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Crafting A Homespun Image: Fred Seely and Biltmore Industries, 1917 to 1942.

A Senior Thesis Submitted to
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Submitted by:
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In early 1939, Fred Seely, the owner of Biltmore Industries, solicited legal advice from the law offices of Norris and Bateman inquiring about potential government repercussions for any manufacturers of woolen material who might falsely be labeling and marketing their product as “homespun.”¹ Seely's concerns initially arose as an unnamed competitor sent representatives to tour Biltmore Industries and observed the processes utilized in the production of Biltmore Handwoven Homespun. The competing manufacturer consequently began to develop and market an alternative brand of alleged “homespun” materials. As Seely inquired about the nature of the word and whether it was “supposed to convey the idea that cloth so labeled was hand-woven,” he hoped to prohibit his competitor's use of the same terminology. Although Biltmore Handwoven Homespun were indeed woven on hand looms, the final product relied on multiple automated processes including a mechanized spinning machine. Yet, he included with his letter an advertisement for the unnamed manufacturer's machine woven cloth as he sought clarification regarding the use of the term. The response from the Washington D.C. based law firm notified Seely that the Federal Trade Commission would take interest in matters concerning unfair competition. This would include the “misbranding of fabrics and other commodities respecting the materials or ingredients of which they are composed, their quality, purity, origin, source, attributes or properties, history, or nature of manufacture, and selling them under such names and circumstances that the purchaser would be misled in these respects.”²

It is interesting to note that Seely himself was concerned with the particular nuances associated with the word “homespun” as his own advertising could at times seem quite misleading. Marketing his products under the name Biltmore Handwoven Homespun, Seely

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1. Seely to Norris and Bateman, April 6, 1939, Biltmore Industries Archives, Grovewood Gallery, Asheville, N.C. (hereafter BIA), Box 55A, “A Challenge to Name Homespun.”
 2. Norris and Bateman to Fred Seely, March 10, 1939, BIA, Box 55A, “A Challenge to Name Homespun.”

utilized advertising campaigns that attempted to tap into the themes and values of American society that were of particular interest to the high-end clientele to which he catered. One of the most effective themes which thoroughly permeated Biltmore Industries' advertising was the simple idea of homespun material itself. As the early 20th century became increasingly industrialized, Seely relied on the general public's beliefs and perceptions of the Appalachian mountaineer's self-reliant lifestyle which included the making and wearing of homespun materials and garments. He was able to successfully craft and manufacture a profitable image for his own "homespun" material as he utilized these popular notions. However, Biltmore Industries' heavy reliance on automated processes was in sharp contrast to the American pioneer traditions Seely consistently attempted to evoke in his marketing. After assuming ownership and management of the Biltmore Industries in 1917 from the Vanderbilt family, Fred Seely proceeded to expand the small, philanthropic and missionary-driven cottage industry into a hybridized and profit-oriented business.

Missionary ideals and philanthropic motives fueled the Craft Revival Movement whose foundations were set in the late 19th century and provided a basis for the formation of Biltmore Estate Industries in Asheville. Numerous works cover the development of this arts and crafts movement within Appalachia which sought to combine traditional craftsmanship with perceived procedural improvements, further driven by a sense of moral obligation to uplift and improve living conditions for mountain natives. While these works provide the context for Biltmore Industries' origins, few provide any specific or detailed information. These include *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands* by Allen Eaton, *The Golden Age of Homespun* by Jared Van Wagenan, Jr. and *Mountain Homespun* by Frances Louisa Goodrich.³

3. Allen Eaton, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1937); Jared Van

While the former works tend to romanticize the image of the Appalachian mountaineer and the positive role the Craft Revival Movement played in preserving traditional handicrafts, later works attempt to provide a more thorough analysis of the movement and its impacts on the region. *The Handcraft Revival in Southern Appalachia, 1930-1990* by Garry Barker and *All That is Native and Fine* by David Whisnant acknowledge the history of the movement and proceed to question the effects within the region, briefly mentioning Biltmore Industries.⁴ Whisnant pinpoints the early 20th century as the height of the Craft Revival Movement in the mountains which provided “national and international recognition for those aspects of local tradition that the revival chose to encourage and represent.”⁵ While the general public perceived that the region's culture and traditions were being simply preserved, the preference and taste of the prominent figures involved in the arts and crafts movement inevitably altered the manner in which regional crafts were produced. Whisnant elaborated on this tendency using Mrs. Vanderbilt as an example, as he described “A large percentage [of craft revival efforts] were directed by wealthy (or at least well-to-do) women whose exalted self-image caused their condescension toward mountain people to outstrip by far their admiration for them, and whose unquestioning confidence in their own esthetic judgment allowed them to tamper with local taste and design in a high-handed manner.”⁶

Jane Becker also builds off the history of the movement in *Selling Traditions* and discusses the allure of perceived Appalachian culture and the resulting commodification of the

Wagenen Jr., *The Golden Age of Homespun* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1953), 2; Frances Louisa Goodrich, *Mountain Homespun: A Facsimile of the Original, Published in 1931* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

4. Garry Barker, *The Handcraft Revival in Southern Appalachia, 1930-1990* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native & Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill and London, 1983).

5. Whisnant, *All That is Native*, 60.

6. Whisnant, *All That is Native*, 153.

region's traditions. Her discussion of Biltmore Industries is minimal as well, but she uses the example of the demanding pace required of Seely's employees and the monotonous tasks assigned to them. In doing so, she attempts to provide an alternative and more thorough perspective of the romanticized notions often perpetuated of Appalachian mountaineers and their crafts. Rather than employing women to perform the traditionally feminine craft of weaving which allowed them to perpetuate “the 'lost arts' of their grandmothers,” Biltmore Industries employed male weavers.⁷ Becker provided Seely's explanation “that he hired men as weavers because the work was too hard for women,” which reflected the pace of production that the profit-oriented business maintained. Although popular perception at the time emphasized mountaineer weaving as a generational tradition and source of individual and familial pride, Becker challenged that notion as Rex Stewart, a weaver employed by Fred Seely, admitted weaving was not a craft he or his family particularly liked or enjoyed.⁸

A recent UNCA senior thesis in April of 2010 by Leaha Wilmoth begins to bridge the Vanderbilt and Seely periods of management, but with the extensive, although sometimes incomplete records available at the Grovewood Gallery, the coverage of Seely's ownership is still limited.⁹ Academic works focusing exclusively on the history of Biltmore Industries are not common, but two pieces in particular do a good job of covering the early years of Biltmore Estate Industries and subsequently providing a brief overview of Seely's ownership of the company. Bruce E. Johnson, author of “Eleanor Vance, Charlotte Yale and the Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries” in *May We All Remember Well Vol. II*, places the origins of Biltmore

7. Jane Becker, *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930-1940*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 135-136.

