



THE
AMERICAN
CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION®

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Tour Asheville-area historic sites featuring rare American chestnut wood

Asheville, NC—Summer is almost here and with it comes the chance to explore a bit of your own backyard. The Asheville-based American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) has created a list of local sites that architecturally showcase that iconic tree—the American chestnut. Take a trip to any of these places, each less than two hours from Asheville, to see a now-rare wood. The Foundation has been working for more than 25 years to restore this tree to its native range in the eastern part of the United States and western North Carolina lies within the heart of this range. The American chestnut was decimated in the first half of the 20th century by a fungal blight that killed nearly four billion of these mighty giants.

Today, the bark and the wood from these trees remain as part of the architecture of several historic sites in western North Carolina. With the plentiful supply of American chestnut in local forests, builders used the bark from these giants to create a rustic, all-American style for summer homes, resorts, and lodges in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The bark was very durable and water-resistant and was able to withstand the harsh winters in the mountains of western North Carolina. This simple, informal and rustic look became known as “vacation architecture” of western North Carolina.

Places to see American chestnut bark

Linville, NC and Architect Henry Bacon

The Linville, North Carolina community was created in the late 1800s and is the site of some of the best examples of this rustic “vacation architecture” look. Many buildings and cottages in the town were covered with chestnut bark shingles, presenting a unified look that set the tone and character of the resort town. Henry Bacon played a large role in the use of the American chestnut in local architecture in Linville by designing some of the cottages and

buildings in the town while he was a visitor there. Bacon is best known as the architect of the Lincoln Memorial.

Linville

Eseeola Lodge

Originally built as Chestnut Lodge and built as part of the original Eseeola Inn in the late 1890s, the Eseeola Lodge is one of the best examples of the use of American chestnut bark in local architecture. Thick chestnut bark shingles cover much of the exterior of the lodge as well as the exteriors of several private homes nearby. The simple bark-covered building has served as the main inn for visitors since a fire destroyed the original Eseeola Inn in 1936. Today, many of the private homes that feature American chestnut bark are still in existence and located a short distance from Eseeola Lodge. Visitors drawn to this unique style of architecture are also close to other sites in the Linville community such as Grandfather Mountain and Tweetsie Railroad. www.eseeola.com.

All Saints Episcopal Church

The tiny church around the corner from the Eseeola Lodge, All Saints Episcopal Church is a treasure for fans of this rustic form of architecture. Designed by Henry Bacon, the church's walls, both inside and out are covered with chestnut bark shingles that provide a warm and cozy feeling to the many visitors. Chestnut shingles also cover the ceiling. Exposed logs, branches and saplings are used throughout the interior of building.

High Hampton Inn, Cashiers, North Carolina

Cashiers, North Carolina is located at an elevation of 3,500 feet, giving it a very hospitable climate. During the early 1800's, people came to escape the heat and mosquitoes of the low country of South Carolina. High Hampton started as a family retreat, but was converted to an inn during the 1920's. When the original structure burned in 1932, the inn was rebuilt in the popular rustic style. The Inn has three stories, a majestic four-sided fireplace and is covered with chestnut bark, making it naturally insect-resistant. The High Hampton Inn showcases a prime collection of buildings covered in chestnut bark. The resort, a simple but elegant retreat, also includes chestnut bark covered cottages scattered around the property. Some of the cottages boast interior walls covered in American chestnut bark while the walls of the main inn are constructed of American chestnut. www.highhamptoninn.com.

Places to see American chestnut wood

The Highlands Biological Station and Highlands Nature Center, Highlands, NC

The Station and Nature Center are in the heart of Highlands, a summer resort community founded in the 1870s in the southwestern corner of North Carolina. Founded in 1927, the Highlands Biological Station promotes research and education in such areas as ecology and conservation with special emphasis on the diverse trees, plants and wildlife of the region. Chestnut wood was the wood of choice for builders. www.highlandscenter.org.

USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station, Asheville, NC

The Southern Research Station is part of the Nation's largest forestry research organization - USDA Forest Service Research and Development -- the leading organization for research on natural resource management and sustainability in the United States. Headquartered in Asheville, North Carolina, the Southern Research Station serves 13 Southern States and beyond. Walk in the front door of the center, and you can see wormy chestnut counters, panels and walls. The rich, yellowish appearance of the wood gives the area a warm feeling. www.srs.fs.usda.gov.

The Gaither Chapel at Montreat College, Montreat, North Carolina

The Presbyterian-based, Montreat College was founded in 1916 as a four-year preparatory school with a two-year college program. Located near Asheville, Montreat has long been known for its beauty and tranquility. Gaither Chapel, on the college campus is constructed largely of American chestnut and recently Montreat College has established an American chestnut seed orchard as part of TACF's chestnut restoration program. www.montreat.edu/Facilities/VirtualTour/GaitherHall.

About TACF

The American Chestnut Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization headquartered in Asheville, NC. It has nearly 6,000 members and chapters in 17 states. The demise of the American chestnut tree due to chestnut blight has been called the greatest ecological disasters of the 20th century. TACF was established in 1983 with the sole purpose of restoring this majestic tree to its native forests in the eastern United States. Today, TACF's four research farms encompass nearly 160 acres and more than 60,000 American and Chinese chestnut trees which are part of its national breeding program. For more information about TACF or volunteering to help restore the American chestnut, visit our website at www.acf.org.

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