

# THREE DAYS' FOREST FESTIVAL ON THE BILTMORE ESTATE.

**Representatives of American Business Life Attend a Practical Demonstration of Work for the Encouragement of the Forestry Idea—Splendid Estate of George W. Vanderbilt Throw Open for Their Inspection Under the Guidance of C. A. Schenck, Ph. D., Forester in Charge, and His Assistants—Attractions of Asheville, in Whose Neighborhood Biltmore Lies—Educative Explanations by Forester Schenck.**

## CHAPTER VI—ASHEVILLE IN THE LAND OF THE SKY.

"The Good Old Mountain Dew."

Down under the hill there is a little still  
And the smoke goes curling to the sky.  
You can easily tell by the sniffle and the smell  
There's good liquor in the air close by.

It fills the air with a perfume so rare  
That's only known to a few:  
So wrinkle up your lip and take a little sip  
Of the good old mountain dew.

So sang the students of the Biltmore Forest School at many times and amid many scenes, reflecting their buoyant physical spirits but not their spirituous inclinations. And these and other rollicking songs haunted their visitors throughout their waking and even their sleeping hours and follow many of them yet, as they will for many a day. Amid such good cheer the preceding installment of this report left Dr. C. A. Schenck and his party in the beautiful woods of the Biltmore estate, where, in thoroughly congenial environment, this installment may leave them from the present while some reference is made to Asheville, the immediate point from which the pilgrimages to the Biltmore forests started and which is entitled to special mention. Little reference need be made here to the commercial or political aspects of Asheville; this article is concerned with those phases of the little city directly complementing the forest festival held in its vicinity three days of the last week of November, 1908. In its significance to the lumber trade and, secondly, to the tourist, the artist and the health seeker, Asheville is more immediately of interest to those who participated in the ever memorable forest fair.

Stating briefly that Asheville is a well governed little city with metropolitan airs and metropolitan accessories in compact form, a community of energetic, up-to-date citizenry living in an altitude of approximately 2,350 feet above sea level, and that it is the capital of the "Land of the Sky," its more apposite relation to this story commands present attention.

## CHAPTER VII—A SUMMER RESORT PRE-EMINENT.

Asheville is located in what was once one of the most densely wooded sections of the southeast and yet indirectly tributary to it are large and active lumbering operations. In it and through it much lumber history has been made; it has been the home of some of the largest lumber interests of earlier days, as it is now of some relatively but little less important. As a point for the exploitation and study of forestry Asheville presents indisputable claims to consideration. As a summer resort, for those seeking health, the study of nature or mere pleasure, it is known to far too few in proportion to its superb attractions.

Within a region immediately tributary to Asheville are to be found specimens of the timber growth of this continent in greater number than can be found in any other section within a similar area. Its sweep of mountain, valley and stream, and its famous sunsets and cloud effects, are unrivaled. Its equable, bracing atmosphere is a continual blessing to the strong as well as to the weak and its climate is unsurpassed, the last fact one that Asheville, for some occult reason, has succeeded too well in hiding under a bushel. The average northerner, and even those within easy reach of the city territorially, have visions of annoying and debilitating heat when reference is made to a southern point as a summer resort. As a matter of fact, Asheville enjoys one of the mildest climates of any point in the United States. During the summer and fall months it revels in a cool temperature when such cities as St. Louis, Chicago, New York, those along the lakes and even far northern St. Paul are numbering by scores their victims of sunstroke. Accessible to Asheville, within easy riding and walking distance, are hundreds of the most beautiful spots of the scenically most attractive section of the country east of the Rocky mountains.

The more pretentious hotels of Asheville, of which the city has a number evidently out of proportion to its size, are large, roomy, admirably equipped and admirably managed. Perhaps the most picturesquely situated is the Battery Park hotel, on a historic height which commands on all sides magnificent views extending to the Smoky mountains — to Mount Pisgah, with altitude of 5,757 feet; to Mount Mitchell, the loftiest peak in America east of the Rocky mountains, 6,717 feet high; and to lesser but impressive eminences, and the intervening vistas of valley and stream, the latter including the famous French Broad and Swannanoa rivers and numerous other streams.

## CHAPTER VIII—AN HONOR TO HIS COUNTRY.

Of those who have made famous this section of the southeast, one whose name will be there revered for all time, for his sterling personal character, his benefactions public and private, his extraordinarily beneficial impress upon the institutions of the section; to whom lasting monuments in

tangible and intangible form have been reared; who was great as a lumberman and greater as a man, was George Willis Pack, a sketch of whose life immediately following his death August 31, 1906, it was the melancholy duty of the AMERICAN LUMBERMAN to publish.