8. Becker, 151.

9. Leaha Wilmoth, “A Tradition of Weaving: How Biltmore Industries Grew, Survived, and Thrived from 1917 to 1942” (Undergraduate Thesis, UNC Asheville, 2010).

Estate Industries in the context of Vance and Yale's missionary goals and also seeks to clarify the two women's pivotal roles in establishing the Industries and its foundation.¹⁰ He addresses the need for this clarification as Seely's advertising of Biltmore Industries' history emphasizes the role of Edith Vanderbilt in its origins and development while downplaying the creative efforts of Vance and Yale. Kelly H. L'Ecuyer's article "Uplifting the Southern Highlander," focuses on Seely's predecessors, yet provides a more thorough discussion of Seely's management as business oriented, rather than philanthropic or missionary driven.¹¹ Both of these pieces lay a solid foundation for further discussion of Biltmore Industries as operated by Seely.

The word "homespun" evokes images of an independent pioneer lifestyle similar to that described by Jared Van Wagenen, Jr. as the "homespun age." Van Wagenen, Jr. refers to the period of early European settlement and the gradual exploration and trailblazing of the American wilderness and backcountry. As settlers' proximity to coastal towns and ports lessened, their need to develop and adapt to a self-sufficient lifestyle became increasingly necessary.¹² When referencing the handicrafts or art of textiles during the "homespun age," the thought of producing woolen material conjures up images of women scouring out the grease and picking debris from freshly sheared wool by hand, the manual carding and combing of the wool to prepare it to be spun by hand on a spinning wheel, and woven by hand as well.¹³ This type of reminiscence tends to persist most readily when referring to Appalachia, often remembered and referenced as a mountainous region isolated and buffered from the advances of modernization, where traditions stand still and thrive well into the early 20th century.

10. Bruce E. Johnson, "Eleanor Vance, Charlotte Yale and the Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries." in *May We All Remember Well, Volume II: A Journal of the History and Cultures of Western North Carolina*, ed. Robert S. Brunk (Asheville, N.C.: Robert S. Brunk Auction Services, 2001).

11. Kelly H. L'Ecuyer, "Uplifting the Southern Highlander: Handicrafts at Biltmore Estate Industries," *Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture* 37, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2002).

12. Van Wagenen Jr., *Golden Age of Homespun*, 2.

13. Van Wagenen Jr., *Golden Age of Homespun*, 261-265.

Fred Seely was able to successfully utilize the generally accepted perception of Appalachia during the time period to market the “homespun” goods being produced by the small, mountain industry. Biltmore Handwoven Homespun were inevitably marketed to wealthy clientele as technology advanced and allowed for the purchase of store-bought material and more cost-effective products such as satinet which grew in convenience and popularity. Traditional means of production became increasingly antiquated and these handicrafts were often practiced as a type of hobby supported by a certain degree of wealth and financial security, rather than out of necessity. Associated with the ideals of the Craft Revival Movement, handcrafted goods gained considerable popularity around the turn of the 20th century throughout the United States and Europe. As noted by Edward L. Dupuy, “the therapeutic and recreational value of making things by hand was being preached” as “women of means were discovering...the fun of owning and showing such treasures.”¹⁴ These sentiments and values, rooted in resistance to the increasingly industrialized American economy, allowed Fred Seely's Biltmore Industries to exist at a time when it was certainly more practical to buy cheaper, alternative materials.

The opportunity for Seely to utilize marketing strategies depicting the homespun image was created by his predecessors Eleanor Vance and Charlotte Yale. Driven by missionary and philanthropic inspiration, the two women began the early Biltmore Estate Industries in 1905 under the ownership and financial support of the Vanderbilt Family. Vance and Yale met at the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago in the late 1890's. Vance, prior to attending Moody, enrolled at the Cincinnati Arts School where woodcarving had been a particular focus of her studies and Yale had attended the New York School of Ceramics gaining valuable experience in music,

14. Edward L. Dupuy, *Artisans of the Appalachians* (Asheville, NC: The Miller Printing Company, 1967), XI.

ceramics, and weaving.¹⁵ The two women moved to Asheville in 1901 and months later became involved with the work of the All Soul's Church in Biltmore Village. This undertaking led to the creation of the Boys' Club where they taught woodcarving to the young male parishioners between the ages of twelve and sixteen. Recognizing the need to involve female youth, Vance and Yale formed the Girls' Club and offered weaving in 1903.¹⁶

Although Edith Vanderbilt often receives most of the credit associated with the creation of the cottage industry, Biltmore Estate Industries was developed from the minds of Vance and Yale. Their hope was that some of the students who had acquired skills through participation in the youth clubs offered by the parish could now develop their abilities into a career. The financial and public backing by the Vanderbilts was instrumental to their success as George Vanderbilt “arranged for payments...for any shortfalls the Industries might incur,” according to Bruce E. Johnson.¹⁷ For the first year, Biltmore Estate Industries focused on establishing their woodcarving and woodworking programs and in 1906 began the development of the weaving of homespun material. Biltmore Estate Industries' failure to emphasize a profit-oriented business model was further apparent as early reports described the “[hope] that the homespun will improve from year to year as the workers grow in experience.” The work involved in producing the material was divided among employees as “some do the carding.....some the spinning, others the dyeing with the vegetable dyes, while others still do the weaving, so that work is furnished to a large number of people living in the isolated parts of the Estate.”¹⁸ With patterns and materials provided by Vance and Yale, some of the products sold by Biltmore Estate Industries were produced by local weavers out of their homes, many of whom owned their own hand looms.

15. Johnson, “Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries,” 242.

16. L'Ecuyer, “Uplifting the Southern Highlander,” 143.

17. Johnson, “Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries,” 249.

18. Johnson, “Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries,” 252.

Each weaver was paid for their work upon completion. This became a significant aspect of Biltmore Estate Industries' income and in 1907 they observed that “homespun sales increased, but most of the money went to area people who did the work, leaving the Industries with shortfalls each month.”¹⁹ In hopes of increasing productivity, Vance and Yale did update to the fly shuttle loom which was patented in the first half of the 18th century by John Kay and allowed for an increase in pace and decrease in the amount of labor necessary for weavers.²⁰

Although Biltmore Estate Industries relied on a local workforce, as well as the idea that they were perpetuating, or possibly re-inventing a mountain craft, one notable development in the material produced was the composition of the fabric. Traditional Appalachian weaving utilized a cotton warp when producing woolen material. Mrs. Vanderbilt considered this combination undesirable and “crude.” She insisted on a warp and weft of wool only, a practice which originated in England and Scotland and required spinners to learn the tighter twist for proper yarn preparation.²¹ The advantages of this composition were apparent as the inherent felting properties of wool created durable, well insulated and wear resistant cloth.²² However, early material developed by Biltmore Estate Industries still produced somewhat disappointing results as it lacked the degree of softness desired. Vance and Yale learned that enclosing their sheep to hinder the accumulation of debris in the wool helped to solve this problem, but eventually Biltmore Estate Industries began to purchase raw wool.²³ Fred Seely continued Mrs. Vanderbilt's preference for wool-only and resisted the temptation to utilize synthetic fabrics as

19. Johnson, “Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries,” 257.

20. Homespun Museum tour as given by Jerry Ball, Grovewood Gallery, Asheville, N.C.; L'Ecuyer, “Uplifting the Southern Highlander,” 143; Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, *Homespun to Factory Made: Woolen Textiles in America, 1776-1876*. (North Andover, Massachusetts: Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, 1977), 38.

