Volume 4, Number 2
December 1995

Newsletter

ADIRONDACK
ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE

W. L. Coulter, Architect

Mary B. Hotaling

Moss Ledge (1898), Upper Saranac Lake, one of Coulter's earliest rustic camp designs.

WILLIAM L. COULTER was the first successful, resident, professional architect to practice in the central Adirondack region of New York State. He established his home and office in Saranac Lake, which had begun to develop as a health resort for tuberculosis in 1884, when Dr. E. L. Trudeau founded the Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium. In the spring of 1896, the thirty-one-year-old Coulter came to Saranac Lake to supervise the construction of a new Administration Building for Dr. Trudeau, but also for the benefit of his own health. He was one of the very few tuberculosis patients who arrived with a job; his was with the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall and Renwick, for whom he had been working as an architect in New York City.

Soon perceiving new opportunities, Coulter amicably left the firm and opened his own office early in 1897. During this period, with the help of a variety of draftsmen, he designed many fine houses in Highland Park and on Helen Hill in Saranac Lake (including his own family house at 34 Shepard Avenue), as well as on Signal Hill in Lake Placid. He built a business block on Main Street in 1899, as both an investment and office space for his firm, and more than doubled its size in 1901.

Coulter designed four small churches: with J. Lawrence Aspinwall, he built Baker Chapel at the sanatorium for Dr. Trudeau; the original St. Eustace and St. Hubert's (Pilgrim Holiness) churches in Lake Placid, both rebuilt now; and the St. Regis Presbyterian Church in

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From the President

In the first year since AARCH has had a full-time executive director, our organization has experienced significant growth in strength and program delivery.

We set an ambitious goal of doubling our membership in two years. With about 650 members at latest count, we are just about on target. We appreciate all those members who responded to our appeal for names of individuals who might be interested in joining AARCH. Please feel free at any time to continue to send us individual names or mailing lists of people that you think would be supportive of AARCH's mission.

Every year I have reported in this column of the growth in our historic tours around the Adirondacks - 5, 8, 10, 13, and now this year 17 tours, with not a single cancellation and many of them filled and with waiting lists. In addition, Steve Engelhart and AARCH board members have conducted over two dozen slide presentations in communities around the Adirondacks and beyond. These tours and presentations do so much to enhance the public's appreciation of the historic architectural resources of their communities, an essential first step in the historic preservation process.

As two other articles in this newsletter describe, we continue to play a significant leadership role in the restoration and interpretation of Camp Santanoni. Right now the Citizens Advisory Committee is meeting regularly to develop the management plan for the Santanoni Historic Area. AARCH speaks with experience and commitment in advocating practical and dynamic uses for Santanoni that both respect the surrounding Forest Preserve and are most likely to insure the long-term preservation of the buildings.

Because there is much more to report along the lines of AARCH's accomplishments, we plan on sending an Annual Report to members this winter. Meanwhile, I hope you share my pride in how AARCH continues to be an increasingly significant positive force for historic preservation throughout the Adirondack Park.

HOWIE KIRSCHENBAUM

STEWARDSHIP AWARDS

In 1996, AARCH will make its first annual Stewardship Awards. These awards will recognize good historic preservation work and practices by individuals, organizations, businesses and municipalities throughout the Adirondack Park. The purpose of making these awards is to recognize the fundamental importance of such efforts and, by drawing attention to them, to hold them up as models and inspiration for others. A total of eight awards will be given.

AARCH is now actively seeking nominations from its members and the public at large for these awards. The awards can recognize a wide variety of projects and efforts including, but not limited to: building restorations, long term stewardship of important properties, advocacy efforts, historic sites surveying and effective educational programs which encourage good stewardship. The deadline for nominations is February 1, 1996. For more information or to make an award nomination, contact Steven Engelhart by telephone at (518) 834-9328 or in writing at 1759 Main Street, Keeseville, NY 12944. The Stewardship Awards Program is funded, in part, by Finch, Pruyn & Company of Glens Falls.

SE

LAST CHANCE FOR CABIN WHERE BELA BARTOK STAYED

In 1945 the Hungarian composer Bela Bartok spent the last summer of his life in Saranac Lake, working on the Viola Concerto and nearly finishing his third Piano Concerto. Fifty years later, Bartok's reputation has soared, but the small cabin where he stayed is near collapse.

