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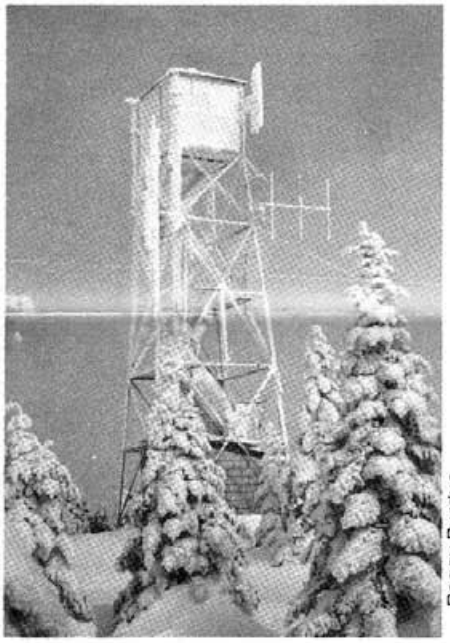
Newsletter

ADIRONDACK
ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE

Fire Towers in the Adirondack Park

The history of observation and communication towers on mountaintops in the Adirondacks properly begins with Verplanck Colvin. In order to accomplish his monumental Adirondack and State Land surveys, between 1872 and 1900 he built a number of rough log towers for triangulation.

The second generation of mountain towers was constructed to enable observers to spot forest fires. The first fire tower in New York State was built in 1905 on Balsam Lake Mountain in Ulster County by a private club. Responding to widespread forest fires in 1903 and 1908, a state law was passed providing for "construction of observation stations on mountain tops with telephone lines connecting up the stations." Initially, four towers were planned for the Adirondacks; the first was put up in June of 1909 on Mount Morris, Franklin County. They proved valuable so quickly that the number of Adirondack towers established that first year was increased to eleven, plus three elsewhere in the state. By the end of the following year, nine more were added in the Adirondacks. These first fire observation towers were ordinarily primitive pole log or plank



Peggy Purdue

Blue Mountain fire tower

structures of varying height and no specific design, though the Whiteface Mountain station was a tent on bare rock. The viewing platforms were unprotected, so the early observers were provided with a rainproof wooden box for their telephones. When tents at the base proved too insubstantial for housing the observers, rough cabins were built, and trails to

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From the President

We are working on a new slide presentation on "The Architecture of the Adirondack Park." We want to show the great diversity and quality of the architecture which has contributed so much to the quality of life in the park throughout its history - from rustic camps to main streets, old hotels, churches, farmsteads, bridges, industrial sites, classic homes of many styles, and other historical and architectural resources. The slide presentation can be shown all around the park - to residents, visitors and school children - as part of AARCH's efforts to help enhance public appreciation and good stewardship of our built environment. If you have any good slides (even a single one) that exemplify any aspects of the Adirondacks' architectural heritage, please contact Barbara Parnass, PO Box 767, Saranac Lake, NY 12983. Either send the slides to her (we can copy them and return the original, if you request), or tell her what you have, and she can get back to you. Thanks for your help.

Three new members of AARCH's board of directors were elected at last summer's annual meeting to fill positions vacated by Anthony Garvan, Craig Gilborn and Michael Wilson.

John Friauf is Adirondack Program Director for the Sagamore Institute in Raquette Lake. A licensed New York State guide, he has led programs for people of all ages in the areas of recreation, adventure, history and environmental education. David Hislop, of Rochester and Essex, is active in several historic preservation organizations in the state. Hislop also has "bricks and mortar" experience in his restoration of the turn-of-the-century Essex School House.

Edmund Lynch, Director of the Adirondack Park Interpretive Centers at Paul Smiths and Newcomb, has an extensive background in historic preservation. The first curator of the Adirondack Museum, Lynch served as chief curator at Mystic Seaport Museum, director of Strawbery Banke in Portsmouth, NH, and director of New York State Historic Sites for the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation before returning to the Adirondacks.

We hope to see many of our members at this summer's tours and at the annual meeting at White Pine Camp on July 10. The 1926 summer White House of President Calvin Coolidge, White Pine Camp, with its 20 buildings and beautiful setting on Osgood Pond, has many interesting architectural and historical features. After many years of deterioration, it is just beginning a major program of restoration. Bring a picnic lunch, bathing suit, or canoe, and enjoy both the annual meeting and a day at one of the least known but most interesting Adirondack "Great Camps."