21. L'Ecuyer, “Uplifting the Southern Highlander,” 143.

22. MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 2.

23. Johnson, “Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries,” 252-253; L'Ecuyer, “Uplifting the Southern Highlander,” 143; Goodrich, *Mountain Homespun*, 32-33.

they became increasingly available in the following decades. Seely never attempted to raise his own sheep and initially relied on a local supply of wool. However, as the business expanded Seely began to turn to overseas suppliers, primarily in New Zealand and Australia.²⁴

Fred Seely was able to begin his craftsmanship of the company when he purchased Biltmore Estate Industries in 1917 following several tumultuous years initiated by George Vanderbilt's death in 1914. The loss of Mr. Vanderbilt was a major blow to the future of the cottage industry, as the business had never turned a profit and relied on Mr. Vanderbilt to provide “approximately \$4354 per year.”²⁵ The company persisted for two more years under Mrs. Vanderbilt and survived another substantial setback with the 1916 flood in Asheville, which caused significant damage to the workshops.²⁶ Seely, who was the son-in-law of E.W. Grove and architect of the Grove Park Inn, held a reputation for being a shrewd and meticulous businessman. He assumed ownership of the business in 1917 and changed the name to Biltmore Industries. Seely's focus was not to uplift and strengthen the moral fabric of mountain society, but rather to turn the company into a profitable, commercially viable business. Upon acquisition he began the construction of three sizable workshops across from the Grove Park Inn and proceeded to centralize the production of the handcrafted goods. All woven products were only produced in Seely's workshops and no longer produced in local homes. Weaving was the main focus of Seely's Biltmore Industries, but the woodworking shops continued until the Great Depression when the prospects for a profitable venture were drastically reduced.²⁷

Following his acquisition of the company, Seely's confidence in his abilities to successfully turn a profit from the “Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns” was apparent as he

24. Homespun Museum tour.

25. Johnson, “Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries,” 259.

26. Johnson, “Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries,” 262.

27. Homespun Museum tour.

immediately raised the prices of material. This action limited who could afford the homespun products and further solidified how his clientele would be defined. For 36" wide material, Biltmore Estate Industries asked for \$1.75 to \$2.75/yd. in 1915 and just prior to Seely's acquisition of the Industries in 1917, set the prices at a straight \$3.00/yd. In June 1918, Seely raised the prices by \$0.50/yd., then reduced the size to 28" wide and raised the price again to \$4.00/yd. The decision was made to separate the weights of the material in June of 1919 and the asking price for lightweight materials was \$3.75/yd., for regular weight \$4.25/yd., and for overcoat weight \$5.25/yd. By 1921, Seely had come down on the price by \$0.50/yd. on the light weight and \$0.75/yd. on the regular and overcoat weight.²⁸ A typical suit requires approximately four yards of material and equivalent prices in 2013 would amount to \$42.46/yd. for light weight, \$48.77/yd. for regular weight and \$58.52/yd. for overcoat weight.²⁹ The prices on Seely's Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns took a hit following the Great Depression and gradually worked their way back up to hover around the 1921 figures in the late '30s and early 40's.³⁰

While Fred Seely advertised Biltmore Industries' use of hand looms, there were numerous processes utilized in creating the finished "homespun" material. A closer examination of the steps involved reveals few procedures associated with the traditional idea of homespun. After sheep were sheared, the first step necessary was sorting the wool into its respective grades based on the value of the wool. This was sorted from finest to coarsest and determined by the area of the sheep's body from which it originated.³¹ Although the scouring process used under Vance and Yale's ownership is unclear, Seely did remain fairly traditional in his methods and insisted on scouring by hand rather than utilizing available machines. He also insisted on scouring the wool

28. Untitled document, BIA, Box 1: Noteworthy, Early Prices of Cloth 1915-1947.

29. "CPI Inflation Calculator," <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>, (Accessed April 2013)

30. Untitled document, BIA, Box 1: Noteworthy, Early Prices of Cloth 1915-1947.

31. Homespun Museum tour; MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 10.

with only water and ivory soap, rather than the traditional mixture of water and urine, a process which cleansed the wool of its suint, or natural grease.³² After the wool was scoured, it still contained a significant amount of debris which needed to be removed by “picking.”

Traditionally, this was a job delegated to women who beat the wool with sticks to loosen the debris and then removed it by hand.³³ Fortunately for Seely, he was able to utilize multiple automated processes to accomplish this tedious task, first running the wool through the picking machine, then the duster, followed by the shredder which broke up any clumps.³⁴ Although wool could be dyed after being spun into yarn, the usual preference was to dye following scouring and the removal of debris. As the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum elaborates “colors could be blended with the greatest ease at this point, and since loose wool has a greater affinity to dye than spun wool.”³⁵

Seely's dyeing methods did remain fairly traditional through this process as workers dyed the wool by hand in large dye vats. However, Seely did deviate from the traditional vegetable dyes in favor of synthetic alizarin dyes. Following the dyeing process, Biltmore Industries ran the wool through the extractor which removed excess water from the fibers. This allowed other natural oils, such as olive oil, to be added back into the wool. The extractor could also be used to blend fibers or colors as well. After the wool was sufficiently dry, accomplished by simply hanging outside, it was ready to be carded.³⁶

The final steps in preparing the dyed wool in preparation for weaving again utilized highly automated processes. Initially Biltmore Estate Industries practiced the “monotonous and

32. MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 12.

33. MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 14.

34. Homespun Museum tour.

35. MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 48.

36. Homespun Museum tour.

time consuming task which required little strength or skill” of carding by hand. This method was abandoned by Vance and Yale in favor of an automated carding machine, a technological development utilized by Seely as well who had four fully automated carding machines in his possession.³⁷ Despite his insistence on the “homespun” label, Seely neglected the iconic spinning wheel in favor of a completely automated process requiring four large mule spinners, or spinning jacks, which were quite common in the United States by 1840.³⁸

