THREE DAYS' FOREST FESTIVAL ON THE BILTMORE ESTATE  

Extraordinary Outing of Representatives of All Concerned With Timber From the Tree to the Trade—Biltmore Estate, the Property of George W. Vanderbilt, Used Educationally in a Unique Celebration Under the Direction of C. A. Schenck, Ph. D.—Authorities Invade the Woods for Lectures by the MasterForester—Open handed, Open Air Hospitality—Anniversaries Signalized in an Unprecedented Way—Beauties ful Biltmore in Story and Verse.

BILTMORE.  We are but borrowers of God's good soil, Free tenants of His field and stormy hill; We are but workmen 'mid his vines to toil To serve his purpose and obey His will.

How shall we use His bounty unto men? For private aims alone, Is spreading lands? Or for social service back again For wealth he places in our eager hands?

Biltmore, the answer ringeth from thy slopes; Biltmore, they forest voices answer— The public good the first of private hopes; A future race the ward of present days. Here use and future use have equal thought. For time that is and time that be; Here Nature's grandest:handwork is wrought In this, the planted and the guarded tree. Biltmore, thy name shall stand for many a year— Not for the wealth that you perpetuate, But for the lesson that is written here For individual and the state.

To him, possessor of these ample miles, Shall come an equal and undying fame; And other woods shall echo with his name Whenever forests rise and Nature smiles. Wherever forests rise and Nature smiles.

CHAPTER I.—THE BILTMORE ESTATE.

From any one of the many picturesque eminences of Asheville, western North Carolina, the eye can encompass a generally western area approximately twenty miles north and twenty miles south within which, due to an extraordinary range of altitude in mountainous country, are to be found, in great numbers, species of every known variety of tree growth native to the sweep of country from Nova Scotia on the north to the Carolina-Georgia state line on the south. Obviously a region of this size is extraordinarily attractive to lumbermen generally and to those interested in forestry particularly, affordine with comparatively compact and dense growths of timber both large and small, it is of course very desirable to encounter in so restricted a territory.

Approximately 20,000 acres of this region was abandoned by timber cutters as one practically devoured of the resources which they sought. A wealthy New Yorker of aesthetic appreciation for outdoor life found this a wonderfully opulent section in all that appeals to the lover of the beautiful scenically, in all that satisfies a nicely appreciative appetite for the beautiful in nature, in all that caters to healthful outdoor life. This man, George W. Vanderbilt, bought the section, a principality in size, in larger or smaller tracts until he was owner of a domain of 200 square miles. Then he transformed it into the most beautiful single estate in America.

Contemporaneously with his ownership of this magnificent domain, Mr. Vanderbilt was impressed with the necessity for its preservation and perpetuation as a region of natural beauty and as a game preserve, and incidentally with the possibilities of recreation Serially developed from this appreciation without interference with its aesthetic value. He brought to it the aid the methods of modern forestry and its resources, and finally, two years ago, secured the services of the best known and conceded one of the most thorough educators, technically, artistically and practically, of conservative forestry—Carl Alwin Schenck, Ph.D., formerly an officer, in leave of the Prussian army, and its forest service.

Dr. Schenck, forester of the Biltmore estate, established upon it in 1898, a school of forestry which has a worldwide reputation for efficiency, whose graduates are reputed to be and are sought, as the most thoroughly grounded in their profession of any in the lumber world. In the last week of November last, to signalize the twentieth anniversary of the inauguration of practical forestry at the Biltmore estate and the tenth anniversary of the Biltmore Forest School, was inaugurated a celebration the like of which has not been encountered before, truly magnificent. It is safe to say, before the lapse of another decade.

Within recent weeks a favored few received invitations to attend at Biltmore, N.C., a “forest festival,” to be held November 26, 27 and 28, the scene of the festival that most beautiful exposition of wood, mountain, valley and stream known as the Biltmore estate. The invitations, eagerly accepted, brought to Asheville, N. C., of which Biltmore is suburb, many of the country’s best known to professional and business life directly or indirectly interested in timber and to the phase of timber growth, from its inauguration and preservation to its commercial utilization. These and the multitude of others who will be interested in these chronicles of the recent forest festival will be glad to learn something of the Biltmore estate and, prefatorily, of the Biltmore Forest School. The story of the Biltmore estate will occupy the greater part of these pages, a story of the Biltmore Forest School follows.

CHAPTER II.—THE BILTMORE FOREST SCHOOL.

