Lumberman* Article, 16 January 1908 [\[See Transcription\]](#)

**Description:** Titled "Three Days' Forest Festival on the Biltmore Estate", this three-page article is the sixth installment of a six-part series describing in detail the various lectures, social activities, and site tours offered to guests at the 1908 Biltmore Forest Fair on George Vanderbilt's (1862 - 1914) Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. This article appearing on pages 52 - 54 in the 16 January 1909 issue describes festival activities held the second day of the fair. Includes discussion of: (1) a tour of a walnut plantation; (2) the growth of pine on abandoned field; (3) white pine improvement cuttings; (4) experimental plantings of western U.S. species on Biltmore forests; (5) yellow poplar regeneration; (6) use of French silvicultural methods along river banks; (7) and the outdoor luncheon provided on 27 November 1908.