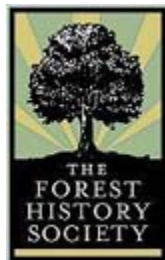


**Inventory of the  
George H. Wirt Collection, 1873 - 1966**



Forest History Society  
Alvin J. Huss Archives  
701 William Vickers Avenue  
Durham, NC 27701 USA  
Phone: (919) 682-9319 / Fax: (919) 682-2349

<http://foresthistor.org/ead>

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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Title:</b>	George H. Wirt Collection,
<b>Dates:</b>	1873 - 1966
<b>Creator:</b>	Wirt, George H. (George Hermann), 1880-1961, collector
<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>As Pennsylvania's first state forester and Chief Forest Fire Warden, George H. Wirt (1880- 1961) came to be known as one of America's most influential forest protectionists.</p> <p>The collection includes documents pertaining to the founding and early history of the American Forestry Association (AFA). Materials include correspondence, copies of speeches, essays, and addresses delivered before various organizations, minutes of the annual meetings of the American Forestry Congress (1882-1887), and copies of the Proceedings of the American Forestry Association (1882-1897), as well as other general information relating to the development of the AFA. Much of the collection pertains to Dr. John A. Warder, president of AFA for a number of years in the late nineteenth century. Also included are receipts for dues of George H. Wirt for the years 1901-1912, 1917, 1919, and 1936-1944. Also a typed list of AFA presidents (1875-1966), a typed list of AFA annual meetings (1920-1966), a typed list of AFA Special Meetings (1875-1950), and a handwritten list of AFA Proceedings for the years 1882-1897.</p>
<b>Extent:</b>	0.5 linear feet(1 archival box)
<b>Repository:</b>	Forest History Society Library and Archives
<b>Call Number:</b>	3964
<b>Language of Material:</b>	Material in English

## Biographical and Historical Note

### George H. Wirt

George H. Wirt is one of the foremost names in Pennsylvania forest history. As the state's first state forester and Chief Forest Fire Warden, Wirt came to be known as one of America's most influential forest protectionists. Born on November 28, 1880 in McVeytown, Pennsylvania, he received a B.E. degree from Juniata College in 1891 with aspirations of becoming an engineer. But a close friend of Wirt's father, Dr. Joseph T. Rothrock, a prominent botanist and forest enthusiast, had other plans in mind for him. Under advice from Rothrock, Wirt enrolled at the Biltmore Forest School and received his Bachelor of Forestry degree in 1901.

## Forest History Society Library and Archives

By this time Dr. Rothrock had been appointed the first Pennsylvania forestry commissioner. Wirt accepted the job of state forester, at which position he authored the first technical bulletin on forestry issued in Pennsylvania. In 1903, Wirt and Rothrock organized the opening of the Forest Academy at Mont Alto, Pennsylvania, of which Wirt was named the first director. Under Wirt's guidance, the academy operated as a higher ranger school and advanced to provide college-level courses of professional caliber only to the most deserving students. The Forest Academy later merged with the Department of Forestry of Pennsylvania State College.

Wirt married in 1907 and left the academy in 1910 to accept the job of forest inspector for the Department of Forestry at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. During this time he supervised the newly-educated staff of foresters at work in portions of the State Forests. In 1913 the proposition of forest protection in the state was recognized as fundamental, and Wirt was assigned the job of drafting a forest protection law. It was presented to the legislature in 1915, and in the fall of that same year Wirt was made Chief Forest Fire Warden of Pennsylvania, a position he held until his retirement in 1946.

Wirt was known as the primary architect of the unified forest fire control structure for Pennsylvania, which became a model for many other state protection organizations. He solicited the appointment of 4,400 fire wardens and 30,000 crew members. Forest fire loss dropped from an average of half a million acres per year to about 25,000 acres a year in the period of Wirt's leadership. He was honored in 1928 with a monument erected in his name at Mont Alto and was awarded an honorary Master of Science degree from Juniata College. He was a fellow in the Society of American Foresters, served on a number of committee assignments, wrote many articles, and delivered many public lectures. He remained active in state and local conservation movements after his retirement. George H. Wirt died on November 8, 1961 in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.

Note: The above biographical information about George H. Wirt was drawn from the following sources: (1) George H. Wirt, "Autobiography of and by George H. Wirt, Graduating from Biltmore Forest School in 1901," in *The Biltmore Immortals, Biographies of 50 American Boys Graduating From the Biltmore Forest School Which Was the First School of American Forestry on American Soil*, Volume I ([Darmstadt, Germany: L. C. Wittich, 1953]), pp. 310-314; and (2) "George R. [sic] Wirt (1880-1961)," *Journal of Forestry* 60 (January 1962): 60-61. [Obituary.]

## American Forestry Association

Established in 1875, the American Forestry Association is the oldest group in North America organized to promote forest conservation. The organization became American Forests in 1992.