HOWIE KIRSCHENBAUM

Local Heritage Project

AARCH's Local Heritage Project, new this spring, is designed to help towns and villages inside the Adirondack Park survey their historical and architectural resources. "Every town and village in the park has older buildings and groups of buildings that are special to the town's residents," says George Canon, Town of Newcomb supervisor and AARCH board member. "These farm buildings, churches, camps, and main streets make up our people's heritage."

Howard Kirschenbaum explains the basis of the Local Heritage Project. "The stewardship of local resources must begin at the local level. It should be motivated and controlled by the people of the community, whose ancestors have lived there for generations and whose children will live there for generations to come."

In the first year of the project, AARCH will work with ten teams from different towns and villages around the Adirondacks. Teams can include local residents, town officials, historical society members, and other interested citizens of the community. The ten teams will come together for a one-day workshop on October 27, where AARCH Board members and guest experts will help train the local teams to conduct a survey of the buildings and areas in their communities which they feel are most special and important to the town's heritage. The conference will be partially funded by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts.

After the conference, AARCH will assist the local teams in conducting their surveys. Once the surveys are completed, AARCH plans on sponsoring future workshops to help the local teams develop plans for enhancing public appreciation of these valued resources and helping property owners better care for their prized buildings, hamlets and historic places.

"The local level is where it should begin," says Sue Rathbun, AARCH board member and director of PRIDE of Ticonderoga. "These are our communities; we live here; and we have the greatest stake in taking care of them."

If you think your town or village might like to participate in the Local Heritage Project, contact Mary Hotaling, AARCH Program Coordinator, 22 Catherine Street, Saranac Lake, NY 12983; (518) 891-2748.

Fire Towers, *Continued from page 1*

the towers were improved beginning in 1912.

The early wooden towers were replaced by standard steel towers made of interchangeable parts; the first nine in the Adirondacks were erected in 1916, and conversion was nearly completed by 1920. Lou Curth estimates the average cost of a steel tower was $530 plus ranger labor. Map-tables oriented to each location and sighting devices called "Osborne Fire Finders" were installed in each tower beginning in 1918.

At one time or another, there have been fire towers at 120 locations in New York State, and 57 of those were within today's Adirondack Park. Some towers were established on state land and some on private land, each called by the name of the mountain on which it stood. The observers in these towers served three functions: detecting fires, providing communications for fire fighting, and offering information and conservation education to hikers, though the last was perhaps not officially a part of the observer's duties. Funding for observers was a casualty of recent budgets,declining from 21 manned towers in the mid-1970s to four in 1990 and none today. Fire observation was thought to be less expensive when carried out by light planes, though it is also arguably less reliable. In 1989 it cost DEC $7,500 to keep a tower in service from April 1 to November.

Twenty-nine of the 57 fire tower locations within the Adirondack Park still have towers, in various states of deterioration. Of these, five are on private land. In accordance with the State Land Master Plan, DEC has removed all towers located in the most restrictive "wilderness" classification. The last of these was Pharoah Mountain; it was removed in 1992 after vandals literally cut the legs out from under it. Observer's cabins are present at some but not all remaining towers. An important new use for some towers is to house communications equipment for local emergency services. This vital function is imperiled by vandalism and deterioration.

In addition to the towers in place on mountain tops, three are on public display: at the New York State Fairground in Solvay, Onondaga County; at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake (Whiteface Mountain tower); and at the Adirondack Center Museum in Elizabethtown, Essex County (a combination of the towers removed from Kempshall and West Mountains in Hamilton County).

Of those towers still standing within the Adirondack Park, twelve were judged eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by NYS OPRHP in 1991. Five were judged not eligible, three on the basis of their late date. Eleven fire towers and observers cabins within the Adirondack Forest Preserve were considered by OPRHP as contributing components to the Adirondack Forest Preserve National Historic Landmark nomination.

AARCH has been participating in the Citizens Advisory Committee which is meeting with DEC to guide the future disposition of the remaining towers. There is strong public sentiment to preserve some towers for hikers to visit, especially where the view from the mountain is inaccessible without the tower. The committee is discussing how the state, the towns where the towers are located, and non-profit organizations like the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Adirondack Museum, and AARCH can work together to preserve and use at least some of the remaining towers. Related issues include whether the towers, their approach trails and parking areas are on state or private land, and how such a program might be funded and administered.

