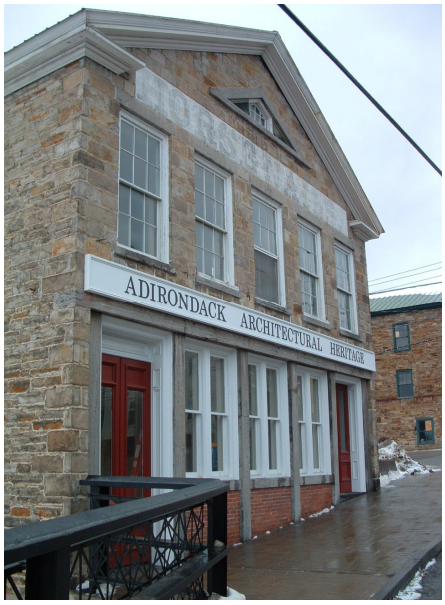
ADIRONDACK ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

The Year In Review 2010



AARCH Office, 1745 Main Street, Keeseville

As AARCH's 20th anniversary year comes to a close, we are celebrating a year full of important achievements and exciting activities. If there's a common theme to 2010, it is that good things take time and that patience and persistence can often bear beautiful and substantial fruit.

For instance, in 2000, New York State approved a unit management plan for its long-neglected Camp Santanoni and this cleared the way for the Santanoni partners, led by AARCH, to undertake far-ranging and substantive restoration and conservation work there. Now, ten years later, we have completed more than $1.7 million in work on sixteen different buildings and two bridges there. This is a huge accomplishment. Seven years ago, some of the first conversations took place about preserving the fire towers on St. Regis and Hurricane mountains and this fall the Adirondack Park Agency voted to make their preservation and public use legally possible. Although there's still a long way to go with these projects, at least the way forward seems clear. Six years ago, the AARCH board of directors had its first discussions about creating a home for the organization and this year we moved into a beautifully restored circa 1850 historic stone building where AARCH will continue to grow and thrive for years. All these accomplishments took a kind of vision and skill and tenacity that we seem particularly good at.

In addition, this year we offered another highly regarded and popular series of public educational programs; continued our advocacy efforts to save threatened historic places; helped others to preserve and restore buildings and to make their communities better places to live through our technical assistance outreach; made big improvements to our website, including an interactive regional map; brought another group of people from all over the country to explore the region through our rustic study tour; and recognized exemplary historic preservation work through our annual our awards program.

We reached and touched thousands of people, helped with several dozen local projects, and continued to raise awareness about our wonderful regional architecture and its connections to community vitality and identity.

All in all, it was a fabulous year.

Taking a Big Leap: A New Home for AARCH

In the fall of 2008, we took a huge leap forward by acquiring an historic mill complex on the Ausable River in Keeseville as a new home for AARCH. This decision stemmed from our wish to have a facility where we could grow our programs and activities, set a good example of historic preservation and adaptive use, and be a more active member of the community. When the two stone buildings on the property are fully developed over the next several years, we will have spaces for exhibits, workshops, meetings and classes, a resource center, and larger offices. Besides developing the site for our own uses, we will restore and rehabilitate a large part of the Stone Mill for other private and compatible purposes.

This property was the industrial and economic center of the village and was typical of the water-powered industries in the eastern Adirondacks that used local wood and iron to manufacture a wide variety of products. Beginning in 1832, it was the home of the Eagle Horse Nail Company and, from 1863 to 1918, it was the Ausable Horse Nail Company, which manufactured horse nails and the patented machines that produced them. In 1925, it became part of the operations of R. Prescott & Sons, which manufactured radio and television cabinets until the 1960s.

By the end of 2010, we will have completed more than 95% of the planned restoration and rehabilitation work on the Stone Office Building, where the core AARCH offices and other functions will be located. Our success in acquiring the property and undertaking more than $250,000 in work is largely due to our success in getting state and private grant funding and to the generosity of our members and friends through our capital campaign. The capital campaign was launched in August 2009 with a goal of raising $100,000. A year later, we've exceeded our goal by receiving more than $125,000 in contributions. This quick and enthusiastic response says a lot about the passion our members have for our work and for this we are most thankful.

To all of you who supported this project through your generosity to our capital campaign – thank you!