Although Seely was quite dependent on such an assortment of technologically advanced machinery to produce his “handwoven homespuns,” he could indeed refer to his material as handwoven. In the early 1800's, the first power looms available in America held too great a risk of damaging the more fragile woolen material. This caused many manufacturers to substitute cotton or linen for the warp and produced the increasingly popular cloth satinet. At that time, it was still considered necessary to use hand looms in the production of “fancier weaves and for cloth of pure wool.”³⁹ Created in the 1840's and considered “standard” by the 1850's, the fancy loom eliminated the need for hand weaving as “the action of the loom was gentle enough to accommodate a warp of woolen yarn.”⁴⁰ Biltmore Industries ran up to 45 hand looms at a time and Seely's insistence on this equipment despite the availability of automated alternatives proved to be the process which was most effective in the marketing of Seely's “Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns.”⁴¹ Apparently, effective enough for him to feel comfortable calling attention to a competitor's alleged misuse of the term “homespun” and seek rectification from the Federal

37. MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 16; L'Ecuyer, “Uplifting the Southern Highlander,” 143-144.

38. Homespun Museum tour; MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 74.

39. MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 82.

40. MVTM, *Homespun to Factory Made*, 88.

41. Homespun Museum tour.

Trade Commission.⁴² The processing of woolen material did not end here however and Seely relied on motor-driven machinery to finish the final three steps of fulling, napping and shearing the material.⁴³

Seely was initially cautious with changes to Biltmore Industries' production as he attempted to balance the demands of generating profit and maintaining the company's image. In April of 1918, he described the “little homespun industry” to Sam Haigh, a dye manufacturer based out of Boston. Seely explained that if Biltmore Industries were to start purchasing dyes from Haigh, “it will be the first change that has been made since the establishment of the Industries.” The Vanderbilts had purchased all their dyes from the American Dyewood Company about whom Seely did not hesitate to express his displeasure. He explained “we do not use any aniline colors, and we stick to as many vegetable dyes as we can get, using alizarins for the balance.”⁴⁴ However, by that August, Seely began to change his tune and reported to Haigh that “we are being compelled to change from vegetable dyes to alizarins.” He discussed attempts to replicate a color from black walnut root dye by the blending of synthetic alizarins, citing labor shortage as a difficulty he faced in obtaining the vegetable dyes desired.⁴⁵ Seely was very vocal in his marketing and advertising of his insistence on alizarin colors only, a fact printed on the labels provided to customers to sew into the material. Aniline dyes had gained a poor reputation, which persisted until the mid-twentieth century, for being impermanent and “fugitive to light.”⁴⁶ This was particularly troublesome for a company like Biltmore Industries that manufactured such wear-resistant products, as it was imperative to obtain dyes whose quality and longevity would

42. Seely to Norris and Bateman, April 6, 1939.

43. Homespun Museum tour.

44. Seely to Haigh, April 12, 1918, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

45. Seely to Haigh, August 5, 1918, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

46. Ralph Mayer, *The Artist's Handbook* (New York: Viking, 1991), 36-37.

match that of the material it colored.⁴⁷

Upon his acquisition of the company, Seely immediately faced challenges presented by the post-WWI government restrictions on dyes and related materials, which limited access to quality overseas supplies. Seely devoted considerable time maneuvering and responding to the regulations and vigorously searched for the specific dyes needed to reproduce the exact shades to which his buyers had become accustomed. Many of the dyes Seely desired were of German origin and the United States would no longer allow the importation of any dyes without prior approval from the Treasury Department and related War Trade Board. For Seely to gain permission to import the desired dyes, he had to first prove that he was unable to obtain what he needed within the United States. The exception to this was if the desired goods were available domestically, but the quantity was insufficient, then Seely had the potential to import as needed.⁴⁸ The task of seeking approval to import could be quite tedious and the Treasury Department denied one such application from Seely in May 1922. They referred him directly to the Chemical Company of America in New York City to obtain his desired shade of green. Seely faced delays in obtaining the necessary materials as the Chemical Company of America proved slow to respond to Seely's inquiries.⁴⁹

The importance of obtaining access to German supplies was of interest to Seely's business associates as well, as Pfister of Wetterwalk and Pfister Company Inc., notified his peers of his observations upon returning from a three month buying trip in Europe. He reported "The best comment on the German dyestuff situation may be had from a protest just recently lodged with

47. L'Ecuyer, "Uplifting the Southern Highlander," 143.

48. U.S. Treasury Department, May 27, 1921, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Dyes (colors and equipments) 1918-1924.

49. U.S. Treasury Department, May 11, 1922, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Dyes (colors and equipments) 1918-1924.

the French government on the part of the French Textile Industry to prohibit by law the exportation of any of the seized German dyes, as there is already a shortage of these products...for French consumption.” Pfister further described the “wild bidding up of prices” of the coveted German dye products.⁵⁰ While Seely's use of synthetic alizarin dyes certainly provided a more stable and reliable product as compared to the traditional vegetable dyes, he faced an additional challenge in obtaining a steady supply as he became dependent on overseas market conditions.

Determined to obtain the “pre-war” colors he desired for his homespun products, Seely's persistence in purchasing supplies of German origin was met with disdain by some of his fellow businessmen. Early in Seely's dealings with Sam Haigh, the manufacturer explained to Seely, “We do not object to using colors that were made in Germany before the war, but we do object to helping along their industries that we think are competing against the United States' interests.” Haigh offered to attempt to replicate the shade and quality of dye Seely desired.⁵¹ However as Seely continued his hunt, his insistence provoked an agitated response from Haigh who referred Seely elsewhere and exclaimed, “Why don't you...buy your colors direct from Germany as it seems you are part of a German and you want to use German dyes.” However, Haigh's exasperation was not simply an expression of patriotic sentiments, but also fear of losing some of his developing business with Seely.⁵²

While Fred Seely's meticulous nature certainly contributed to his success in establishing a profitable company, his personal prejudices seeped into his business transactions. In Seely's quest

50. Pfister to Seely, November 19, 1923, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Dyes (colors and equipments) 1918-1924.

