

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 MeadWestvaco Records, Sidney E. Balch Collection, 1915 - 1983, n.d.

The MeadWestvaco Records, Sidney E. Balch Collection includes resource surveys, land inventories, reports, maps, documents, and photographs pertaining to Oxford Paper Company pulpwood operations in Alaska, New Brunswick, and the northeastern United States, with a particular focus on Maine. The records date from the 1910s to the 1980s. MeadWestvaco purchased the former Oxford Paper Company operations in 1996.

2004

**Guide to the MeadWestvaco Records, Sidney E. Balch
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Descriptive Summary

Collection Title: The MeadWestvaco Records, Sidney E. Balch Collection, 1915 - 1983, n.d.

Creator: MeadWestvaco

Extent: 1 carton and 1 map tube, ca. 1 linear foot, 2 inches

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: Emily Wakild

Date Completed: June 2004

Encoded By: Michele A. Justice

Information for Users

Restrictions to Access: This collection is open for research.

Provenance: Sidney "Si" E. Balch, Technical/Planning Superintendent of the New England Region Forestry Division of MeadWestvaco Corporation in Rumford, Maine, donated this collection of materials to the Forest History Society in November 2003. The materials include items of a historical nature collected by the division that were not subject to the company's records management retention policy.

Preferred Citation: [Identification of Item], MeadWestvaco Records, Sidney E. Balch Collection, Library and Archives, Forest History Society, Durham, North Carolina.

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Historical Note

In 1888 William Luke and three of his sons founded the Piedmont Pulp and Paper Company in West Piedmont, West Virginia, with the intention of producing wood pulp using the sulphite process. Over the next few years, they acquired more land in West Virginia and Maryland and constructed additional mills for manufacturing both wood pulp and paper. In 1897 the various operations were consolidated to form the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company. Over the course of the twentieth century the company acquired timberlands and mills in Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, the Carolinas, Kentucky, Texas, and Brazil, often by purchasing smaller companies. In 1919 the company hired its first industrial forester, and over time expanded its forest management research. In 1929 the company opened a headquarters office in New York City. In 1969 West Virginia Pulp and Paper changed its name to Westvaco to represent its diversified interests; by then it was producing not only a wide range of pulp and paper products, but many specialty chemicals derived from pulp and papermaking processes. In January 2002 Westvaco merged with the Mead Corporation, to form MeadWestvaco.

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In the early twenty-first century, MeadWestvaco's vast holdings included paper mill operations and woodlands in the Rumford, Maine, region. Mead Corporation originally acquired the properties in 1996 from Boise Cascade, who had purchased the mill operations from Ethyl Corporation in 1967. Ethyl Corporation -- a producer of gas, chemicals, and oil -- had acquired the holdings from the Oxford Paper Company in 1967. Records pertaining to the Rumford mill and related woodland operations are included in this collection.

Note: Historical sketch drawn from the following sources: (1) Dadisman, Don, ed. *A History of Westvaco's First HUNDRED Years 1888-1988*. S.l.: Southern Woodlands, Timberlands Division, Westvaco Corporation, 1989; (2) "The Story of West Virginia Wood: Westvaco (West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co.) Lights 100 Candles". A four-part series printed in *The West Virginia Hillbilly* (29 December 1988, p. 5; 5 January 1989, pp. 6 - 7; 12 January 1989, pp. 18 - 19; 19 January 1989, pp. 16 - 17); (3) Beckley, Thomas M.: "Pluralism by Default: Community Power in a Paper Mill Town". *Forest Science* 42:1 (1996): 35-45.

Scope and Content Note

The *MeadWestvaco Records, Sidney E. Balch Collection* contains archival materials documenting the forestry and paper milling operations of the formerly independent Oxford Paper Company of Maine, which Mead Corporation acquired in the mid-1990s prior to merging with Westvaco. The collection includes resource survey reports containing numerous charts of land inventory data with executive summaries conducted by the James W. Sewall Company for the Oxford Paper Company; records pertaining to Oxford Paper Company forestry operations in New Brunswick (Canada), Alaska, New Hampshire, Maine, and other northeastern states; statistical data on pulpwood production costs and wood usage; and topographical maps, most likely of company properties. The collection materials are housed in a single carton and in one map tube.