The Stone Office Building. Almost every building that's been around for 160 years gets altered over time and the Stone Office Building was no exception but, fortunately, almost all of the original underlying historic materials were still intact. By removing sheetrock, paneling, linoleum, and carpeting we discovered hardwood floors, plaster and paneled walls, moldings, and even a two story vault. Based on what we found, plans were drawn for restoration and rehabilitation work on the middle and upper floors and our crew slowly went about the process of restoring plaster, trim, windows and doors; making minor modifications to the floor plan to create a bathroom and reception area; refinishing floors; and installing new electrical, plumbing, and heating systems. The work on the ground floor, which contains our offices and a gallery space, was finished in April and we moved in.

Work continued on the upper floor through the summer and fall and should be completed by the end of the year. Here there will be a meeting room, small office, and a rental space, which is already occupied by an engineering firm.

The lower level of the building, formerly an unfinished basement, will be recaptured for our use as a resource center and gallery space. Work will include finished walls, ceilings, and floors; radiant floor heating; restoring the existing doors and windows; and creating a new entrance at ground level. This work is currently underway, being done by Cloudsplitter Carpentry, and should be completed by the end of the year. We received a special Capital Program grant from the New York State Council on the Arts in support of this project.

The Stone Mill. The 11,000 square foot Stone Mill will be used for AARCH for workshop and classroom spaces but a large portion of the building will be developed and sold as working studio and living spaces. We were fortunate to attract some major public funding for this project in 2009. A $630,000 grant from the Restore New York program was awarded to AARCH, through the Village of Keeseville, for the adaptive reuse of the building. The program is an excellent fit for this project as it primarily funds the revitalization of vacant and abandoned buildings in community centers, which will bring new economic and social life to the community. This fall we hired SD Atelier Architecture of Saratoga Springs, to do the initial planning for this project. This will include an existing conditions assessment, schematic designs, and cost estimates. Depending on the outcome of this planning work, construction could begin as early as 2011.

For more information about this project, see http://www.aarch.org/siteappeal/home.html

The cost of acquiring the property and doing the work on the Stone Office Building is as follows:

Estimated Project Costs

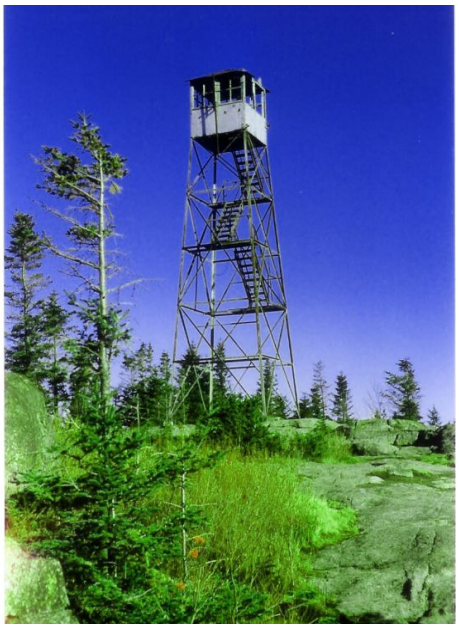
Acquisition:	$145,000
Restoration and Rehabilitation:	265,000
TOTAL:	$410,000

Sources of Funding

State Grants	$150,000
AARCH (working capital fund)	85,000
AARCH (capital campaign)	125,000
NYS Council on the Arts	50,000
	$410,000

Advocacy and Assistance for Endangered Properties

At the end of last year, the 1929 **Lake Champlain Bridge**, which crossed between Crown Point (New York) and Chimney Point (Vermont), was demolished after engineers determined that it was unsafe and could not be rehabilitated at a reasonable cost. The loss of this National Historic Landmark eligible structure was surely tragic but might have been avoided had New York and Vermont taken better care of it in recent years. Unfortunately, this is part of a much larger problem of not adequately maintaining our transportation infrastructure and while this impacts everything, it may bode even worse for less valued historic bridges. The new bridge was designed by Ted Zoli of HNTB, is being built by Flatiron Construction Corporation for $69.6 million, and is scheduled to open in the fall of 2011. The significance of the Lake Champlain Bridge will be commemorated through the production of exhibits, a book, and a video documentary.



St. Regis Fire Tower

In an effort to save the 1878 **Upper Bridge** in Keeseville, AARCH co-wrote a successful $135,750 state grant application that will fund the engineering work needed to plan the rehabilitation this extremely rare bridge, which is one of only about 75 cast and wrought iron bridges in the country. We're also part of a working group, with the Olympic Regional Development Authority, Town of Wilmington, and Essex County Planning Office, trying to plan and fund much needed restoration and rehabilitation work for the National Register listed **Whiteface Veterans Memorial Highway.** This nine mile marvel of American civil engineering also includes three major structures - the Tollhouse, Castle, and Summit House – all of which need work.