51. Sam Haigh to Fred Seely, June 11, 1918, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

52. Sam Haigh to Fred Seely, November 26, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

to obtain German dyes, he was particularly interested in those products offered by the Bayer company. Fully aware of the difficulty in obtaining them, Seely was suspicious when Harry Muenzer of Midwest Dye Products claimed access to an unlimited quantity of Bayer colors.⁵³ In 1923, Seely's suspicions were confirmed as he received verification from the Carbic Color and Chemical Company that tests performed on his desired shade of green revealed the dye to be fraudulent.⁵⁴ As Midwest Dye Products failed to compensate Biltmore Industries for losses incurred, Seely attempted to involve the Federal Trade Commission, forwarding a fraudulent label and the results from Carbic Color and Chemical Co to Washington. The Federal Trade Commission denied responsibility for correcting the situation as they were “not a court.”⁵⁵ Seely expressed his frustration with his cousin William Foster of New York “Am just afraid that Jew Muenzer will die or escape” and filed a suit against Midwest for \$360.00 the following year.⁵⁶ Although having many other professional responsibilities to attend to, Seely had not forgotten the situation and inquired of his cousin late in 1925 “have you heard anything from those German Jews, called the Midwest Dye Company?”⁵⁷ While the resolution of the suit against Midwest is not clear, Seely's motives can certainly be questioned as it was not uncommon for him to suffer losses in the thousands of dollars. It was also not the first time Seely had sought legal remedy through the courts, as he had sued his father-in-law for breach of promise when he refused to relinquish ownership of the Grove Park Inn to Seely. The case denied Seely's claims in

53. Correspondence between Muenzer and Seely, April 21, 1919 to May 1, 1919, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Midwest Dye Products 1919-1925.

54. Carbic Color and Chemical Company to Seely, July 5, 1923, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Midwest Dye Products 1919-1925.

55. Correspondence between FTC and Seely, September 9, 1923 and October 1, 1923, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Midwest Dye Products 1919-1925.

56. Seely to William Foster, November 28, 1923, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Midwest Dye Products 1919-1925; Suit against Midwest, July 15, 1924, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Midwest Dye Products 1919-1925.

57. Seely to William Foster, November 11, 1925, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Midwest Dye Products 1919-1925.

1928, a year after Grove's death.⁵⁸

As evidenced, Seely was rather meticulous in obtaining the quality of dyes he considered necessary for the high-end homespun goods his company produced and he did not hesitate to remind his suppliers of the type of business he managed and the clientele he represented. In his dealings with Haigh, Seely expressed his “anxiety” and his unwillingness to “take any risk on the stability of colors.” Seely attributed this to the superior nature of Biltmore Industries' patrons as detailed in a letter to Haigh: “Last week we shipped a suit to Mrs. George Gould. This week among our customers were Mrs. Proctor, the wife of Mr. Proctor, of Proctor and Gamble. Another suit went to President Wilson and his daughter has three suits of homespun, so you see we must be very slow and sure.”⁵⁹ However, Seely also expressed awareness of the somewhat peculiar and demanding figure he could be as he wrote to Haigh in September of 1920, “I find that our class of trade requires a pretty sure product, and I suppose it makes us look as if we are very much more tedious and particular than many other of your customers.”⁶⁰ As he established his reputation as a meticulous businessman, Seely also backed up his demands for quality. This was proven by instances such as late in 1921 when Biltmore Industries suffered about \$10,000 worth of losses on account of dyes supplied from Haigh & Company. Rather than attempting to earn a profit from the material, Seely donated the defective products to an orphanage.⁶¹ However, this was the inherent risk in purchasing dyes as the previous year Seely accrued losses around \$5,000 over an inadequate shade of Olive Green purchased from Haigh & Co as well.⁶²

Considering the potential for large losses of material and profit, Seely was most definitely

58. Helen Wykle, *Seely's Women*,

http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/biltmore_industries/seely_women/default_seely_women.htm.

59. Seely to Haigh, May 31, 1918, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

60. Seely to Haigh, November 13, 1920, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

61. Seely to Haigh, November 2 and 11, 1921, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

62. Seely to Haigh, June 12, 1920, BIA, Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs, Sam Haigh and Company Files.

particular in his dealings with dye manufacturers.

Just as Seely did not hesitate to use the identities of his distinguished clients to gain favor in transactions with business associates, he welcomed the opportunity to highlight Biltmore Industries' gifting and sales of homespun material to celebrity figures in advertising as well. This list included Presidents Harding and Coolidge, as well as the first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, J. Edgar Hoover, and President Camacho of Mexico.⁶³ This was a tactic Seely's predecessor Edith Vanderbilt was acquainted with as well, although the celebrity figure Biltmore Estates Industries utilized to advertise their material was Mrs. Vanderbilt herself.⁶⁴ Quite a variety of publications sought to run advertisements for Biltmore Industries and were well aware of the nature of the goods produced by the company and Seely's clientele. Hoping to gain his business, the publisher of *Golf Illustrated* attempted to reassure Seely that buying advertisement space in his publication would provide exposure to “only the wealthy people who reside in areas where property values are high and where the social limitations are such as to bar anyone without wealth.”⁶⁵ Other high-end publications such as *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* sought advertisement campaigns from Biltmore Industries as well. Multiple publications also sought the opportunity to write articles about the hybrid Biltmore Industries and the specialized goods produced out of Asheville, North Carolina.⁶⁶ As Seely sought to expand and develop his homespun company, effective advertising was a key component in his success.

Well aware of the importance of tourism to Biltmore Industries, as well as to the surrounding Asheville area, Seely allowed articles advertising his products to be run in magazines such as *AAA Travel*. This magazine was certainly an appropriate venue for Seely to

63. Wilmoth, *A Tradition of Weaving*, 9-11.

64. L'Ecuyer, “Uplifting the Southern Highlander,” 144.

65. Angier to Seely, November 22, 1934, BIA, Box 22: Advertising, Advertising Letters.

66. Various letters, BIA, Box 22: Advertising, Advertising Letters.

market his high-end goods, as recreational travel was not a practical option for the general American public at the time and *AAA Travel's* readers were likely to be somewhat affluent. Biltmore Industries offered the publication's readers, and potential travelers, an escape not only to a more rustic and “native” environment, but a more traditional approach to life. In 1934, an article titled “You Take the Low Road and I'll Take the High Road Over the Mountains” spotlighted Biltmore Industries. According to the article, Seely's industry, nestled in the Appalachian mountains, offered a product “made exactly as it was in the British Isles hundreds of years ago – every bit of it woven upon old-type wooden shuttle looms, operated by native mountaineers.” The article offered its own version of the beginnings of the mountain industry claiming that “the mountaineers...had forgotten how the work was done until the founders of the Biltmore industry, finding ancient looms in the natives' cabins, taught them how this kind of cloth should be made.”⁶⁷ The theme of the Appalachian mountaineer was a familiar one in Seely's advertising. Although the *AAA Travel* article claimed the local residents had to be re-taught their traditional manufacture, other Biltmore Industries pamphlets highlighted the fact that “ancestral pride in their work played an important part,” in the weavers' abilities to produce such high-quality goods.⁶⁸

As readers were encouraged to visit Seely's business in person, *AAA Travel* described the wool utilized by Biltmore Industries as originating “from all over the world,” yet somehow the resulting material managed to be representative of “homespun made as our forefathers wore it.” Seely frequently utilized the exotic appeal of the origins of Biltmore Industries' wool. He noted in advertisements that some materials could be obtained across the Atlantic in the Shetland

67. “To Florida – You Take the Low Road and I'll Take the High Road Over the Mountains,” December 1934, BIA, Box 22: Advertising, Catalogs and Magazine Ads, *AAA Travel*, p. 15.