Organization of Collection

The *MeadWestvaco Records, Sidney E. Balch Collection* contains four series: (I) James W. Sewall Company Reports, [1929 - 1976]; (II) Public Land Swap Documents, 1982 - 1983, n.d.; (III) Oxford Paper Company Wood Usage and Production Cost Documents, 1915 -1962; and (IV) Maps, n.d.

Online Catalog Headings

Atkinson (N.H.) -- Maps.
Forests and forestry -- Northeastern States -- History.
Franklin County (Me.) -- Maps.
Gilmanton (N.H.) -- Maps.
Mead Corporation.
MeadWestvaco (Firm).
Oxford County (Me.) -- Maps.

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Oxford Paper Company.

Pulp mills -- Maine -- History.

Pulpwood industry -- Alaska -- History.

Pulpwood industry -- Maine -- History.

Pulpwood industry -- New Brunswick -- History.

Pulpwood industry -- New Hampshire -- History.

Pulpwood industry -- Northeastern States -- History.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: James W. Sewall Company Reports, [1929 - 1976]

8 reports, 7 inches

Scope and Content Note for Series I

This series consists of 8 resource survey reports conducted for the Oxford Paper Company by the James W. Sewall Company. James Wingate Sewall founded the consulting firm in 1880 to provide forest inventory, surveying, and mapping services to the lumber industry in northern Maine and Canada. The reports in this series contain tables, charts, maps, and textual summary information about timber resources and the pulpwood industry in New Brunswick, Alaska, Maine, and other northeastern states. Most are internal documents that were never published; they are bound in either paperback or more commonly in hardback format. Reports rest loosely in the container carton in chronological order.

Item 1: "Southeastern Alaska Pulpwood Possibilities" (1929)

Description: Black hardbound report (ca. 8 1/2" x 11 1/2"; ca. 27 leaves) by the Sewall Corporation containing text supported with black-and-white photographs, many of which appear to be U.S. Forest Service images. Includes data on such things as forest conditions, wood supply, log rafting practices, logging and mill operations, forest taxation, lumber prices, wages, climate, water power, topography, and freight rates for transporting wood pulp from Alaska to United States ports on the Atlantic Ocean. Includes a map of Alaska showing agricultural regions and a Canadian Pacific Railway Company map depicting an Alaskan steamship route. The photographs include scenes of the cities of Ketchikan and Sitka.

Item 2: "Report on Brown Company Lands in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont 1937" [1937]

Description: Unbound report (8 1/2" x 11"; 116 leaves) with stapled edge containing summary information organized by township region listing the topography, forest conditions, forest types, logging and transportation conditions, forest area, and recommendations about whether Brown Company should sell, liquidate, or keep forest holdings in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont after logging.

Item 3: "Timber and Pulpwood Resources of Maine for Oxford Paper Co. 1944" (1936 - 1944)

Description: Hardbound report (ca. 9" x 11 1/2") containing approximately 62 oversized, folded pages. Hugh J. Chisholm of Oxford Paper Company commissioned the James W. Sewall

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Company to produce this inventory of the pulpwood and timber resources of Maine, with particular emphasis on the amounts of wood not held by companies competing with Oxford Paper Company for wood. Sewall compiled the data from existing cruises covering seventy-two percent of the forested area of unincorporated lands of Maine, by interviews with local men in the incorporated towns, and by a few supplemental cruises. The report assesses land areas in Maine, organized by watersheds and wood types. Includes map of incorporated and unincorporated lands; chart showing pulp ownership, state ownership, and open market ownership; estimates of timber and pulpwood resources; assessments of the number of trees per acre by species and diameter; estimates of annual cuts; and appendices on state areas (state planning board, 1936), on public land ownership and area (Maine Forest Commissioner, 1940; National Resources Planning Board, 1942), data on Fee Simple Land in Unincorporated Townships (Bureau of Taxation, 1942), information on Public Lots in State and Private Ownership (Maine Forest Commissioner, 1941), and a United States Forest Service statement on forests in Maine (1943, 1944).