George W. Pack was identified with steadily increasing prominence with the lumber business from 1854. Michigan was the scene of his early operations. At Sand Beach, that state, he was a member of the firm of Carrington, Pack & Co., which continued nine years. Other concerns with which he was identified and their respective periods of activity were Pack, Jenks & Co., Rock Falls, Mich., eleven

public benefactions were a public park and handsome library building and grounds, a club house for a golf course and the erection at his expense of a monument to the Hon. Zebulon B. Vance, formerly a popular governor and United States senator. He established and maintained a free kindergarten and provided generously for the maintenance of a successful charity known as the Mission hospital. Of a tithe of his private charities the public never will know.

Public life had little charm for Mr. Pack, but when it was evident that in office he might serve his fellows to advantage he accepted the call readily. He was regent of the University of Michigan in 1856. In 1864 he was a presidential elector and assisted in casting the vote of Michigan for Abraham Lincoln. While a member of prominent clubs of Cleveland and Asheville, Mr. Pack spent the larger part of his leisure time among the, to him, greater attractions of his home.

Pack Square, the center of business activity of Asheville was named in honor of George W. Pack and the expense of its establishment was borne by him. Indicative of the general esteem in which Mr. Pack was held, his death and the subsequent memorial services were made the occasion of extraordinary public demonstrations. Asheville and Cleveland, by civic bodies and as communities, paid him and his memory tributes of respect in which the entire populace of both cities joined. The name of George Willis Pack will be held in affectionate reverence in Asheville and Cleveland as long as the cities shall endure.

## CHAPTER IX—IN OAK, PINE AND POPLAR.

Rejoining those enjoying the forest fair, upon reaching Tip No. 4 Dr. Schenck called attention to the marking by different colored labels of the various growths of timber, a scheme which was followed throughout the estate wherever visited in order that the party might determine at a glance the character of the respective growths. Here Dr. Schenck said:

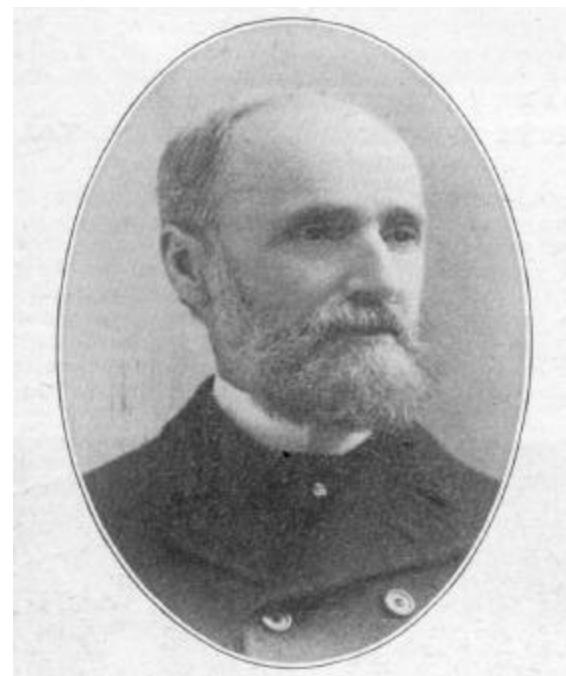
"This hollow, in my opinion, is particularly fertile. It was stocked in 1905 with poles and trees of little prospective value. The proof of the pudding is seen in the yellow poplar wherever they regenerate as these did, and where the white oaks are as big as those that are shown here it is very good soil. The 10,000 acres were regenerated pine forests and the pines were cut by the railroads to help in the building up of Asheville. It was a yellow pine forest, towering yellow pine—North Carolina pine—of which some relics are left over there yet. In these hollows hardwoods were growing with great fertility, notably those with northern aspect. This cover had a heavy growth of poor hardwoods among good ones and these I had taken out, misshapen woods of no particular value, and I made them into money, getting over \$47 an acre. This was largely due to the fact we are but a step from the road and I had good transportation by wagon. We get for our hardwoods \$5.60 a cord and consequently I made good money out of it, and it seemed to be a pity at the same time to allot this good soil to an inferior group."

"Where we get one of the restricted areas nature reafforests the best, particularly where we cut clean, though not as quickly as I can through the aid of the

nurseries. Here I have clean cutting doctored up by planting hardwoods, a few chestnuts, oaks and yellow poplar, to get results quicker and a larger variety of growth in the reestablishment. The tendency of nature to reestablish itself is shown in these yellow poplars—and no tree do I hold more dear than the yellow poplar. In the primeval forests it is the prettiest tree by far and the most valuable where the conditions are much better for a fine second growth of yellow poplar. I love to cut the big poplars, but I love also to have them replaced by thousands of seedlings."