Despite its neglected condition, a committee of Historic Saranac Lake Board members believes that there is a constituency for the Bartok cabin across the country, and they have volunteered to help determine if there is a solution other than demolition. The best possible outcome is envisioned as a restored memorial cabin, open to visitors by appointment, and perhaps even to artists for use as a summer studio.

Letters of moral support for the project are very welcome. However, financial support will be necessary for this cabin, or a part of it, to be saved.

For more information, or to participate in any way, please write to the Bartok Cabin Project, Historic Saranac Lake, PO Box 1030, Saranac Lake, NY 12983, or call Emily Fogarty (518) 891-3755 or Mary Hotaling (518) 891-2748.

MBH

Coulter, First Resident Adirondack Architect . . . continued from page one

Paul Smiths. Also at the sanatorium, he designed Anderson, Ladd, Robins and Phoenix Cottages (all extant), as well as Hoffman Cottage and Childs Infirmary (demolished).

A number of camp buildings on the St. Regis chain were Coulter's work, including some at the Penfold camp (today's Camp Regis and Applejack), as well as the first Ice Palace in Saranac Lake. He also built distinctive rustic camps on Lake Placid, including Woodland and Joyland (Victor Herbert); Beach Cove, Meadowhill & Irondequoit in Private Park; and Camp Gordon, Brushwood and Sunset Lodge in the Ruisseaumont area.

Coulter Family

W. L. Coulter

Upper Saranac Lake was the site of many of his camp designs: Moss Ledge and the original Pinebrook; spectacular Bull Point for Otto Kahn (demolished); the Moritz Walter camp next door (now the Wawbeek, with its remarkable dining room fireplace-staircase); main house alterations and a new billiard room for J. S. Bache at Wenonah; a cottage for Schuyler Merritt at Bartlett Carry; and some work at both Deer Island camps.

On Lower Saranac Lake, Knollwood and the Mark Twain Camp were Coulter's creations. He was the architect of the Lake Placid Club, and of the Rockefeller retreat at Bay Pond. Farther afield, he built the Amusement Hall at Camp Sagamore in Raquette Lake for Alfred G. Vanderbilt.

In 1902, perhaps the height of Coulter's career, the firm designed two of the largest camps on Upper Saranac Lake, Prospect Point for Adolph Lewisohn and Eagle Island for former U.S. Vice-President Levi P. Morton. In 1904 Max H. Westhoff, who had been Coulter's employee for two years, was named as associate in the firm. That year Coulter built a winter home in Camden, South Carolina, but the firm did design the D. Henry Smith camp on Lower Saranac Lake and Sunset Hill in Keene Valley. In 1905 Westhoff rose to partnership, and the firm became Coulter & Westhoff. In their two years in partnership, Adolph Lewisohn hired them to design an enormous estate for him in Ardsley, New York, and they planned the mining town of Keokee, Virginia. Locally, Coulter & Westhoff laid out a subdivision for Julia Miller, and designed camps Red Fox and Gull Rock on Lake Placid, the Floyd-Jones camp on Lower Saranac Lake, a cottage for the Upper Saranac Lake Association, several large houses in Saranac Lake, a particularly fine Ice Palace, and a Town Hall (later demolished) for Santa Clara.

Coulter was lucky in his timing: he both benefitted from and helped to create a building boom. Not only was the semi-charitable Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium itself growing fast, its reputation was attracting wealthy private patients who were building their own fine homes in the village of Saranac Lake.

At the same time, vast tracts of nearby lakeshore lands were being subdivided, and wealthy families were building private summer homes, known as "camps." Among these families were Jews, who had been excluded from a number of resorts and hotels in the region since New York banker Joseph Seligman was refused accommodations at the Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga Springs in 1877. After that widely-publicized incident, anti-Semitism became overt in certain hotels and clubs. Coulter worked for a broad clientele, but a handful of wealthy and prominent Jewish camp owners provided his largest and most lucrative commissions.