Though the fire detection and communications functions of the observers can be accomplished through new technology, the towers' contribution to public recreation and education is irreplaceable. The fire towers are an important part of the historic built environment of the Adirondack Park. Their preservation will insure that their unique place in Adirondack history and architecture will continue to be enjoyed and appreciated by future generations. At the same time, seasonal interpreters can help inspire future generations through conservation education, sharing of information, and inculcating the values of good stewardship of the Park's natural and human resources.

The Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake will sponsor two events on the subject of fire towers this summer, on July 23 and August 27. Check with the museum for specifics at (518) 352-7311.

The summer intern position at Santanoni has not yet been filled. Interested persons please contact Howard Kirschenbaum at (315) 354-3532.

Historic photographs and excerpts from the Santanoni spring-party scrapbooks are the subject of an article by Robert Engle, AARCH's first Santanoni intern, and Howard Kirschenbaum, AARCH president, in the June 1993 issue of *Adirondack Life.*

The Lake Placid Club: What Went Wrong

Mary B. Hotaling

Forest wing of the Lake Placid Club before demolition.

How did it happen that historic preservation failed to protect the Lake Placid Club? Accumulated errors and omissions by many involved in the process brought down the Club.

After a fire of suspicious origin destroyed a section of the main Forest Clubhouse in October 1992, the Lake Placid North Elba Historic Preservation Commission, a Certified Local Government, issued a certificate of appropriateness for the demolition of the fire-damaged wing. This action would be familiar to members of historic preservation commissions throughout the state. Where the process began to diverge from normal was in the suggestion by the chairman of the commission that the owner amend its application to include demolition of the undamaged remainder of the wooden sections of the structure. That suggestion was both taken up by the owner and acted upon by the commission within the week. Both commission meetings were called quickly, without notice to the public or the press.

On November 13, 1992, the Preservation League of New York State, Essex Community Heritage Organization, and four individuals brought a civil action in U.S. District Court against Lake Placid Resort Partnership, Resolution Trust Corporation, the Village of Lake Placid, the Town of North Elba, the Lake Placid/North Elba Historic Preservation Commission, its eight individual members and the Code Enforcement Officer of Lake Placid. The action sought to require compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and with the historic preservation laws of the Village of Lake Placid and the Town of North Elba. On November 17, the court temporarily restrained the defendant from taking any steps to demolish the Club. Shortly after that, two of the six complainants withdrew, and complaints against all the original defendants were withdrawn, replaced by claims against the Lake Placid Land Corporation and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. A court date was set for November 30, but was later adjourned until February.

The public hearing required under local law was belatedly held on December 16, at which representatives of both the owners and the Preservation League presented their views of the safety of the structure, and the owners presented their studies which showed financial loss if they rehabilitated the building. Common economic tools of preservation, including the use of tax credits and variances for the wooden structure, were not employed by the owners in their analysis or argued by the League. Members of the audience booed attempts by the League to present information on similar hotels which have been successfully renovated, and flicked the lights while League representatives were speaking. Despite the fact that the criteria for issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness are clearly stated in the law, the question before the hearing became distorted by the disorderly atmosphere, until the safety of volunteer firemen and nearby properties in case of future arson seemed to be the paramount issue. The owners' responsibility for disconnecting the alarm system, discontinuing the watchmen, and inadequately securing the building did not enter the discussion.

At the end of the meeting the hearing record was closed by the chairman without allowing a comment period. He later offered League counsel the opportunity to write a Finding of Fact based on the evidence presented at the hearing, but not to introduce any refuting information, which he interpreted as new evidence, which was therefore inadmissable. Because the League felt it was pointless to respond unless they were allowed to refute, they declined to enter a Finding of Fact.

At the next meeting of the commission, January 6, 1993, the chairman's Findings of Fact were ratified, despite the presentation of alternative findings (characterized as new information not presented at the hearing) by commission members Janet Mellor and Mary Hotaling; and a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued. The Town of North Elba subsequently abolished the law which had created its part of the joint commission, removing Mellor, Hotaling and two others from the commission.