68. Pamphlet from Biltmore Industries, undated publication, BIA, Box 22: Advertising, Homespun Printouts Ads 'Early'.

Islands, while the Biltmore Industries' material known as Plain Weave Lady Cloth contained lamb's wool which originated from Australia and New Zealand combined with “cashmere from the Pashmina goat that lives at the foot of the Himalayas in India.” Although Seely transitioned from the regional wool to the exotic and apparently higher quality over-seas wool supply, he still understood the appeal of the natural resources of the surrounding mountains. This proved especially attractive to his predominantly urban clientele. He emphasized the “purity” of the water used to process the exotic wool, which flowed from the “mountain springs on the slopes of Mt. Mitchell” and allowed Biltmore Industries to obtain the “wonderful results we do with our dyes.”⁶⁹

Not only did Biltmore Industries “homespuns” provide Seely's high-end clientele the opportunity to purchase a sense of tradition, as well as an exotic allure, but they were also “putting health into [their] Homespun.” One of Seely's most interesting pieces of advertising was an eight page booklet titled “Health Clothing.” In this lengthy advertisement, Dr. Kellogg of the Battle Creek Sanitarium offered his professional opinion of the benefits of wearing Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns and “[taught] the value of light as a life stimulant” and “therapeutic agent.” Dr. Kellogg advised the wearing of Seely's health-infused material as experiments conducted comparing the Biltmore Industry homespun cloth with other prepared woolen cloth revealed amazing results. Apparently, seeds grown in boxes were best able to grow when covered by the handwoven homespuns, providing pictorial evidence of the thick and thriving results as compared to the sparse growth of those covered by “ordinary” material. The booklet explained that “light rays pass through Biltmore Hand-woven Homespuns.....not shutting out the light from their light-starved bodies.” This was apparently due to the manner in which the “old-fashioned

69. “The Story of Making Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns,” Biltmore Industries Museum, Grovewood Gallery, Asheville, NC. Undated publication by Fred Seely.

plainly twisted homespun thread” was woven so as to best allow the seeds, or the human body when applicable, to access the natural properties and health benefits of light and air. Another factor which contributed to the experiment's results was the quality of the wool composing Seely's cloth as “it is simply the very best grade of old-fashioned sheep's wool and the grade of wool our grandfathers and grandmothers wore in the days when people were healthy.” While Seely admitted “we cannot honestly claim that we have discovered or invented any marvelous thing,” he asserted his innovation as the return to a more traditional, and therefore wiser, more rewarding, and healthier approach to creating his material.⁷⁰

Beyond his creative advertising, Seely's persistence in producing quality materials in the Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns line created a highly-regarded reputation among his peers and customers. Biltmore Industries' name itself became synonymous with quality, making claims that “one of the most frequent comments we receive is that our cloth wears too long,” and after several years wear, garments could be turned inside and worn for several more years.⁷¹ In one advertisement from 1930, Richard H. Edmonds the editor of *The Manufacturer's Record*, asserted that his homespun suit purchased in 1921 was still in such good condition that “Folks insist that it is brand new and I have to show the tailor's label to prove that it is eight years old.”⁷²

The high esteem in which Seely's business was held could be attributed to Seely's achievements in producing quality goods and his effective advertising tactics. His resulting success was apparent as companies such as Monel Metals and Proctor & Gamble sought endorsements from Seely on behalf of Biltmore Industries to reinforce their own reputation for

70. “Health Clothing,” undated publication, Box 22: Advertising, Catalogs and Magazine Ads.

71. “The Story of Making Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns,” Biltmore Industries Museum, Grovewood Gallery, Asheville, NC. Undated publication by Fred Seely.

72. 1930 Manufacturers Record Advertisement, BIA, Box 23: Publications and Notices, Manufacturer's Record 1920-1943.

providing quality goods. Seely gave permission for the use of the Biltmore Industries' name in Proctor & Gamble's advertising for Ivory Soap. He provided a personal endorsement claiming that the advertised product was the only soap he would allow in the scouring process for the homespun because of its "purity." Ivory soap was best able to preserve the quality of the material as it was processed.⁷³ Seely provided an anecdotal account of his previous experience "in charge of a division of the largest laboratory in the world" and his insistence then as well to use only Ivory to formulate a germicidal soap for their surgical needs. He promoted the cosmetic and hygienic benefits of Proctor & Gamble's product providing his testimonial that "I am past 60 and I have seen very few men who have healthier hair and scalp than I have. I am not bald, my hair is only partly gray, and as for dandruff, I have never seen it except on others."⁷⁴ The endorsement Seely provided Monel Metals was placed directly in their ad, prepared on Biltmore Industries letterhead complete with a sketch of a man weaving on a hand loom in the lower left corner of the page. Seely shared his "satisfaction and gratification" with the performance of the extractor he had purchased. Monel Metals reinforced the idea of quality implied by Seely's endorsement asserting that Biltmore Industries was "noted far and near for the painstaking workmanship which produces their woolens....they take no chances on any metal equipment which could endanger their quality."⁷⁵ Seely's personal endorsements for notable and profitable companies attested to the reputation of Biltmore Industries among his peers. However, as Seely built connections to his small, homespun industry with these endorsements, the image of quality provided by Biltmore Handwoven Homespun's was strengthened and perpetuated, which certainly contributed to further growth and profit for Seely's business as well.

73. Seely to Proctor & Gamble, October 3, 1930, BIA, Box 22: Advertising, Blackman Co 1930-1932.

74. Seely to Proctor & Gamble, September 9, 1932, BIA, Box 22: Advertising, Blackman Co 1930-1932.

75. "Monel Metal's Performance has Been More than 100%," 1936, Biltmore Industries Museum, Groovewood Gallery, Asheville, NC.

