

Mountains-to-Sea Trail – Buck Springs Lodge Site

Directions:

From Asheville take the Blue Ridge Parkway south to The Pisgah Inn at milepost 408.6. Park in the north end of the Pisgah Inn parking lot near the MST trailhead. From Hendersonville/Brevard Take 280/64 to 276 north through the Pisgah National Forest to the Blue Ridge Parkway. Turn north (right) on Parkway to milepost 280.6, Pisgah Inn.

Hiking directions:

From the parking lot go up the steps to the MST and turn left going north. Follow the path until you get to a clearing with some old rock foundations. A sign will tell you a bit about the old Vanderbilt Hunting Lodge site. Take a trail to the left and find the old Spring House which is the only remaining structure from the area. From there, you can go back the way you came or, cross the BRP and go up to the picnic area to have lunch or a snack. After a break, follow the Campground trail which runs along the BRP south back towards the Inn. Once you arrive at the long set of steps on the left, climb those and it will take you back to the parking lot. 4.4 miles

History/ Information

Buck Spring Lodge, Vanderbilt's hunting retreat, was constructed in three stages beginning in 1896 at Buck Spring Gap on Mount Pisgah, some 20 miles from Biltmore House. Later expansions and renovations were made in 1903 and 1910. Hunt and Hunt, the same company that designed the Biltmore Estate, designed the lodge. Building materials were hauled up a temporary mountain road from the Cruso community on the Haywood County side of the mountain. The Vanderbilts and their guests arrived in horse and carriages until 1910 when a road was built to provide automobile access. The Vanderbilt family used the lodge for summer vacations for nearly 60 years. Buck Spring Lodge eventually included a hydraulic ram pump for running water, its own electricity plant, individual hot water heaters in the bathrooms, and a tennis court, garden, and orchard. Goats and Sheep grazed among the buildings.

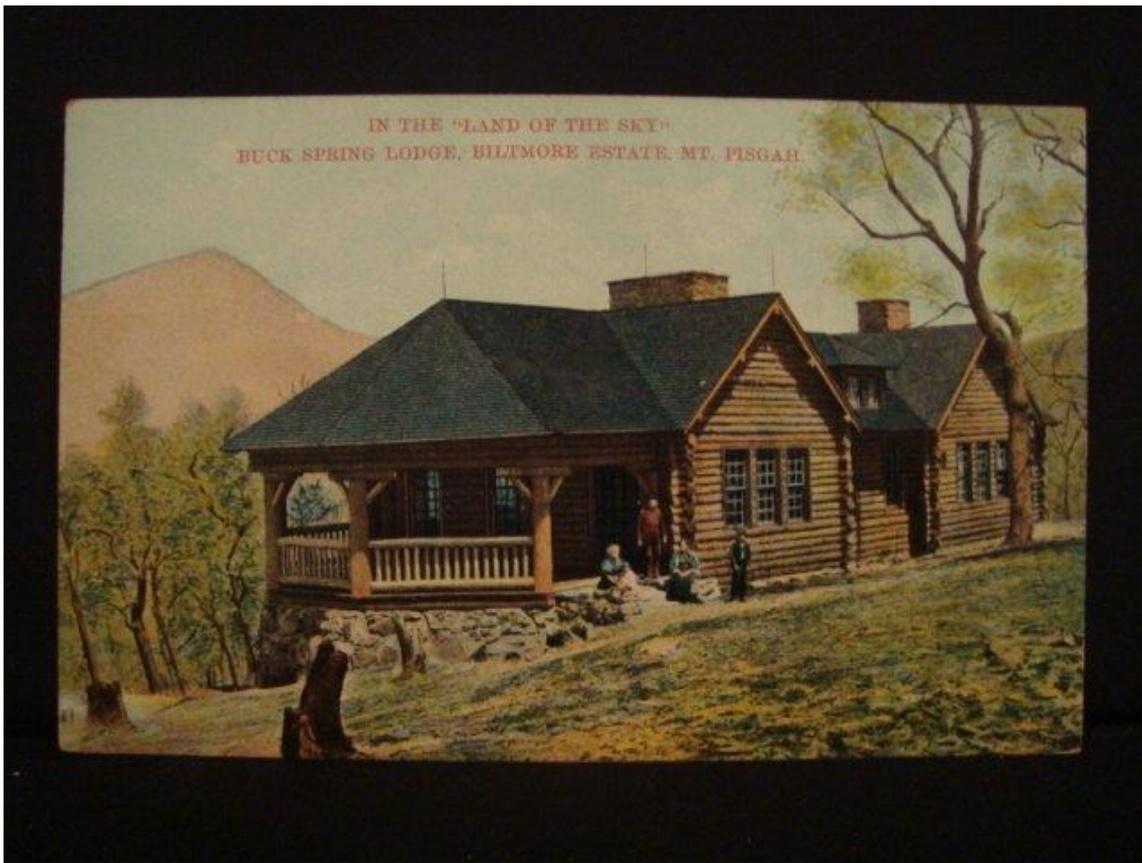
A photo from 1935 includes several buildings including the main lodge, a midway Cottage, a dining and kitchen, Honeymoon cabin, staff house, stable, utility and a ranger house. A full-time ranger and caretaker were in residence near the lodge, and additional staff arrived when the Vanderbilts stayed there.

In the 1950s, an agreement was made to sell the 471 acre parcel of lodge property to allow for construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The parkway's superintendent at the time, Sam Weems, originally intended to lease the lodge buildings as an annex to the nearby Pisgah Inn. However, the buildings were deemed not feasible for hospitality

rooms, so, sadly in 1961, officials decided to raze all the buildings except for the springhouse.

After the removal of all the buildings, nothing was done to the property and the forest took over. In 2004, the Carolina Mountain Club sought permission from the National Park Service to clear the site with later attempts to uncover foundations and have a photo exhibit installed. Today, the Buck Spring Lodge site and interpretive panel can be visited from the parking area at Buck Spring Gap, Milepost 407.7 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Mountains to Sea Trail passes through the site. Although the foundations of the main lodge building were removed, stone retaining walls and outbuilding foundations remains. The only surviving structure is the springhouse, down a short trail from the main lodge site.





This is a view of one of the buildings with Mt. Pisgah in the background. Notice there is no tower on Mt. Pisgah.