The Biltmore Forest School was established in the summer of 1898 by its present head, Dr. C. A. Schenck, who was inspired by his devotion to the science of practical forestry and his desire to push it along and by a knowledge that the demand for practical foresters was increasing and would still further increase with the passage of the years. Its faculty consists of seventeen lectures, headed by Dr. Schenck, all in the van of the best known authorities on subjects with reverence forestry, forest policy, forest policy, timber preservation, prairie planting, geology, economics, law, fungus diseases of trees, zoology, forest insects, soil-physical problems, timber inspection, forestry and stock raising—a nicely adjusted combination of the theoretical and the practical.

The school is located on the Biltmore estate from November to April of each year, when the working field is the Biltmore forest, a tract of 8,000 acres managed for the production of firewood for the markets of Asheville and neighboring towns. In this timber the students are taught practical forestry in every aspect afforded by their environment. On the abandoned fields of which the Biltmore estate holds nearly 2,000, the students are taught reforestation from the making of seed beds to the planting of the sexes; the care of the seedlings and management of the growths. They are taught at the Pisgah forest station and at the planning mill on the estate sawing, manufacturing, inspecting and the general phases necessary to the education of practical lumbermen.

Early in April of each year the school is moved to the mountains, with headquarters at the edge of Pisgah forest, an 80,000-acre tract of virgin timberland. Field work is pursued here for six weeks, particularly in ten operations, from which the estate supplies 1,000 cords of chestnut, a forest product deriving boric acid. The students are taught all phases of the disposition of wood used in the production of boric acid.

A region in Pisgah forest is known as the “pink beds,” so called from the prevailing color furnished by the rhododendron and laurel, which grow in profusion in that vicinity, and, in fact, throughout the estate. These and the multitude of others which have a knowledge of algebra to quadratic equations, the first five books of plane geometry and plane trigonometry.

Good health, of course, is an absolute requisite, as hard physical labor faces the students, and he must understand that he will devote all of his time and his energy to study the class room, in the field and in his own room. One year is the full course in the Biltmore Forest School and the number of students is limited to twenty-five. Dr. Schenck would prefer a larger number were it possible to give personal attention to more than twenty-five, but upon this point he is insistent, as he desires to confer upon each pupil some of the advantages of his own personality. In lecturing he would prefer a much larger class, but believes that in actual instruction he could not do justice to more than twenty-five, even if designated as the limit of the school force.

Diligence and gentlemanly conduct are about the only precise rules imposed upon the school. The instruction is limited to those species closely associated with technical forestry. Horticulture and landscape gardening are not included in the curriculum. The instruction in the above subjects is given for only one year. The students are awarded diplomas, grating the degrees of Bachelor of Forestry and Forest Engineer.

Objectives of a publication issued by the Biltmore Forest School:

1. To instruct in the science of practical forestry.
2. To prepare students for the medical profession upon which the school insists.
3. To give lectures and field work must be attended and no vacations are given during the year. The last five graduates are awarded diplomas, grating the degrees of Bachelor of Forestry and Forest Engineer.


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Dr. Schenck had

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roads in the swamps in the coldest weather, when my clothes

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and on the yard before he would entertain my application. I

"Dr. Schenck requires ordi

circulated.

of any use in the scientific line, for instance in allied sciences

than that as side issues. So while we get everything practical

lumbermen from start to finish and he regards other things

scientific men, but Dr. Schenck wants them to be practical.

"It is Dr. Schenck's idea primarily to give the young fellows

thoroughly well equipped, practical young lumbermen and

enrollment at the Biltmore Forest School is $1,000 as a

nearby Asheville at prices ranging fr

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The tuition fee required by the school is $200, payable in

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ECE. H. Harrington, Agricultural and Mechanical College,

Charles L. Tarbet, C. A. Smith Timber Co., Minneapolis,


Charles A. Keffer, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.


Otto Armbruster, Oak, Beds., Calif., Oregon, Wash.

A. K. Orr, Southern Railway, Ashville, N.C.

J. E. DeBakey, professor Livestock Husbandry, Chicago.

J. M. Will, Stander's University, Nashville, Tenn.

Carl Jenetz, Champion Pipe Co., Carteret, N.J.

E. D. Brousse, faculty Biltmore School, Greensboro, N.C.

E. M. H. Moffit, Hallett Lumber Co., Carteret, N.C.

W. P. Delare, Brewer Farms Co., Brewer, N.Y.

Gen. T. F. Davidson, Davidson, Bourne & Parker, Asheville,

N.C.