Because the Preservation League chose to bring its action in federal court, the "meaning and scope" of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the previous owners lay "at the heart of this controversy." Among other points at issue, imprecise names for the various

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AARCH

Our tours, led by knowledgeable volunteer guides, are meant to be enjoyable learning experiences, as well as to raise funds to support our activities. Participants should wear comfortable walking shoes and dress for the variable weather conditions of the Adirondacks. Bring your own lunch and beverages unless otherwise noted. Your pre-registration helps us to make appropriate arrangements. To register or for information, call Mary Hotaling at her home, 518 891-2748, unless another number is given.

Saturday July 10 — **AARCH Annual Meeting,** White Pine Camp, Paul Smiths. Howard Kirschenbaum, President of AARCH, will host a tour of President Coolidge's 1926 summer White House, beginning at 10:30 AM. A brown bag lunch on the grounds will precede the 1 PM meeting. Bring your bathing suit for a swim in Osgood Pond. Our Annual Meeting and tour is a benefit of AARCH membership; guest fee is $10 paid at the gate. We value your participation. Please come!

Saturday July 17 — **Historic Ticonderoga, Village and Fort.** The tour meets at 10 AM and features a walking tour of the historic village of Ticonderoga, visits to two of its historic buildings, and a tour especially designed for AARCH, emphasizing the architectural restoration of Fort Ticonderoga . Lunch may be purchased. Fee $15 ($12 for AARCH members), includes admission to the Heritage Museum and the Fort. To register, send the full fee to co-sponsor PRIDE of Ticonderoga, 126A Champlain Av., Ticonderoga, NY 12883. 518 585-6366.

Saturday July 24 — **Behind the Scenes at Sagamore.** John Friauf, Jr., AARCH Board member, Sagamore's Adirondack Program Director, and licensed NYS guide, will host an unusual day at Camp Sagamore. Beginning at 10 AM and ending about 3 PM, participants will be ushered backstage for a unique view of how "Great Camps" in the woods worked to maintain the illusion of ease for owners and guests. Includes a 2.5 to 3 mile afternoon walk in the woods. Fee is $15 ($10 for AARCH members). Please reserve by sending the full fee to AARCH c/o Mary Hotaling, 22 Catherine St., Saranac Lake, NY 12983, or call 518 891-2748.

Saturday July 31 — **Adirondack Railroad walk,** for railroad buffs only! Celebrate the centennial of the Saranac & Lake Placid Railway with local railroad history expert Chris Brescia. Explore trackage that may be in use by 1994! Meet at 1 PM at the Lake Placid Historical Society Museum in the railroad station (open 1-5 PM). Tour ends 4 PM, allowing an hour to visit the museum. Fee $10 ($5 for AARCH members). Co-sponsor: Adirondack North Country Association.

Wednesday Aug 4 — **Historic Raquette Lake.** This all-day tour, led by AARCH President Howard Kirschenbaum, will feature visits to many historic spots in the hamlet and along the shores of the lake. Meet in front of the Raquette Lake Supply Company at 10 AM for a walking tour of "downtown" Raquette Lake, then take a short drive to The Antlers to see several buildings associated with one of Raquette Lake's major, early hotel complexes. From the Raquette Lake Girls Camp we will board a boat and spend the afternoon viewing the Great Camps and other historic buildings from the lake and debarking to visit a number of fine old camps, cottages and churches. Return about 4 PM. Co-sponsored with the Raquette Lake Foundation. Fee: $20 ($15 AARCH members).

Friday Aug 6 — **Adirondack North Country Association Annual Picnic,** Newcomb, and walking tour of Camp Santanoni with an AARCH guide. The round-trip walk is about 9.4 miles on a gently sloping dirt road. A limited number of seats are available in a horse-drawn wagon, for an additional fee, by advance reservation only. Call ANCA for information and charges, 518 891-6200.

AARCH Events *continued*

Saturday Aug 21 — **Rustic Camps of W. L. Coulter.** Mary Hotaling will lead a tour of three turn-of-the-century "Great Camps" on Upper Saranac Lake designed by Adirondack architect W. L. Coulter: Eagle Island, Moss Ledge and Prospect Point. Fee of $35 ($25 for AARCH members) includes the boat ride to Eagle Island. Reservations required. Send the full fee to AARCH c/o Mary Hotaling, 22 Catherine St., Saranac Lake, NY 12983. 518 891-2748.