Item 4: "Timber and Pulpwood Resources of New Brunswick for Oxford Paper Co. 1945-1946" [1946]

Description: Black hardbound volume (ca. 8 1/2" x 11 1/2"; ca. 70 leaves) containing inventories of pulpwood and timber resources in New Brunswick, Canada. Includes land tenure charts, forest classifications with predominant species, and a foldout map of area.

Item 5: *Forest Practice Survey Report* (1952)

Description: Softcover bound report reviewing data previously compiled by Henry Haupt Chapman and William P. House on forest management practices in the northeastern United States. Published in 1952 by the Northeast Pulpwood Research Center in Gorham, New Hampshire (v + 191 pp.; 8 1/2" x 11"). Includes data on forest conditions, forest management and cutting practices, major forest types, and brief historical examinations of forests and forestry in the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and Pennsylvania. Includes some photographs.

Item 6: "Forest Resource Inventory of Area Within 50 Mile Radius of Rumford, Maine for Oxford Paper Company 1956" [1956]

Description: Oversized black hardbound report (ca. 9" x 14"; ca. 156 leaves) investigating the quantity of merchantable pulpwood and saw log material near the Oxford Paper Company's Rumford, Maine, mill in the states of Maine and New Hampshire. The inventory lists forest land area in acres according to ownership, subdivision, and forest type. Includes information on timber volume, forest locations and boundary lines, topographic conditions, transportation options, and stand tables. Also describes aerial photographs of the region. Inserted in the front of the volume are several loose correspondence items dated 1956 or 1957 and a couple of folded maps of the region. Harry L. Beach, Woodlands Manager of Oxford Paper Company, engaged the James W. Sewall Company to produce the report.

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Item 7: "Report on So-Called "Stetson Lands" in Maine" (1956)

Description: This oversized report (ca. 9 1/2" x 14 1/2") contains 156 leaves grouped in a blue softcover binder containing information on lands owned in the state of Maine by the Stetson Lands Group. Provides data on individual landowner tracts, operable areas, transportation options, amounts of merchantable species, and estimated tree diameters in Piscataquis, Somerset, and Penobscot counties. Includes many charts. The firm of Warner Stackpole Stetson & Bradley, representing the Estate of Charles Stetson, authorized the James W. Sewall Company to produce this inventory report, which resulted from a cruise of eleven towns in which the Stetson Lands Group owned undivided fractions.

Item 8: "Report on Oxford Paper Company Timberlands & Wood Supply 1976" [1976]

Description: Black 3-ring notebook binder (10" x 11 1/2") containing an internal 77-page report (ii + 75 leaves) marked "confidential". Juan del Valle, Senior Vice President of Boise Cascade Corporation, authorized the James W. Sewall Company to investigate the extent and condition of Oxford Paper Company lands and wood supply in 1975. The company conducted the survey in January and February 1976. The report provides a general description of lands, valuation, procurement areas, and description of forests and other areas including wood costs. Also includes figures on holdings, age, allowable cut, and possible income as well as a brief section on land acquisitions and exchanges.

Series II: Public Land Swap Documents, 1982 - 1983, n.d.

1 file folder, ca. 1 inch

Scope and Content Note for Series II

This series contains a single file folder containing records relating to a plan for the exchange of selected land parcels between the state of Maine and private landowners, most of whom are timber, lumber, or pulp and paper companies. The materials in this series relate specifically to Boise Cascade Corporation. Items are arranged in chronological order within the folder.

Folder 1: Public Land Swap Documents (1982 - 1983, n.d.)

