



here still stands in Pisgah National Forest six of the original twenty houses of unusual design and structure

which were built for the wardens who worked on the George W. Vanderbilt estate around the turn of the century. They were copied after the German Schwarzwald type of architecture common to the Black Forest area of Germany.

Standing near the Pink Beds is the best preserved of all these houses. The U. S. Forest Service gave this haven of week-end campers the name of Schenck Lodge in honor of Dr. Carl A. Schenck, forester for the Vanderbilt estate and founder of the Biltmore Forest School.

Dr. Schenck of Darmstadt, Germany succeeded Gifford Pinchot as consulting forester for the estate in 1895; finding himself in charge of 100,000 acres of timberland, dotted with several hundred small interior holdings and dozens of abandoned farms.

During his many trips abroad, Mr. Vanderbilt had been deeply impressed with the careful management of forest lands as practiced by European nations. The Black Forest in Germany was particularly interesting to him. Since it was natural for him to put similar practices into effect on his Southern Appalachian estate, Dr. Schenck had a rough job already cut out for him when he came to Biltmore.

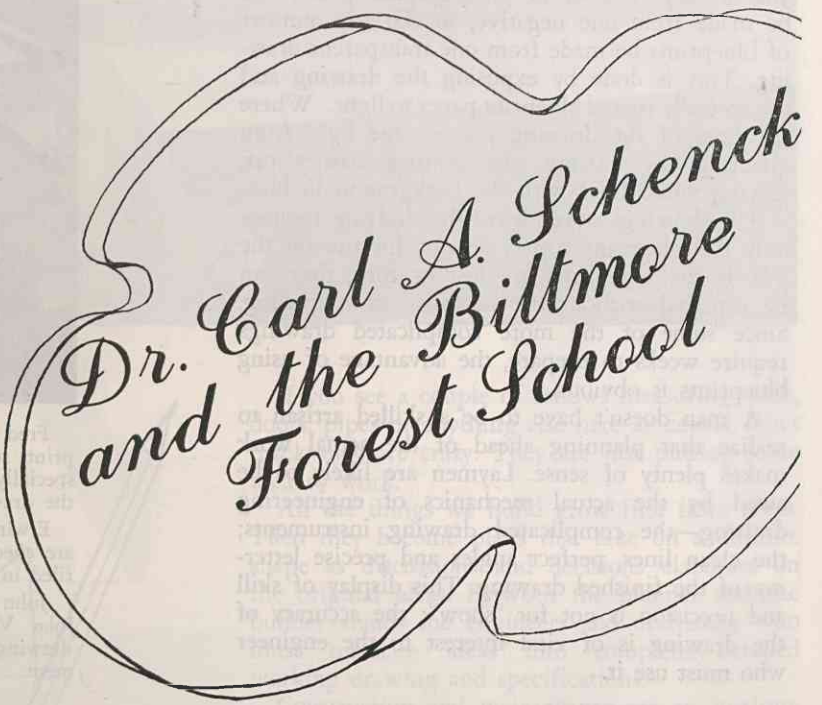
He had to run a band mill of a type that he had never seen in operation, which was sawing lumber from hardwoods that he knew little about. The operation of the sawmill had become a heavy financial burden. All sorts of difficulties arose in trying to keep the mill supplied with logs that were felled in Pisgah-Forest, splash-driven to the French Broad River, and carried by the current of the stream to the boom at the mill. Many logs sank, many hung stranded on the rocks, many floated high on the banks of adjacent farms.

Dr. Schneck plunged in, having many heart-breaks along the way, on his new job and struggling to acquaint himself with our numerous species of trees, with the lumber market, with local labor, with bandmill techniques, with soils, with tree planting problems in strange environments, and with our colloquialisms. He succeeded

well in many lines of effort; he failed in others; particularly in early attempts to plant trees in old fields.

He later used portable circular mills in his lumber operations. These mills were moved from place to place wherever his investigations showed good timber accessible to market. This phase of his operation was generally successful.

In the forests, the objective was to cut mature trees that would make good lumber, and to leave the remaining stand in prime condition. The plan called for individual selection of trees to be taken out. Clean cutting was resorted to only for experimental purposes.



Dr. Schenck strongly believed that a permanent system of trunk roads was necessary for forest utilization on a standard yield basis. The roads were carefully surveyed and held to the best grade possible. He believed in a macadam surface but, not having a budget sufficient for this purpose, he resorted to many miles of plank and corduroy construction. He was compelled by his contract to get out large quantities of lumber and wood, and this meant, in turn, that his roads must be passable throughout most of the year. It is interesting to observe that these old dirt roads were so carefully located that few major changes were made when major highways pushed through the forest. The roads and trails reached all watersheds of the entire boundary, making the forest accessible for fire protection and game protection as well as for utilization.