Saturday Sept 11 — **Saranac Lake, Pioneer Health Resort.** Held in cooperation with Historic Saranac Lake's third "T.B. Reunion" for former patients and caregivers, this walking and car-pool tour guided by Mary Hotaling begins at 10 AM at the Hotel Saranac. We will visit Trudeau Sanatorium in the morning with reunionees, who will return at noon. After our brown bag or purchased lunch, AARCH will go on to visit other historic sites in and around the village. Fee, $15 ($10 for AARCH members). Please reserve by sending the full fee to AARCH c/o Mary Hotaling, 22 Catherine St., Saranac Lake, NY 12983. 518 891-2748.

Saturday Sept 18 — **Camp Santanoni,** a walking tour guided by AARCH President Howard Kirschenbaum. The round-trip walk is about 9.4 miles on a gently sloping dirt road. Meet at 10 AM at the parking lot at of the Santanoni Preserve, off Route 28N in the hamlet of Newcomb, and return about 4 PM. Suggested donation $10 ($5 for AARCH members). A limited number of seats are available in a horse-drawn wagon, for an additional fee, by advance reservation only. Call for rates, 518 582-3211, 9-2 weekdays. Reservations may be made by sending the suggested donation to co-sponsor Newcomb Historical Society, Newcomb, NY 12852.

Wednesday Oct 27 — **Local Heritage Project Workshop,** Saranac Lake. AARCH Board members and guest experts will train ten teams from different towns and villages around the Adirondacks to conduct a survey of the buildings in their communities which they feel are most special and important to their town's heritage. Teams can include local residents, town officials, historical society members, and other interested citizens of the community. The conference will be partially funded by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. Call Mary Hotaling at 518 891-2748 if you are interested.

Saturday July 17 — **Historic Keeseville, Essex and Westport.** Special opportunity for AARCH members, by reservation only! AARCH Board member David Hislop has arranged a bus tour of three Champlain Valley communities for the Landmark Society of Western New York, co-sponsored by AARCH. This is a rare opportunity to visit private houses. A limited number of places are available as a day trip for AARCH members, who must provide their own transportation. Fee of $45 includes lunch, dinner and evening reception. To reserve, call the Landmark Society (716) 546-7029, and ask for tours.

Lake Placid Club,

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parts of the rambling main building had been used in the agreement. A later study funded by the state described and defined the various parts more accurately, but the names on the agreement were never corrected when the owner subsequently made an inquiry. This left the parties to the agreement (both successors to the original parties) disagreeing on what parts of the building were protected.

On Wednesday, February 10, 1993, Federal Judge Con Cholakis in Albany denied the League's request for an injunction barring demolition. Within two hours, by about 4:30 PM, the owners had begun to demolish. Severe physical damage was done immediately to the wood frame parts of the building, so that there was little left to save, and the League declined to appeal. The clearly defined Agora wing, about one-quarter of the main clubhouse including the Agora Theater, the Annie Dewey Chapel (minus its Tiffany glass windows, whereabouts unknown), and the brick Agora suites, will apparently be left standing in accordance with the Federal Advisory Council agreement.

Great heaps of demolished materials lie on the site of the building, their clean-up perhaps impeded by record-breaking snows in March and April. Lake Placid must now deal with the aftermath: the visibility of the demolition site; disagreement over the method and cost of disposing of the debris; an arsonist still at large; a $6 million decrease in assessment on the club property which must be made up by other property owners; and possible pollution of Mirror Lake by leachate from the demolished materials through old sewer lines.

Judge Cholakis decided that "the risks to Lake Placid firefighters and to public safety plus the Owner's interest and investment in its private property clearly outweigh the plaintiffs' and the public's aesthetic interest in preserving the Club property." In so narrowly construing the value of historic preservation as an "aesthetic interest," a legal precedent was created which is unfortunate for historic preservation in general.

"This sad story underlines the importance of AARCH's mission, working with communities to help them recognize how historic properties can be not only preserved safely, but used to enhance the economic and cultural well-being of the whole community," commented AARCH President Howard Kirschenbaum.