There is good news about several other endangered properties. North Country Community College, which had indicated it might demolish historic **Hodson Hall** for campus parking in 2007, now includes its rehabilitation and continued use as part of its *Facilities Master Plan* (2010). The Arto Monaco Historical Society is working with the Town of Jay, local residents, and the landscape architects and planners at Elan Planning & Design to explore the creation of a public park at the former **Land of Makebelieve** site in Upper Jay. This is made possible by a planning grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. In late October, the Essex County Board of

AARCH Office and the Chapel Hill Foundation Gallery, 2010.

Supervisors announced a compromise that would save the 1914 **Otis Road Bridge** from replacement. Instead, a new bridge and bypass will be built to provide access to the camps and forest land on the other side of the Boquet River. And after years of uncertainty about the future of the ruins in the Forest Preserve associated with **Camp Sagamore and Uncas**, New York State has proposed the creation of a Historic Great Camps Special Management Area to allow for the survival and public appreciation of these historic resources.

We are also delighted by the decision of the Adirondack Park Agency in October to designate a small area around the **Hurricane and St. Regis mountain fire towers** as Historic under the State Land Master Plan. This makes the restoration and public use of these National Register listed structures possible, once other regulatory hurdles are overcome. Both towers have active and engaged friends organizations – the Friends of the Hurricane Mountain Fire Tower and the Friends of the St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower.

For more information about these issues, see:

Lake Champlain Bridge:
www.nysdot.gov/lakechamplainbridge
Hodson Hall at NCCC:
http://www.nccc.edu/uploadedFiles/6-30-2010.pdf
Land of MakeBelieve:
http://ressrepublican.com/0100_news/x1627562748/Land-of-MakeBelieve-restoration-planned
Friends of Hurricane Mountain Firetower:
http://www.hurricanefiretower.org
Friends of St. Regis Mountain Firetower:
http://www.friendsofstregis.org

Ten Years of Amazing Progress at Camp Santanoni

2000 was a milestone year at Camp Santanoni. It was declared a National Historic Landmark and AARCH published *Santanoni: From Japanese Temple to Life at an Adirondack Great Camp.* Even more important, the buildings and road features were officially designated as Historic under the State Land Master Plan and a unit management plan for the new historic area was approved by the Adirondack Park Agency and these actions made it possible for the buildings at Santanoni to be restored, interpreted, and further enjoyed by the public. At about the same time, AARCH entered into an Adopt-A-Natural-Resource Agreement with NYSDEC that gave AARCH many management responsibilities for the site, including training and supervising summer staff, undertaking planning work, grant writing and fundraising, and sponsoring conservation projects.

Over the next ten years, working in partnership with NYSDEC and the Town of Newcomb, we have made incredible strides there. The site has been staffed every summer with talented guides who interpret Santanoni to thousands of people each summer. They also do small conservation projects like staining logs and reglazing and painting windows. To guide our ongoing restoration work, AARCH was successful in getting funding from the Getty Foundation to do a site-wide *Conservation Plan,* which was completed in 2004. This plan helped to make a case for higher levels of funding from New York State and in getting $365,000 from the federal *Save America's Treasures* program.

Restoration and Stabilization at Santanoni 2000-2010

With support from the Getty Foundation, *Save America's Treasures program,* and with substantial financial support from NYSDEC and the Town of Newcomb, we have been able to undertake the following stabilization, restoration, and conservation projects:

- Stabilization of the **Main Lodge kitchen wing** (2008-2010). $392,000. Crawford & Stearns, architects. Construction by Jameson General Contracting.
- Stabilization and exterior restoration of the **Gate Lodge** and **West Cottage** (2004-2007). $498,250. Argus Architecture & Preservation, architects. Construction by Mercer Construction Company.
- Restoration of the boathouse, ash house, generator building, bath house (2010), gazebo, and pump house at the **Main Camp** (2004-2007). $272,000. Michael Frenette, builder.
- Restoration of the porches, log work, roof features, and other elements of the **Main Lodge** (1997-2003 and 2008-2010). $150,000. Michael Frenette, builder.
- Stabilization and exterior restoration of four buildings at the **Santanoni Farm**. $177,000. NYSDEC crew, builders.
- Reconstruction of a stone culvert, the **Upper Duck Hole bridge**, and improvements to the **Newcomb Lake Road**. $220,000. Work by NYSDEC, Town of Newcomb and others.
- Repairs and restoration of Harris Lake boathouse and garage and replacement of **Artist Studio** and **Main Lodge** roofs. $75,000. Work by NYSDEC staff, volunteers, and others.