Description: A single file folder containing copies of an undated newsclipping, ten maps of various sizes, eight aerial photographs, correspondence between representatives of Boise Cascade Corporation and representatives of the state of Maine, and the 1982 proposal by Maine Governor Joseph E. Brennan dated May 1982 that outlines plans to consolidate the state's public reserved lands via land exchanges between the state and the private sector. The first land swap occurred in December 1974 when the state exchanged certain parcels of scattered lots for consolidated parcels of land owned by Great Northern Paper Company.

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**Series III: Oxford Paper Company Wood Usage and Production
Cost Documents, 1915 - 1962**

2 file folders, ca. 2 inches

Scope and Content Note for Series III

This series consists of hand-written and typed statistical records compiled primarily in chart format pertaining to labor costs, monthly production numbers, wood transportation, and other aspects of the pulpwood production operations of Oxford Paper Company from 1920 to 1950. Items were originally housed in two 7" x 10" faded green-cloth three-ring binders; during processing, pages were removed from each binder and re-housed in two acid-free folders.

Folder 1: Oxford Paper Company Wood Uses and Costs (1920 - 1948)

Description: Ca. 80 - 100 sheets of paper with statistical data on (1) soda mill production records for the Oxford Paper Company, 1920 to 1948; and (2) production cost records associated with pulpwood operations in the company's Virginia yard, 1920 - 1930. Originally housed in binder simply marked with the number "2" on the spine. Items are arranged within the folder in reverse chronological order per the original arrangement scheme.

Folder 2: Oxford Paper Company Wood Uses and Costs (1915 - 1962)

Description: Ca 120 sheets of paper with statistical data on (1) spruce and poplar pulpwood freight costs (1915 - 1938) and sulphite mill records (1920 - 1948) of the Oxford Paper Company; (2) pamphlets on chemical de-barking (1955) and the American Paper and Pulpwood Association (1962); (3) information on boxboard usage supplemented with clippings on grading rules and charts of skid stock usage (1915 - 1956); (4) research and lab reports (1933, 1930); (5) information on scaling, including general rules and instructions for scaling (1950 - 1927); (6) weights and measures compiled by tree species, month, and year (1942 - 1920); (7) data on the company wood yard's railroad clearances and conveyor costs (1929); (8) information on wood room operations (1931 to 1936); and (9) a memorandum dated 14 October 1935 concerning measures for hay on scaffolding per ton (filed under "miscellaneous" folder tab heading from the original binder). Materials are arranged in both chronological and reverse chronological order per the original arrangement scheme.

Series IV: Maps, n.d.

1 map tube, ca. 4 inches

Scope and Content Note for Series IV

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This series contains six undated maps of various sizes containing topographical information pertaining to forest lands located in Maine and New Hampshire. Some or all of the maps may be duplicates of early maps that were printed at a later date. The maps are loosely rolled and stored in a map tube sized approximately 38" in height by 2 1/2" in diameter. A number of the maps in this series contain information originally documented by forester Austin Cary (1865 - 1936), who worked as a land cruiser and topographical surveyor in Maine and New Hampshire in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

Item 1: Map of Atkinson and Gilmanton Academy Grant (n.d.)

Description: Map of lands in Atkinson and Gilmanton, New Hampshire, surveyed and explored in 1888 by James A. Pike.

Item 2: Map of Township Letter D, Franklin County, Maine (n.d.)

Description: Cartographic representation of lands in Franklin County, Maine, surveyed and explored in 1888 by James A. Pike.

Item 3: Map of Grafton, Oxford County, Maine (n.d.)

Description: Topographical map on lands in Grafton, Maine, by Austin Cary (1899).

Item 4: Map of Township 5 R. 3. Oxford County, Maine (n.d.)

Description: Map showing allotment and topography for this region of Oxford County in Maine by Austin Cary (1901).

Item 5: Map of Spring Tract T 5. R 7., Oxford County, Maine (n.d.)

Description: Topographical map showing land contours in this region of Oxford County, Maine, by Austin Cary (1904).

Item 6: Map of Millsfield, New Hampshire (n.d.)

Description: Topographical map of lands in Millsfield, New Hampshire, by Austin Cary.