News & Notes

ALL OUTDOORS: Save Outdoor Sculpture!, a nationwide survey aiming to identify, research and assess the condition of sculpture available to public view, is seeking both information and volunteers. Adirondack statuary includes the John Brown Memorial and Olympic artwork near Lake Placid, and two Gutzon Borglum works near Saranac Lake. If you know of more, including folk, primitive and modern art, the New York State Association of Museums would like information now: title or description; general location (village, if any, town & county); specific location (street address or nearest intersection or landmark); your name, address and phone number; and AARCH membership. Contact Valerie Balint, SOS Project Coordinator, NYSAM, Box 71, Troy, NY 12181, within formation or to volunteer. 518 273-3416.

ALTAMONT: Fifty-thousand acre Whitney Park recently passed uncontested to Marylou Whitney after the death of Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney on December 13, 1992. Whitney's will specifies that his Adirondack property, which includes the very private family camp, would pass to the federal or state government if renounced by the heir.

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY: U.S. Senator James Jeffords, R-Vermont, is sponsoring Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Study legislation. The federally funded study will consider the entire Lake Champlain Basin including its Revolutionary War and War of 1812 sites, much as was done for the Civil War battlefields in the Shenandoah Valley. The proposal has aroused suspicion of possible federal regulation among property-rights advocates.

HARRIETSTOWN, FRANKLIN COUNTY: Follensby Pond Preserve, a large parcel of pristine wilderness including Follensby Pond, site of the 1858 Philosopher's Camp, is frequently listed as a high priority for acquisition by advocates of open space protection. On this property, accessible only by water, is a 17-room rustic camp, built in 1917, with a 6' x 8' stone fireplace, cathedral ceiling, and two-story open porches on three sides. To avoid repeating the situation that occurred at Camp Santanoni, this camp's eligibility for the National Register (and that of all others contemplated for acquisition to the Forest Preserve) should be evaluated before acquisition. Such a determination is required by historic preservation legislation signed into law in 1983 by Governor Cuomo.

JAY: After NYS Department of Transportation announced plans to build a new bridge 600 feet upstream from the Jay covered bridge, community volunteers organized as "Bridge

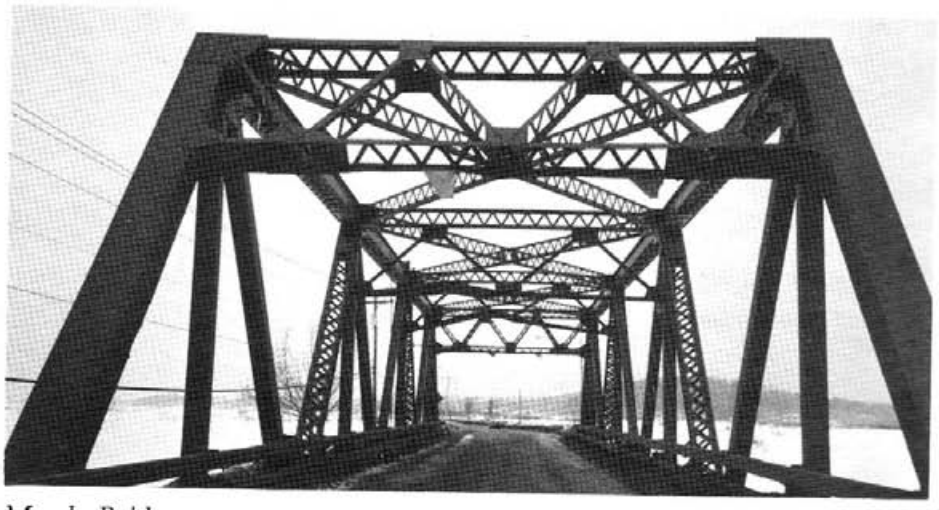
and Beyond"opposed the nearby site for a new bridge, which would spoil both the community swimming hole and the view from the covered bridge. The Jay bridge, owned by Essex County, is the only covered bridge in the Adirondack Park. Jay Supervisor Vern McDonald appointed a task force to examine the problem and make recommendations. As a result, complete rehabilitation of the covered bridge has been added to the list of alternatives being considered by Walt Addicks, project manager for DOT. Public hearings are expected to take place early this summer.

PAUL SMITHS: In an auction on April 22, Camp Topridge was returned to Midlantic National Bank, which had foreclosed on the $1.5 million mortgage. New York State received the lavish camp on Upper St. Regis Lake as a bequest from Marjorie Merriweather Post, who died in 1973, and sold it with 105 acres to Roger Jakubowski in 1987. The auction was complicated by legal uncertainty over the right-of-way to the property and the disposition of the original furnishings and contents of the camp. Midlantic is offering the property for $2.5 million.