Although Seely catered to customers of higher incomes, the effects of the Great Depression on Seely's high-end homespun products and his clients were apparent as Biltmore Industries' production levels and profits struggled as a result of the economic downfall. Prices for the Handwoven Homespun reached their lowest point under Seely's management at \$2.75 for light weight material, \$2.85 for regular weight, and \$3.50 for overcoat weight.⁷⁶ The inventories of 1933 revealed the lowest amount of cloth on hand since Seely's acquisition of the company, recording 48,331 yards.⁷⁷ Sales and production levels were at their lowest in 1932 as well, with 31,131 yards produced for the year and 29,688 yards sold.⁷⁸ As a result, employee salaries were at their lowest levels in 1932 and 1933. Ruth Hatch and Robert Stevens, Seely's highest paid employees, witnessed decreases in their steady salaries for the first time in years. This trend was observed for all the employees on Biltmore Industries' payroll.⁷⁹

Amidst the struggles of the Great Depression, Seely also had to consider the additional challenges of maintaining a successfully functioning work environment at a time when labor strikes and union organizing was thriving. The Corporations Auxiliary Company based out of Birmingham, Alabama capitalized on the worries of any textile manufacturer. They periodically notified industry management of the frequent strikes and labor issues occurring throughout the region. The Corporations Auxiliary Company claimed that:

The great number of strikes, lock-outs and other labor disturbances throughout the South during the past year bring forcibly before the mind of each manufacturer the warning that the present calm and quietness of labor at his particular plant do not indicate that these conditions are permanent, neither do outward and visible manifestations in his plant accurately show the true situation within.

76. Untitled document, BIA, Box 1: Noteworthy, Early Prices of Cloth 1915-1947.

77. Inventory of December 31, 1933, BIA, Box 4, Inventory 1933-1934.

78. "December 31, 1932," BIA, Box 1: Noteworthy, Yards of Cloth Made 1930s.

79. Employee Annual Salaries, BIA, Box 2, "Taxes 1931, 1932" and "Taxes 1933, 1934."

They offered their services in preventing labor unrest and “applying remedies” as needed in order to prevent unnecessary expense and worry that may result within any company from “labor disturbances.”⁸⁰ Biltmore Industries seemed to be buffered from much of this activity and although employees' salaries and overall production reached the lowest levels in the years to follow, Seely's need to utilize services such as those offered by the Corporations Auxiliary Company was highly unlikely.

The rest of the 1930's never witnessed the level of production Seely had attained prior to the Depression. In 1929, Biltmore Industries had produced 96,590 yards of material for the year, with 66,634 yards on hand from the previous year. The sales of Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns were impressive at 70,726 yards. The Industries began 1930 with 79,007 yards on hand, but sales began to decrease and although they did recover from their low point in 1932, they never passed 50,000 yards for the remainder of the decade. This inevitably affected those employees such as the weavers and spinners, whose wages relied on piece-work and who never again witnessed the individual pre-Depression production levels attained for the remainder of the 1930's as well.⁸¹

At the age of 70, Seely died in March of 1942 due to high blood pressure or “hardening of the arteries” as written by his wife in a telegram to her sister.⁸² Although Fred Seely had been in poor health for a number of months prior to his death, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* recounted that Seely was “marooned by a heavy snow at the Battery Park almost two weeks ago, and it was said by his friends that the fact he could not return to his mountain home, [Seely Castle], caused

80. Corporations Auxiliary Company to Fred Seely, 1930, BIA, Box 23: Publications and Notices, Corporations Auxiliary Company 1929-1930.

81. Wilmoth, *A Tradition of Weaving*, 13; “December 31, 1930,” BIA, Box 1: Noteworthy, Yards of Cloth Made 1930s.

82. “Seely Funeral Services Will Be Held Today,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*, March 15, 1942, sec. A; Telegram from Evelyn Seely to Charlene Riley, March 14, 1942, BIA, Box 1: Noteworthy, Fred Seely Obituary.

his condition to take a turn for the worse.” Robert A. Stevens, superintendent of Biltmore Industries, and Harry Bloomberg, future owner of Biltmore Industries, served as honorary pallbearers at the funeral. In response to Seely's death the former Governor John C.B. Ehringhaus expressed his sorrow as “A fine gentleman and public servant has left us.” North Carolina's current Governor Joseph Melville Broughton provided his condolences to Seely's family and shared his grief as well.⁸³

Following discussion of Fred Seely's death, the *Asheville Citizen-Times* provided a tribute to his life as well and proclaimed it to be “a story of success....the story of attainment of youthful ambition by sheer will power and physical drive.” One could hardly expect anything less as “genealogically, it may be said that Mr. Seely comes from good old American stock and is a son of the Revolution.” Attesting to Seely's successes, a full page collage of photographs were displayed which included his personal residence the “pretentious” Seely's Castle on Sunset Mountain, and the Battery Park Hotel which he owned and managed. Seely was pictured next to Grove Park Inn guests Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, during his tenure as the resort's manager. Nestled among his various triumphs was a photo of Seely's Biltmore Industries, “manufacturers of famous Biltmore homespun,” in which “he took great pride.” As the newspaper proclaimed Seely's “generosities were legion” and described his multiple charities and contributions, the article further noted that “he had another way of being generous toward his friends and toward visiting dignitaries. To these he gave suit lengths of homespun, manufactured at his industry.” His history with the Asheville business was recounted and the origins of Biltmore Industries were attributed to the effort to “keep alive the hand weaving art of the pioneer mountaineers.” Reading like a fine piece of Seely's advertising, the article referenced Dr. John Harvey Kellogg

83. “Seely Funeral Services Will Be Held Today,” *Asheville Citizen-Times*.

of the Battle Creek sanitarium and his endorsement of Biltmore Handwoven Homespuns' inherent "health-giving" properties.⁸⁴

Seely had invested nearly 25 years of his life into Biltmore Industries. Following his death, Fred Loring Seely, Jr., acquired ownership and management of a company which served half a million customers, employed approximately 100 workers, and welcomed around 48,000 visitors each year.⁸⁵ In 1953, Harry Bloomberg took the reins and purchased Biltmore Industries from the Seely family. Fred Seely succeeded in creating a profitable industry, upheld by an effective and persuasive image which his successors were able to triumphantly perpetuate. He expanded upon a hybrid conglomeration of handcraft and automated processes initiated by Vance and Yale. His predecessors had acknowledged their increasing reliance on technological advances as L'Ecuyer expressed "while the cloth itself was hand-woven, hand-processed materials were found to be impractical."⁸⁶ Although the accuracy in labeling his products as "homespun" can be challenged, it was the process of hand weaving combined with Seely's shrewd and meticulous business acumen that allowed Seely to so effectively market his material. Recognizing the value of a sense of tradition during a time of increasingly complex social issues and conflicts, rapid technological advancements, and a restructuring of the American identity, Seely was able to tap into a nostalgic longing for the "homespun age" and cater to a clientele who was willing and able to attempt to put a price tag on the idea of tradition. And in doing so, Seely's capitalization on an American longing for tradition, was traditionally American.

