

**Alfred Cunningham Papers, 1910, 1931-1937, n.d.**  
**(Correspondence Series)**  
**Schenck Christmas Letter, December 1934**

**Transcription**

[Transcription of a four-page typed letter from German forester and former Biltmore Forest School director Dr. Carl Alwin Schenck (1868-1955) in Darmstadt, Germany, addressed to "Dear friends anywhere in notably in the USA" in which he sends Christmas greetings and describes the work and leisure activities he accomplished during 1934. Topics covered include his and Mrs. Schenck's travels; their hikes through area forests; his game-watching, fishing, and hunting activities; Schenck's correspondence with forestry leaders in the United States during the year; and the saltless diet Dr. and Mrs. Schenck were on for much of the year. The original spelling and formatting of the letter has been maintained in the transcription below without any editorial correction. Digital scans of each page of the letter are 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.]

C. A. Schenck, DARMSTADT, Heidelberger strasse 16, at Christmas 1934.

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Dear friends anywhere in notably in the USA:

You know it anyhow; I love you; and I love you—promise to love you—better in 1935 than what I did and demonstrated in 1934. My body lies smouldering in the fatherland; but my soul is marching on, all the time, with you thru the USA. On every Sunday, in particular, I am communing with you while I read on of the classic sermons of Dr. W. E. Fosdick. I wish on you and on your loved ones, all the time and not only at Christmas, all God's best blessings. AMEN.

At this point, I might close my Christmas card to you. But I suppose that you, too, continue to be somewhat interested in my affairs and welfares. And look here, here is their record for the whole year 1934.

FROM JANUARY TO MAY, our H. Q. were in old Darmstadt, worldfamed as everybody knows for being the hub of Europe; it is within a night's ride from either Vienna, or Paris, London, Prague, Milano, Brussels, Berlin of course, and of some more suburbs of Darmstadt. At Darmstadt, snugly established in my old apartment, Mrs. Schenck and I were sick with flues for 3 weeks, were playing bridge with friends for 7 weeks, and we had many a week of really grand operatics such as Götterdämmerung (which is no dussword), Magic Flute, Figaros Wedding, Fidelio, Hensel and Gretel, Puppenfee Country of Smiles etc etc.; we also had some grand music otherwise: The Violin concerts by Beethoven, Mendelssohn Busoni and Spohr and the symphonies 5 7 and 8 by Beethoven, 3 and 4 by Schumann. If you do not know what that is, --just hurry to Darmstadt and to me. My stepson and godson George Kulenkampff is today THE Leading violinist of all Germany; and I too have turned musician, to my own surprise—and probably also to yours.

INTERMEZZO

On all Wednesdays, we attended lectures at the Darmstadt "Tech" where you can have all sorts of information, from chemistry and physics and - there is a tanning institute, a cellulose fibre institute, a botanical institute and what not --- but we were satisfied to listen to lectures on the recent history of the great powers of the world. Really, those were most fascinating lectures. And a lecture, I tell you ---

On every other week - or sunday, rain or shine or snow all three of them, we strolled through the woods which encircle Darmstadt, wreathlike, -- there are the PINERIES of the Rhine valley with the finest riding roads on the earth; and there are the hardwood forests of the hill country with the beech and oak and maple etc. etc, in all age classes, --and there is the - former grnadducal park with wild boar and red deer and fallow deer; and there are thousands of foot paths leading thru all that sort of beauty.

*((And there was -- Mardi gras! Do not ask me for details of the frolicking time which we had--in spite of our dignifying old age--at an ancient inn named the Hess! No! Forget that! I ought not to tell ---!))*

When the peaches and when the apples were in bloom, at Easter time, our excursions were extended so as to include the proximity of the "hub" in all directions. We do not own a car; thus we did the side trips on foot, by buss and by rail. Glorious they were! We visited Heidelberg,

Oppenheim on Rhine, Aschaffenburg on the Main, Worms, Zwingenberg, Amorback etc etc. And - before that, on Mardi gras, -- do'nt ask me what frolicking time we had at an ancient inn known as the Hess !

Did I do any work in Darmstadt? Well, yes and no! I finished a little book on the trees of the woods, hand- illustrated (!), and I tried to keep step (goose step) with the grand and novel strides made by American forestry under NIRA and under the LUMBER CODES. I was in correspondence with leaders like Chas. L. Pack, Dr. Wilson Compton, H.E. Hardtner, P.F. Ridsdale, Howard Krinbill, R. S. Kellogg, S. R. Black, G. M. Cornwall, Ed. Meeker (Hard wood Record), Ward Shepard et al; I kept in touch with the faculties of Syracuse, Berkeley, Moscow and of dear Missoula (here incl. The Druids and the Lions!), further with the Forest Service in Asheville, Portland, Missoula, and New Orleans, and finally with the "boys" engaged in the Tenn Valley Authority and in the C. C. C. My own letters continue to sing the same timehonored (not honored otherwise) melody: "" Sustained forestry cannot come to private lands unless it does come by cooperation, financially, of NATION and OWNER"".

I didn't accomplish much; Alas, I am minus a typist; I cannot afford a good one (for fear of losing my dollars); nor can I afford a

bad one (for fear of losing my temper.) And how can you expect a fellow to be efficient when he does his own typing??

FROM JUNE TO DECEMBER, Mrs. Schenck and I have been living in the old Schenck place, DINDENFELS near Darmstadt. Here, I have some fishing and some hunting rights; and indeed, I have been fishing and hunting continuously, Mrs. Schenck frequently with me of an evening on a "pulpit in the woods". Watching the game is more fun than killing it. Still, there were rabbits all the time, roebucks in July, partridges in August, English pheasants in September, Woodcock in Oct., and just now, every Thursday, there is a small hunting party on my grounds consisting of 12 guns and of as many beaters.

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Visitors have been coming and going, all summer long, among them some of my American Merck relatives and almost among them Mrs. R. R. of Ashville N. C. The summer was extremely hot; but its temperatures didn't prevent us from journeying to BAYREUTH where we had Parsifal and the Meistersinger under Richard Strauss. From Bayreuth, we hopped to dear old Munich where we chanced to meet Dr. Wilson Compton and his dear Billy boy, and Mr. W. R. Brown and his dear daughter, -- all fresh from a trip thru the German forests and all bent for the PASSION PLAY in Oberammergau. Lo, what fun it is to meet American friends anywhere and notably in Munich!

You see, as a whole, we had a glorious year, --- in the face of economic disaster, in spite of politics, of assassinations, of Hindenburg's death, and of the shock of the Roehm revolt; also, in spite of the fact that Mrs. Schenck broke her little toe square thru, one morning, --- all's well that heals well!

The most lamentable fact of 1934 is, however, this: Both of us have been put on a strictly saltless diet. I do'nt like it.

Fortunately for me, Rhinewine does not contain any salt and Rhine wine has not been tabooed by the Aesculaps. Consequently, if our ears should ring on NEW YEARS EVE, just remember that it is from my toasting you personally and in Rhine wine at the birth of a glorious new

1935 !!!!!

Very sincerely yours

C. A. Schenck

Not dictated but written by CAS.



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