QUERY: To understand the context of the sanatorium treatment of tuberculosis in the Saranac Lake area, I would like information about sanatoria elsewhere in the Adirondacks, for example IdleEase Sanatorium in Croghan. Mary Hotaling, 22 Catherine St., Saranac Lake, NY 12983. (518) 891-2748.

RAQUETTE LAKE: The Catholic Church hierarchy is prepared to donate the St. William's church property on Long Point to a non-profit organization. A group of interested Raquette Lake residents is in the process of forming a non-profit organization to take title to the property, preserve it, and use it for small group retreats, gatherings and other compatible uses.

ROUTE 3: The major Route 3 rebuilding project between Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake, called "Wawbeek" by DOT engineers, is expected to be under construction from the spring of 1993 through 1994. It will include replacement of the so-called "state bridge" over the Saranac River between Lower Saranac and Oseetah lakes.



Moody Bridge

Replacement of the Moody Bridge between Tupper Lake and Long Lake on Route 30 is also scheduled to begin this year. The present structure is a "Warren through truss" constructed in 1933 by ACC Fabricators in Buffalo, according to a plaque on the bridge. It is named for the guide Martin Moody, who ran a hotel nearby. DOT Region 7's environmental review for the construction project found the bridge not to be of historic importance.

SANTA CLARA: A fire on March 26 completely destroyed one of the little-known camp buildings on the former William Rockefeller estate at Bay Pond. It was a three-story rambling wood shingle residence in a style similar to the Lake Placid Club, built about 1899. There is some evidence to suggest that W. L. Coulter, architect of other Great Camps in the vicinity, designed the buildings of the compound that were erected at that time. Very much in the tradition of Adirondack Great Camps, the buildings are located deep in the 21,000 acre Bay Pond Park, far from public view. The establishment of this preserve, and the elimination of the lumbering hamlet of Brandon, were a source of great controversy in the early years of this century.

SARANAC LAKE: Historic Saranac Lake is sponsoring its third "T.B. Reunion" September 10-12, 1993, for former patients, nurses, doctors, family members, and interested parties, including researchers. As no mailing lists of patients were kept, all those who have attended in the past were self-referred. Please pass this information along to anyone who might be interested. Contact: Historic Saranac Lake, PO Box 1030, Saranac Lake, NY 12983. Phone (518) 891-0971.

SARANAC LAKE: Castle Point Resort, the former Will Rogers Hospital, was sold at auction March 19 to the holder of a $1.798 million mortgage, The Liberty Bank for Savings in Middletown, CT. The 57,000 square foot Tudor Revival building, built in 1928 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has been partially remodeled into apartments. The bank is offering the property for sale at $700,000.

THENDARA: May 8 is opening day for the second year of the Adirondack Centennial Railroad scenic excursion rides, operated by

the Utica and Mohawk Valley Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The four mile line running on restored track and headquartered at the Thendara station proved phenomenally successful in 1992, attracting 61,900 riders between July and October. Two committees are meeting to study the railroad corridor and make recommendations: one representing all state agencies with interest in the railroad corridor, and a Citizens Advisory Committee on which AARCH is represented. In addition, the Adirondack Railway Preservation Society is working on listing the entire railroad on the National Register of Historic Places to make the line eligible for restoration funds. State funds are expected to be made available by Senator Ronald Stafford to study the financial feasibility of the line and to do basic maintenance on it while the study is being done.

WADHAMS, 12990: In a blow to a 169-year-old pattern of life still common to many small rural communities, the US Postal Service closed its office in Wadhams on September 18, 1992. (Nearby Whallonsburg closed two years ago.) A safety inspection triggered by the retirement of the postmaster found that the facility, housed since 1975 in a rented vernacular wooden house on Main Street, could not be made handicapped-accessible according to federal regulations, though the Postal Service itself constructed a ramp and a new front door in 1988. Closing a post office removes one of the few public gathering places in a small community, striking at its identity, as well as its daily life.

WILLSBORO: The Canadian Pacific Railroad, owner of the former Delaware and Hudson line, has agreed to give their 19th century wooden railroad station to the Town of Essex, rather than to demolish it, if it can be promptly moved off the CP property. Supervisor Teresa Sayward is seeking a site for the station and funding to accomplish the move.