"In this hollow we have approximately per acre 6,000 specimens of poplar. Some of you boy students go in and shake them." The attentive students fled at the master forester's command and executed his orders, after which Dr. Schenck continued:

"The straight saplings with yellow bark were numerous here. Yellow poplar has few foes. The rabbits do not chew it, and insects and birds and fungi do not inter-



THE LATE GEORGE WILLIS PACK.

years; Woods, Pack & Cos., Alpens, Mich., ten years; Woods, Perry & Co., Cleveland, Ohio, twenty-three years; Pack, Woods & Co., Cleveland, over fifty years, and last but lately out of existence, Pack, Gray & Co., Cleveland. His companies were in their day among the largest timber cutters and lumber manufacturers of their respective localities, owners and operators of great mills, trams, docks, lake craft, etc., and of all these usually he was the dominating spirit.

After a long residence in the more western cities Mr. Pack moved, in 1885, to Asheville, influenced by consideration for his wife's health. His public spirit and effective energy were at once recognized and from the early days of his residence in it he was a foremost citizen of the North Carolina city. Among other evidences of his high character frankly and spontaneously given by his fellows was the bestowal upon him of the rare distinction of placing his portrait in the county building in Asheville among those of governors of the state and other dignitaries.

Mr. Pack was ever among the foremost in practical efforts for the general advancement of his city. The site of its county building was a gift from him, and among his other



PACK SQUARE, BUSINESS CENTER OF ASHEVILLE, N.C.

fer with it, but it has to have the best soil, which I give it with pleasure.

"Here were a few groups of white pine, my first planting, and I hid them away in the woods because I was afraid I would make a mess of it. There were 2,500 of them two years old.

"If you come back in ten years, as I hope you will, I shall show you a splendid growth here of spontaneous yellow poplar. Here is one of the typical groups of yellow poplar of spontaneous growth entirely from seedlings that cost nothing and better than I could plant it."

#### CHAPTER X—COAXING TIMBER GROWTH.

In movements from tip to tip, or plantation to plantation, the carriage were utilized mostly, but Dr. Schenck's indifference to the exertion of high climbing induced him on several occasions to ignore the other means of locomotion provided and to lead his sometimes winded party rapidly to the next point of interest. It was so in this case when he reached Tip No. 5, where with eager audience around him he said:

"Here we have North Carolina pine and opposite some groups of North Carolina pine spontaneous growths. When I knew them first they were about half as high as they are now and were badly suppressed by other growths of poor timber trees of no prospective value. I came in here with my little ax to free the pines from the poor timber and incidentally to make revenue, because we get for fire wood here as much as \$5.60 a cord.

"I recollect very well how the hardwoods kept back the yellow pine, how misshapen the pines looked under the superstructure that deprived them of light. Since the poor timber has been thinned out the others have done remarkably well. We kept some poor stuff growing in here because it is beneficial to the better timber. It keeps the soil moist and helps to make a supply of humus and helps to keep these pines free from limbs rubbing against them and brushing off the dead branches and so the understuff is very welcome. From the standpoint of the sylviculturist I think it is far better to preserve them. At the time of the first thinning we reduced the number of plants to give the individual more to eat—food and moisture and soil and light—and in the next three or four years we will make another thinning, taking out half the pine, and then the under forest will be found to be doubly valuable."

According to the printed program referred to in the previous issue of the LUMBERMAN, the primeval forest at Tip no. 5 consisted of oaks, hickories, chestnuts, sourwoods, and blackgums, which grew up in profusion up to the first thinning in 1898.

At Tip No. 6 the lecturer said:

"This little lot in front of us always interests me particularly. It had been cut over apparently preparatory to farming in 1890 and was burned over the last time in 1894, when I came to America. Then I looked it over and found it apparently hopeless and bare, and I recall very well that when the American Forestry Association paid me the honor of a visit here I told them of the destruction of the forest by ax, unintelligent cutting and burning. I thought it was hopeless and that it never would amount to anything. I have changed my mind, because one of the best wood lots we have is here. Here are yellow pine saplings kept free from brush. Fire running over the ground will hurt the yellow pine the worst. They will not sprout even from the stumps, as hardwoods will. Smoke will not hurt them, however, and sulphur fumes will hurt them but little. It is particularly interesting to know that yellow poplar suffers less from sulphur fumes than practically all other species. It is practically immune. Spring fires are the worst because in the spring the bark is loose and the effect of the fires is really an entire girdling of the trees all around, their life veins being destroyed."

"The tops of the yellow poplar are absolutely free. The poplar cleans itself of lower branches better than any other tree that I know of. The small lower branches more easily adapt themselves to good growth than those of any other species. Where the lower little branches are removed the spot is healed almost immediately."

