

Alfred Cunningham Papers, 1910, 1931-1937, n.d.
(Adele Schenck Obituary Notice Series)
Letter Describing Adele Schenck's Demise

Transcription

[Transcription of a one-page typed letter composed by German forester and former Biltmore Forest School director Carl Alwin Schenck (1868-1955) describing the circumstances that led to the death of his first wife, Adele Bopp Schenck, on 14 August [1929]. The letter is addressed "Dear friends in America: You will be anxious to know how the end came on August 14th". In the correspondence, Dr. Schenck describes how his wife had been called from their home in Lindenfels, Germany, to her mother's bedside in Darmstadt, Germany, on 29 July to care for her after a long illness. While attending to her mother, Adele Schenck developed mumps. She was attended to by a home nurse for a couple of weeks prior to being admitted to a hospital in Darmstadt, where she died in the evening on 14 August. Her body was cremated on 17 August, and her ashes were interred in the family tomb at Lindenfels. The original spelling and formatting of the letter has been maintained in the transcription below without any editorial correction. A digital scan (300 dpi; maximum pixel limitation of 600 pixels) of the document is included at the end of this document. The letter is part of the [Alfred Cunningham Papers](#) held by the Library and Archives of the Forest History Society in Durham, North Carolina.]

DR. PHIL. C. A. SCHENCK

DARMSTADT
HEIDELBERGERSTR. 16

Dear friends in America:

You will be anxious to know how the
end came on August 14th.

We were living in Lindenfels, our little country place, when Adele was summoned to the bedside of her paralyzed mother on Monday July 29th, the mother having developed, after 3 years illness, some painful sores. The mother lived in her little country place, 5 miles out of Darmstadt (Nieder-Ramstadt). Adele intended to return to Lindenfels on August 2nd, but had to abandon her plans, since her octogenarian mother developed in addition erysipelas. In the night from Monday to Tuesday, August 5/6th, quite suddenly and unexpectedly,

Adele had a severe spell of feverish ague and a temperature of 103°. I left for her bedside at once and found her, in spite of continued fever, in a cheerful mood. The physician assured me that it was nothing but a severe cold. In the meantime the paralyzed mother was taken to the city hospital in Darmstadt. I stayed with Adele on Wednesday the 7th and Thursday the 8th, making arrangements for her transfer to our house in Darmstadt, Heidelbergerstresse 16. On Friday the

9th Adele walked, although the fever continued to be close to 100°, from her bed to the car taking her to Darmstadt where another physician assured me that Adele's case was a typical mumps. We secured for Adele her pet nurse for better attention. The salivary glands being badly swollen and painful, the physician considered the advisability of an operation.

On Monday the 12th I went on a short business trip to Lindenfels. Returning, the nurse told me that Adele had had another spell of feverish ague. Mistrusting the physician, I secured the help of the best clinical physician in Darmstadt, at the city hospital, who advised her transfer to the city hospital. She was transferred easily and apparently in her usual strength. It was decided that an operation for her mumps should be postponed.

After a bad night (12th to 13th) Adele showed signs of cryptogenetic sepsis, combined with intense pains in her left arm. Injections of serum were made. In the evening she was put under morphine. On Wednesday the 14th, after a quiet night, Adele was weak and the temperature below normal. Adele was willing to drink some claret and some champagne and even some nourishing soup. The pain had almost ceased. More serum was injected. In the afternoon of the 14th from 5 o'clock on, Adele slept quietly, awaking from time to time for a few seconds, always in full possession of her senses, though very weak. At 9 o'clock in the evening, unwilling to take her medicine, the nurse decided to inject the medicine in her left leg. Adele, awaking suddenly, exclaimed with a smile: "How naughty to take a little girl by surprise in her sleep!" She asked for a drink of champagne. I raised her head with my hand to give her the champagne; in that very moment she began to tremble with a paroxysm of ague and was dead in my arms in half a minute.

Her remains were incinerated at the Darmstadt cemetery on August 17th. According to her wish, the ashes will be interred in the family tomb at Lindenfels near Darmstadt.

Adele's mother from whom the disease is supposed to have been contracted is on the road of recovery.

Very sincerely,
C. A. Schenck.

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