84. "Seely Funeral Services Will Be Held Today," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, March 15, 1942, sec. B.

85. "Biltmore Industries, Founded 46 Years Ago, World's Largest Hand-Weaving Establishment," December 28, 1947, BIA, Box 54: Miscellaneous Folders.

86. L'Ecuyer, "Uplifting the Southern Highlander," 144.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Asheville Citizen-Times. March 15, 1942.

Used this newspaper to obtain articles related to Fred Seely's personal and professional life, in particular information related to his death.

Seely, Fred. *Biltmore Industries Archive*. Grovewood Gallery, Asheville, North Carolina.

This is an extensive collection of Fred Seely's personal and professional memorabilia. It is composed primarily of his correspondence with other businesses and individuals, but also includes a variety of other records: ledger books, blueprints, articles of clothing, a collections of tools, etc. The collection is grouped into boxes numbering from 1 through 61. Those used to support this thesis are as follows:

- Box 1: Noteworthy
- Box 2
- Box 4
- Box 22: Advertising
- Box 23: Publications and Notices
- Box 30: Chemicals and Dyestuffs
- Box 54: Miscellaneous Folders

Two other sources of information relating to this archive is information regarding Biltmore Industries which can be found exhibited within the Hometown Museum and information gathered from tours provided Jerry and Pat Ball, resident historians at Grovewood Gallery.

Secondary Sources

Barker, Garry. *The Handcraft Revival in Southern Appalachia, 1930-1990*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991.

This book only mentions Mrs. Vanderbilt and Biltmore Industries very briefly, with no mention of Fred Seely. It's usefulness is derived from the broad coverage and overall context of the craft revival movement, which it breaks down by periods.

Becker, Jane S. *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930-1940*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Becker provides detailed look at the Craft Revival Movement including how it developed, satisfying the middle class desire for consumption of folk traditions, and how it affected the region, its residents and affected the production of the crafts it supposedly sought to preserve. The book is most helpful in providing context for the success Seely had in his advertising tactics and the trends of the time period that allowed Biltmore Industries to effectively market to their clientele. Becker does provide a brief discussion relating to Fred Seely's ownership of the plant.

CPI Inflation Calculator. <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>. (Accessed April 2013.)

This website allowed me to provide perspective on inflation related to the costs of Biltmore Industries material.

Dupuy, Edward L. *Artisans of the Appalachians*. Asheville, NC: The Miller Printing Company, 1967.

This book gives accounts of how the craft revival movement was implemented and effected the lives of individual Appalachians who were able to continue or take up a traditional craft. Information provided regarding the background and development of the movement was of more interest for this paper.

Eaton, Allen. *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1937.

Eaton discusses the earlier years of the craft revival movement and focuses on the different craft disciplines. His coverage of Biltmore Industries is also brief and limited only to Mrs. Vanderbilt's ownership, but is also helpful in providing context for the craft movement.

Goodrich, Frances Louisa. *Mountain Homespun: A Facsimile of the Original, Published in 1931*.

Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

Goodrich recalls details of traditional mountain weaving. She includes a section discussing the craft revival movement and gives background regarding the early years of the Biltmore Estate Industries.

Johnson, Bruce E. *Built for the Ages: A History of the Grove Park Inn*. Asheville, NC: Grove Park Inn and Country Club, 1991.

Although the focus is on the Grove Park Inn, it provides context for Biltmore Industries under Seely's management.

Johnson, Bruce E. "Eleanor Vance, Charlotte Yale and the Origins of Biltmore Estate Industries." In *May We All Remember Well, Volume II: A Journal of the History and Cultures of Western North Carolina*, edited by Robert S. Brunk, 241-266. Asheville, N.C.: Robert S. Brunk Auction Services, 2001.

This selection focuses on Seely's predecessors, but provides much helpful background information from which to build a discussion of Seely's acquisition and management of the industry. Does provide some information of the early years of Seely's ownership in concluding information.

Johnson, Bruce E. *Grove Park Inn: Arts & Crafts Furniture*. Cincinnati: Popular Woodworking Books, 2009.

While Johnson's focus is on the Grove Park Inn and the collection of arts and crafts within their possession, but it does offer some insight into the arts and crafts movement.

L'Ecuyer, Kelly H. "Uplifting the Southern Highlander: Handcrafts at Biltmore Estate Industries."

Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture 37, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2002): 123.

This article provides a helpful analysis of Seely's predecessors and the background of Biltmore Estate Industries, helping to clarify the processes and developments between the different periods of management. Also provides discussion of the motivations and origins in the development of Biltmore Estate Industries, which is helpful in providing context for Seely's management and allows comparison between the different styles and motives.

Mayer, Ralph. *The Artist's Handbook of Material and Techniques*. New York: Viking, 1991.

Discussion of dyes is a very small portion of this book, which is more of a glossary or type of encyclopedia of art related terms. Mayer distinguishes between aniline and alizarine dye, information which helps clarify Seely's insistence on the usage of alizarines.

Merrimack Valley Textile Museum. *Homespun to Factory Made: Woolen Textiles in America, 1776-1876*. North Andover, Massachusetts: Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, 1977.

Extremely helpful source as it only relates to woolen material and provides extensive background on the developments within the wool industry. The pictures and text are based off of a museum exhibit. Provides fairly detailed description of technological advancements which help to place Seely's procedures in the context of the rest of the industry.

Van Wagenen, Jared Jr. *The Golden Age of Homespun*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1953.

This book goes into some of the particulars of the traditional processes in creating materials, but was most useful to this paper in its description of homespun in relation to the pioneer lifestyle evinced.

Whisnant, David E. *All That is Native & Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*. Chapel Hill and London, 1983.

Whisnant examines and discusses the perception of Appalachian traditions, culture, and history, providing context for Biltmore Industries' homespuns and Seely's marketing. Whisnant's discussion directly involving Biltmore Industries is minimal.

Wilmoth, Leaha. "A Tradition of Weaving: How Biltmore Industries Grew, Survived, and Thrived from 1917 to 1942." Undergraduate Thesis, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 2010.

This thesis covers a broader, more general survey of Biltmore Industries. Wilmoth places a considerable amount of coverage on the earlier Vanderbilt years and provides more detailed coverage on the details involved in the early weaving process, as compared to the overall production as discussed in this paper.

Wykle, Helen. "Seely's Women." http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/biltmore_industries/seely_women/default_seely_women.htm.

This webpage focuses more on the opportunities female employees experienced under Seely's management, but also provides a helpful outline of significant events in Seely's personal and professional lives.