"By the time these poplars are fitted for thinning we will possibly get \$8 a cord for the woods for fiber."

#### CHAPTER XI—LUNCHEON AT THE FORESTER'S HOME.

At this juncture, after long tramps in the open air and considerable strenuous climbing, the appetites of the entire

party were on keen edge. Dr. Schenck had made ample provision for this fact, timing nicely a short tide from Tip No. 6 to the Schenck home.

Here was afforded an illustration of hospitality such as was repeated on several occasions on all the three days' outing. It was a combination illustrative of the best traditions of open handed German hospitality and American hospitable customs. A lunch was provided of substantial and delicacies, sandwiches, meats, dessert, coffee, in almost embarrassing profusion, and was eaten in and around Dr. Schenck's home without regard to ceremony.

If envy ever may be justifiable, the attitude of the visitors toward the Schenck home was well warranted. It is one of the handsomest frame buildings on the Biltmore estate; big, roomy, built with an idea to comfort and apparently equipped with every modern appliance devoted to that end. Its situation is admirable and from it from all sides one can get views of some of the most entrancing scenery on the beautiful Biltmore estate.

Dr. Schenck was assisted in serving his guests by friends of her sex of Mrs. Schenck, and prominently by Mrs. Schenck, a lady to whom his guests, never perfunctorily but always spontaneously and with deepest respect, doffed their caps. For this lady, a transplanted, most attractive product of the Fatherland is one of those of her sex to whom the thoughtless and the thoughtful alike pay homage instinctively. Mrs. Schenck is a worthy helpmate, in physique and mental attainments, of her husband. Her attractive personality, her thorough but never obtrusive hospitality, her graceful tact, made for her a staunch friend of every member of the forest fair contingent, as long ago it did of the pupils of the Biltmore Forest School, all of whom swear by and would gladly fight for the master forester's wife.

#### CHAPTER XII—SOME GENERAL AND VALUABLE OBSERVATIONS.

After luncheon Tip No. 7, on what is known as the "Ridge road," was visited. Commenting upon this Dr. Schenck said:

"If you will look about you will find on the ground a number of yellow pine stumps, the remnants of trees six to ten inches in diameter. We made here a very heavy thinning. We were cutting about ten cords to the acre here, which is very heavy. Of course, we have to experiment in the line of thinning as well as in the line of planting. I car-



NATURAL REPRODUCTION OF YELLOW POPLAR  
SHOWING HOW IT TAKES POSSESSION OF  
THE GROUND AND FORMS STRAIGHT, CLEAN BODIES.

sunlight. What it needs is water, moisture and sunlight. Suppose we have an acre covered with a certain amount of growth; is it not best to feed it all so as to get the timber quickly and of the best character?

"What is the use of feeding 10,000 trees when we can get just as good results from feeding 1,000, getting as a consequence timber of logable size more rapidly? We reduce the number of messmates, providing thereby better environment and opportunity for the remaining good messmates, and at the same time obtaining, as we do here, a good deal of revenue, making here about \$12 an acre because of the firewood market thereby made available by a good system of transportation, enabling me to practice sylviculture and make money by so doing.

"In the mountains thinning is out of the question because there is no market for the wood. The mountain timber is too far from the consumer and inadequate transportation makes its marketing a commercial impossibility. Do not offer to the market more than the market can digest but less than it desires and you get a better price. The firewood price here in 1895 was \$2.50 a cord; it is now \$5.60 delivered. All the delivering is done by our own teams. It is all retail business and very intricate and a lot of trouble, but I have no other choice. I would rather somebody else would attend to that stunt, but I have to do it in order to practice sylviculture."

Here Dr. Schenck turned to one of the party and said, "If Mr. J. M. English (indicating the gentleman), the chief lumberman of Asheville, will take the retail business out of my hands I will be very glad, and I will sell you Mr. English, the firewood at 50 cents a cord, if you will offer me that and assume all the trouble."

(To be continued next week.)



SERVING LUNCH AT DR. SCHENCK'S HOUSE.

not foretell the results; I do not know whether insects will attack the trees which I have left after thinning, depriving me of all the pines, so it is all experimental. What I have tried to do is to leave all of the most promising pines, those which promise to develop into valuable timber, by which I mean the trees particularly free from limbs and which form a good bole. The most prominent of the trees, the aristocrats of these, I have left. What the result will be I can not say. This thinning was made only three years ago and so far has grown to my entire satisfaction.

"On an acre of ground there is a certain amount of food to be found in the soil and in the air. An acre of ground obtains a certain amount of sunlight. Timber is formed out of moisture in the soil, moisture in the air and out of



GROUP OF VISITORS AT DR. SCHENCK'S HOUSE.