Coulter was an eclectic architect who worked principally in the Tudor, Shingle, Rustic and Chalet styles. A well-organized businessman, he ran a busy office, producing 100 projects in eleven years, conservatively counted. During about the same time, Frank Lloyd Wright's office produced 135 projects in 17 years. Throughout his life, Coulter associated himself with others: as a protege of J. Lawrence Aspinwall; as a partner in investment with Judson Newman Smith, Frank L. Creesy and George V. W. Duryee; in professional practice with Max Westhoff; and as a mentor of William G. Distin. He was happily married to Violet M. Rohe, with whom he had four living children. Through his architectural practice and investments, and especially because he did not discriminate against Jews, he made a fortune and a name for himself. But in seizing the abundant opportunities that presented themselves, instead of strictly following the rest cure, he may have hastened his own death. Age forty-two, Coulter died of tuberculosis on October 28, 1907.

W. L. Coulter made two unique contributions to architecture, both intimately associated with his own time and place. First, he designed the earliest institutional and residential sleeping porches in Saranac Lake, a community in which these porches define the vernacular. Second, along with William West Durant and Robert H. Robertson, W. L. Coulter significantly developed the rustic camp style for which the Adirondack region is known. Both of these contributions exerted a broad influence on American domestic architecture of the early twentieth century.

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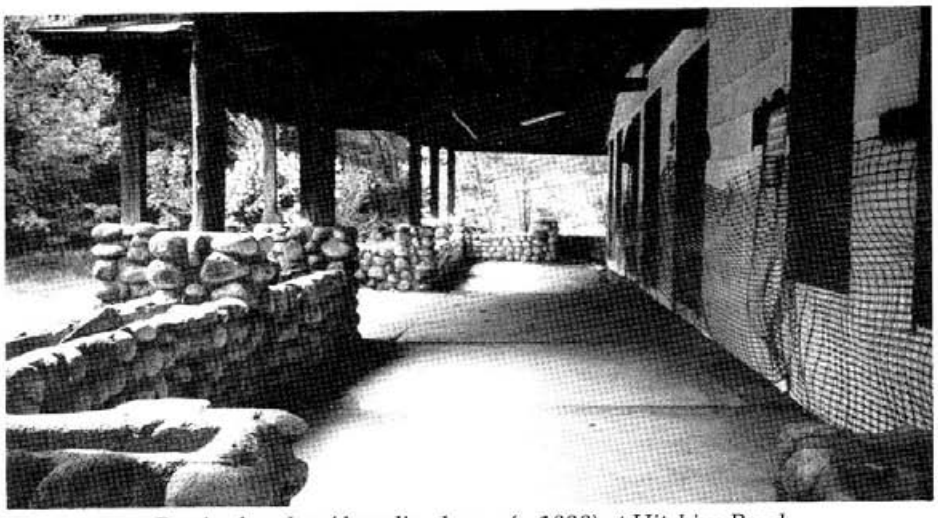
The author has recently completed her M.S. in Historic Preservation at the University of Vermont. The above article is derived from her thesis.

State Ignores Historic Preservation Law



Peg Masters

Porch of workers' boarding house (c. 1898) at Hitchins Pond, St. Lawrence County, later the Low Family Camp.

In September, when AARCH member Peg Masters of Old Forge sent AARCH President Howie Kirschenbaum photographs of historic buildings on state-owned land in the Bog River Flow area a few miles southwest of Tupper Lake in St. Lawrence County, the existence of those buildings came as a surprise to him. And to the entire AARCH Board. And to Chuck Vandrei, the Department of Environmental Conservation's historic preservation officer. And to Lynn Garofalini, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's regional representative. (See News & Notes.)

Of news to everyone was that the state's acquisition several years ago included a dozen or so buildings that were part of Augustus Low's turn-of-the-century attempt to develop lumbering, maple sugaring, and other industries in this area. The remaining buildings include three guest cabins, a large workers' lodging house turned Low family camp, a garage with apartment above, a gate/guard house, a garage and several storage buildings.