Preservation Technology
with Carl Stearns, A.I.A.

Repairing Mortar in Traditional Masonry

The basic components in any masonry system are the bricks, stones, or manufactured cementitious blocks and the mortar, the hardened bedding compound which holds the assembly together. The color and texture of finished mortars are important to the physical survival and appearance of historic chimneys and foundations. Considering that quality masonry pointing will last many years and neatness is indispensable to the appearance of traditional masonries, extra care is recommended.

Common belief has it that when a masonry wall or chimney becomes deteriorated and starts to come apart, it is because the mortar is too soft and cannot hold up to the weather or to stresses within the gravity resisting system. While very high strength and cementitious fillers may be needed in piers or pilasters to support heavy, concentrated building loads, most masonry components have been shown to survive longer and better when the mortar used is of lesser strength and is actually more flexible. Though the earliest mortars were a mix of sand with lime or natural cement and no Portland cement component at all, traditional mortars in most existing buildings probably contain Portland cement with an equal or greater amount of lime. During the 20th century, however, many mortar recipes created a material which is so hard that it either fractures the bricks and stones it borders, or it breaks itself, or it pulls away from the masonry units, making it inappropriate for repairing historic masonry.

Today, most masonry mortars originate in pre-proportioned "bag mixes" which use other natural materials and/or special additives to provide the type of workability and adhesion to masonry components that lime has traditionally provided. Though these prepared mortar mixes come in a considerable variety of compressive strengths, the color is usually a light gray. Dry tinting agents and hydrated Type "S" lime can be dry-mixed with prepared mortars to modify their color, plasticity and strength, or mixed directly with Portland cement and sand to create an original formula.

All the components in a mortar mix affect its color and texture, including the sand. The range in particle size and tint from #1 white sand to concrete sand with pebbles in it in amber, red, brown or gray has a pronounced effect on the finished mortar joint.

The tooling and surface finish also affect the appearance of the mortar joint. A mortar which is tooled with a steel blade will show more of the color of the matrix or cementitious portion of the mix, whereas a mortar surface which is eroded by being sprayed, rubbed or brushed upon its initial setting will be apt to reveal the color and gradation of its aggregate. Tooled mortar joints traditionally come in a variety of styles, some raised and some recessed. Some are struck flush, others finished to a bevel with a trowel point. A slicker can form a flat mortar joint; various tools can produce concave profiles, or convex ones, such as a Colonial Revival style grapevine joint.

Resources

Designated Agency Preservation Officers (APOs) in NYS agencies operating within the Adirondack Park

OPRHP:
Julia S. Stokes
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation
Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1
Albany, NY 12238-0001
(518) 474-0479

DEC:
J. Winthrop Aldrich
Special Assistant to the Commissioner
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
50 Wolf Road, Room 602
Albany, NY 12233-1010
(518) 457-6558

DOH:
David L. Smith
Director, Human Resource Management
NYS Department of Health
Empire State Plaza
Corning Tower Building
Albany, NY 12237
(518) 486-4976

DOT:
Mary Ivey
Cultural Resource Coordinator
NYS Department of Transportation
Environmental Analysis Bureau
W. Averill Harriman State Office Building Campus
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12232
(518) 457-5672

DOT Region 1:
Essex, Saratoga, Warren, Washington Counties

Dan Hitt, Regional Environmental Coordinator
Department of Transportation
84 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12208
(518) 473-5937

DOT Region 2:
Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Oneida Counties

Neil Palmer, Regional Environmental Coordinator
NYS Department of Transportation
Utica State Office Building
207 Genesee Street
Utica, NY 13501
(315) 793-2433

DOT Region 7:
Clinton, Franklin, Lewis, St. Lawrence Counties

Jim Tinney, Regional Environmental Coordinator
NYS Department of Transportation
Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 785-2341

State-owned Historic Sites within the Adirondack Park

Crown Point
State Historic Site
R.D. #1, Box 219
Crown Point, NY 12928
(518) 597-3666

John Brown Farm
State Historic Site
Lake Placid, NY 12946
(518) 523-3900

Adirondack Architectural Heritage

BOX 159
RAQUETTE LAKE, NY 13436
315-354-5832

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