W. M. Johnston, J. A. Armstrong, N. C.

Criner Co., Cincinnati, Ohio.

S. P. Rawell, Biltmore, N.C.

Charles A. Waddell, faculty Biltmore School, Biltmore, N.C.

J. M. Burns, William Brownell Co. P., Biltmore, N.C.

G. W. Garnier, Biltmore, N.C.

Collier Coop., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.

In addition to the above listed as connected with the Biltmore Forest School, the following, graduates or cords, were in table:

T. J. McConrad, Biltmore.

H. A. Armstrong, Biltmore.

Jeff C. Richardson, Biltmore.


R. C. Nash, Buffalo, N.Y.

H. C. Johnson, Washington, N.C.

A. C. Shively, San Fran., Calif.

L. G. Voorhees, Chicago, Ill.

J. H. Voorhees, Ontario, Cal.

L. P. Proctor, Buffalo, N.Y.

H. B. Gent, East Orange, N.J.

R. I. Mount, Halsey, N.Y.

W. H. Robb, Lime Lake, N.Y.

E. B. Dunn, Buffalo, N.Y.

H. D. Bums, Buffalo, N.Y.

Hughes Lindsay, Richmond, Va.

T. J. Weatherby, Columbus, Ohio.

G. W. Orr, Midwest City, Okla.

H. G. Black, Houston, Tex.

C. T. Runkle, Biltmore.

L. N. Poile, Pittsburg, Conn.

H. H. Harrington, Agricultural and Mechanical College,

Carlos L. Tarbet, C. A. Smith Timber Co., Minneapolis,

Michael.


Charles A. Keffer, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn.


Otto Armbruster, Oak, Beds., Calif., Oregon, Wash.

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Collier Coop., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.
and several more on horseback, the latter mostly students of the Dr. Schenck. We were in an automobile, accompanied by apprised officers and outriders for the visitors and who throughout the whole day of unalloyed enjoyment and educational plenitude witnessed that remarkable Lechery, to which the Dr. Schenck party was invited to at the Biltmore estate, their host in the lead, the party. Arrived at beautiful Biltmore village, a replica of that delicious English rural life, a half hour was spent in an automobile procession and at 9 o'clock it started on its first day's outing.

CHAPTER V – LECTURES BY A FOREST EXPERT.

Dr. Schenck's main purpose in this forest fair was the delivery of a series of lectures upon conservational forestry appropriate to the needs of each of the various trees.

"The best Douglas fir I have ever seen is in Germany and it comes from Washington. They grow out to the west coast in rapid development, yet at Biltmore when 16 years old they are only of very small size. The tree is like evergreen, some sons do not develop well in their first sixteen years, but afterward one may develop into a president of the United States. If a species does poorly locally to begin with it is wrong to assume that it will do badly all its life. Frequently after they get a fairly good start, particularly if they have plenty of good water, they start up well. I gave these the best slopes that I could - northern slopes are the best for the trees - you have not done well at all. Some of them are only a foot high now; the highest is about seven feet.

"The lesson we are doing here is experimental. I have no patterns by which I can work, and the experiment is somewhat expensive. From the inventor's standpoint it is somewhat unwise to be the first experimenter.

"I planted here white pine with black cherries and the trees have done remarkably well. After the cherry plants catch up I am sure the black cherries will be safe.

"Here are sugar maples planted in 1899. The sugar maples in the bottom of the cover, where there is more moisture, have done best, showing their dependency on moisture in the soil. It is a pure plantation in sugar maple and it does well in pure stands.

"Here is where I planted chestnuts on top of the hill, and they are all gone. I was induced to plant chestnut here because the original stand was chestnut. Professor Sargent induced me to make that experiment at considerable expense, but it is the worst kind of experiment on abandoned fields. Of chestnut wood we sell retail $3.00 cords annually."

With his Dr. Schenck led his party to Tip No. 4, passing Tip No. 3, which was a demonstration in "thinning." Several of the "tips" were passed in this way as relatively unimportant, especially in view of the time at the command of Dr. Schenck and his party.

Further installments of this report will tell of additional lectures by Dr. Schenck, of his discussions with the audience, of the climbing of stiff mountain sides, of the fording of rivers, of enlightenment for the most erudite foresters, botanists and lumbermen in this well informed party, of numerous other features of interest and of the lofty mountain scenery which is unparalleled in American forest and lumbering history.

(To Be Continued Next Week.)