This is an impressive record of accomplishment, especially considering that Santanoni does not have a predictable allocation from New York State and does not have its own historic site staff, as is typical for other New York State historic sites. All this has been accomplished because of the amazing but rather unusual partnership between NYSDEC, the Town of Newcomb, and AARCH.

Kitchen Wing stabilization project, Great Camp Santanoni, 2010

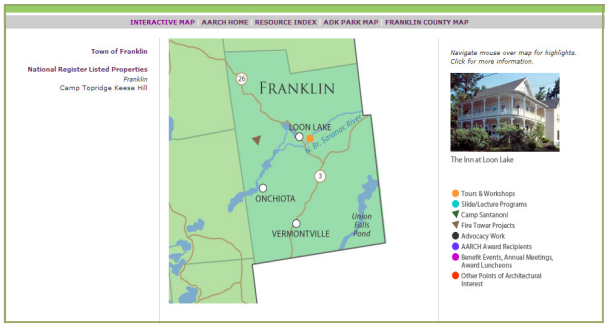
THE YEAR IN REVIEW

This portion of Montcalm Street, Ticonderoga is included in the National Register district nomination written by AARCH.

Technical Assistance and Support

We routinely provide helpful technical assistance to historic property owners on a range of preservation issues each year. This past year included providing support for National Register nominations, distributing information on preservation grants and tax credits, giving conservation advice, and helping to nurture fledgling preservation organizations. This year we did this kind of work in communities like Cranberry Lake, Crown Point, Chazy, Dresden, Essex, Keene, Westport, Hague, Elizabethtown, Potsdam, Jay, North Elba, Lake George, Newcomb, Plattsburgh, Tupper Lake and Brighton.

This was an especially busy year for us in writing National Register nominations and completing cultural resources survey work. AARCH occasionally takes on and is paid for this kind of work when we have the staff time to devote to it. Susan Arena's big project for the year was completing a reconnaissance level survey of the cultural resources in the **Town of Willsboro.** This was funded primarily by a grant from the *Preserve New York* program of the Preservation League of New York State. It identified the key themes and contexts in the town's history and located hundreds of historic buildings and landscapes worthy of our attention. The information from the survey will also inform the town's current comprehensive planning project. Steven Engelhart wrote a National Register historic district nomination for more than a dozen downtown commercial buildings on Montcalm Street in **Ticonderoga**. This designation, and the grant and tax credit opportunities that come with it, will help with the town's ongoing downtown revitalization efforts there.



The new interactive map can be accessed from the homepage of the AARCH website at: www.aarch.org.

Other Activities

Web Site Improvements. With the help of our web designer, we completed the new *Interactive Map,* which allows users to learn about all of the work that AARCH has been doing throughout the region over the past 20 years and to explore the architecture and resources of every town in the region. We've also added a link from our homepage to our new facebook page which has images of the progression of our building projects in Keeseville. These images are updated periodically, so check back often and watch our progress!

Bearhurst (1894), was one of many stops on the *Summer Living in Speculator* tour in 2010.

Tours, Workshops, and Special Events

This summer marked another successful season of AARCH tours and events. Several new tours were introduced, including *Slate Valley, Summer Living in Speculator,* and *Topridge,* and others such as *Riparius and North Creek by Rail* and *Loon Lake* were brought back after several years off the schedule. Most were well subscribed and more than a dozen sold out and in total nearly 900 people attended 36 tours! In addition, we welcomed people to the Adirondack League Club, Werrenrath Camp, Whiteface Club and Resort, and the Mirror Lake Inn for our annual meeting, benefit events, and awards luncheon. We also held an *Adirondack Rustic Architecture Study Tour* in September. Attendees were from all over the country and we spent five days traveling the Adirondacks looking at the wonderful rustic architecture of the region.

We are privileged to offer this remarkable selection of educational outings each year and are able to do so because of the generosity and cooperation of property owners, historians, and educators throughout the region. Their support is greatly appreciated, as is that of our members, who travel all over the Adirondacks to participate in events and share in the celebration of the Park's architectural and cultural legacies. For all that you do, we would like to say thank you.

Adirondack Architectural Heritage
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State of the Arts NYSCA
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