## Collection Overview

The collection includes documents pertaining to the founding and early history of the American Forestry Association (AFA). Materials include correspondence, copies of speeches, essays, and addresses delivered before various organizations, minutes of the annual meetings of the American Forestry Congress (1882-1887), and copies of the Proceedings of the American Forestry Association (1882-1897), as well as other general information relating to the development of the AFA. Much of the collection pertains to Dr. John A. Warder, president of AFA for a number of years in the late nineteenth century. Also included are receipts for dues of George H. Wirt for the years 1901-1912, 1917, 1919, and 1936-1944. Also a typed list of AFA presidents (1875-1966), a typed list of AFA annual meetings (1920-1966), a typed list of AFA Special Meetings (1875-1950), and a handwritten list of AFA Proceedings for the years 1882-1897.

## Collection Arrangement

1. American Forestry Association Materials, 1873-1966

## Restrictions

### Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

### Copyright Notice

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## Subject Headings

American Forestry Association

American Forestry Congress

Forest conservation -- United States -- 19th century

Forest conservation -- United States -- 20th century

Hough, Franklin B.

Landscape design -- Cemeteries -- United States

Landscape gardening -- United States

Loring, George Bailey, 1817-1891

Warder, John A.

Wirt, George H. (George Hermann), 1880-1961

## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], George H. Wirt Collection, Library and Archives, Forest History Society, Durham, NC, USA.

### Processing Information

Processed by Staff,

Encoded by Amanda Ross, June 2009 and Eben Lehman, January 2010

Funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission supported the encoding of this finding aid. Support for digitization and outreach provided by the Alvin J. Huss Endowment.

# Detailed Description of the Collection

## 1. American Forestry Association Materials, 1873-1966.

Folder 1	Warder Letter, 1873	Letter written in ink and signed by John Aston Warder with reference to his visit to Bohemia in 1873.
Folder 2	Report on Forests and Forestry, 1875	<i>Report on Forests and Forestry</i> by John Aston Warder, member of the Scientific Commission of the United States to the Vienna International Exposition, 1873.
Folder 3	Forestry and Its Needs, 1878	An address by John Aston Warder delivered before the American Forestry Association at its meeting in Washington, DC, February 19-21, 1878.
Folder 4	An Address on Forestry, 1878	Address by John Aston Warder delivered before the Otoe County Horticultural Society in Nebraska City, Nebraska, September 12, 1878.
Folder 5	List of Names, 1879	List of names written in pencil by John Aston Warder, to whom copies of Vienna Report were mailed March 10, 1879.
Folder 6	Landscape Gardening for the Cemetery, 1880	An essay read by request before the Michigan Horticultural Society at Ann Arbor, Michigan, December 7, 1880, by Dr. John Aston Warder.
Folder 7	Proceedings of Montgomery County Historical Society, 1881	Includes an essay on "wind-breaks, shelter-belts and shelter-hedges" by Dr. John Aston Warder, Cincinnati.
Folder 8	Protection to the Orchard, 1881	Pamphlet by John Aston Warder, read before American Pomological Society, Boston, September 14, 1881.
Folder 9	Rural Cemetery and Landscape Gardening, 1881	Pamphlet by John Aston Warder, North Bend, Ohio, printed 1881.
Folder 10	Some Trees for Planting on the Open Prairies of Northern Illinois and Adjoining Regions, 1881	From the transactions of the Illinois State Horticultural Society for the year 1881, by John Aston Warder, president of the American Forestry Association.
Folder 11	What are Forest Trees?, 1882	Leaflet, by John Aston Warder, president of the American Forestry Association, 1882.
Folder 12	American Journal of Forestry, 1882	

	Volume 1, Issue 1, edited by Franklin B. Hough, October 1882.
Folder 13	Tree Planting in Shelter-Belts, 1882
	By Dr. John Aston Warder, reprint from <i>Agricultural Review</i> and <i>Journal of the American Agricultural Association</i> , May 1882.
Folder 14	Report of American Forestry Association, 1882
	Meeting at Rochester, New York, June 20-21, 1882.
Folder 15	Tree Planting for Railroads, 1882
	Reprint of address by Dr. John Aston Warder at the Montreal Meeting of the American Forestry Congress, August 1882.
Folder 16	In Memoriam, John A. Warder, 1883
	Obituary of Dr. John Aston Warder.
Folder 17	In Memory of John A. Warder
	Poem by J.N. Matthews.
Folder 18	An Eloquent Tribute
	Memorial statements as tribute to John A. Warder, Mississippi Valley Horticultural Society.
Folder 19	Address of George B. Loring, 1883
	Address by Loring, U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture, before the American Forestry Congress meeting at St. Paul, Minnesota, August 8, 1883.
Folder 20	Proceedings of the American Forestry Congress, 1882
Folder 21	Proceedings of the American Forestry Congress, 1883
Folder 22	Proceedings of the American Forestry Congress, 1885
Folder 23	Proceedings of the American Forestry Congress, 1886
Folder 24	Proceedings of the American Forestry Congress, 1887
Folder 25	The Empire Forestry Association, Its Genesis and Objects with a Report of a Forestry Conference Held in London, 1921
Folder 26	Membership Receipts
	Receipts for American Forestry Association dues from George H. Wirt for the years 1901-12, 1917, 1919, 1936-44.
Folder 27	Lists of AFA Presidents, Meetings, and Proceedings
	Typed lists.
Folder 28	AFA List of Officers, 1891