According to an article by Tom Hughes in the May/June 1990 issue of *Adirondack Life*, Low began acquiring his Adirondack lands in 1892. He built himself a summer house on the west shore of Bog Lake and later a year-round home on Lake Marian. In 1896, he built a railroad station at Horseshoe on the Mohawk and Malone line, said to have been identical to the station at Garden City, Long Island. In 1898 he established a post office at Horseshoe, New York, though no building is mentioned. He laid fifteen miles of standard gauge railroad tracks to facilitate lumbering. Around 1898 Low built a three-story boarding house and several cottages near Hitchins Pond on the Bog River as housing for workers near his sawmill and box- and barrel-making equipment. He started a maple-sugaring operation in 1899 that involved elaborate evaporators, capable of producing 4,000 gallons of syrup a year. He built a dam on the Bog River in 1903, and a second dam near Hitchins Pond in 1907. Bad forest fires in the fall of 1908 destroyed his lumbering and maple sugaring operations, and Low returned to his former home in Brooklyn, where he died in 1912. After his death, the family used the boarding house at Hitchins Pond as their camp. Hughes describes the area in 1990:

The buildings at the pond are marked with orange spray-painted numbers. This is state land now, and the buildings are slated for destruction. (If they weren't insulated with asbestos, they'd be gone already, but no one is sure what to do with the stuff.) The three-story house, which first served as housing for the work crews and later as the Low family's summer retreat, still stands. Some of the stonework is quite beautiful, but the house itself has been thoroughly wrecked. Every window has been knocked out of the place, and there wasn't much interesting to see except for a dozen tiny dead bats we discovered in a third-floor bathtub.

The dam at the pond still operates, and a powerhouse still stands next to it. But Hitchins Pond is just a ghost town on its way to becoming wilderness.

Apparently, when DEC acquired thousands of acres in the Bog River Flow, it failed to follow Environmental Conservation Law 9-0109. This law requires the state to evaluate the significance of historic buildings *before* it acquires them for the Forest Preserve. If OPRHP finds the buildings eligible for the State or National Registers of Historic Places, they cannot become part of the Forest Preserve and therefore subject to demolition (with certain exceptions).

AARCH has no position at this time on whether these buildings, in quite poor condition, are historically or architecturally significant. But they are certainly substantial enough to trigger an evaluation under ECL 9-0109. AARCH has communicated its concern to agency officials that DEC seems to have ignored its own law and guidelines by not having the Bog River buildings formally evaluated before acquisition, thereby potentially creating another situation like that at Santanoni.

HK & MBH

CORRECTION

In the article on "Timb Bombs" in the Spring 1995 *Newsletter*, the former chapel at Stony Wold Sanatorium in Onchiota was pictured. Contrary to our report, the chapel was excluded from the sale to New York State and is privately owned. We regret the error. *MBH*

Santanoni Update . . .
Internship 1995

In mid-winter of last year an internship announcement arrived at the University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program where I am a graduate student. It described a summer job living and working in a remote setting on beautiful Newcomb Lake, interpreting and stabilizing the magnificent Camp Santanoni. I read the part of the announcement warning that there was no electricity, no running water, and that a successful applicant must be emotionally stable, and able to endure long, solitary nights. I read that part, but the warning flowed in and out of my cognizant understanding like water off an emerging loon's back. All I really understood was that here was an opportunity to combine my two greatest passions, the great outdoors and historic architecture, and get closer to a master's degree to boot!

I arrived in Newcomb one hot summer day in late June, avoiding the black flies and just in time for the busy Fourth of July weekend. After a day of orientation and training from Howie Kirschenbaum, Steve Engelhart and the local DEC staff, they departed, and I could not contain my excitement. I had the keys, and now I could poke around alone, discover the camp's secrets, relax on the porch, and read about the camp and its owners, imagine stories the logs could tell me. I could go for a swim, do some fishing, hike and row around the lake, bike along the road. But as I began thinking of all this, a beautiful sunset gave way to a dark, quiet, solitary night, the kind of night of which the job announcement warned.

My first tour the next morning was a dry run. Confident there was no one around, I designed the tour and began walking from building to building, talking to myself. I didn't see the curious kayaker from across the lake walk up from the boat house; worried about my mental stability, he stood and listened to my tour before letting himself be known. Embarrassed, I explained my duties to him and more than an hour later we parted, he delighted with the camp and its history, and me delighted with his interest. I was never caught talking to myself again, but the tremendous feeling I got informing people about this fascinating camp was always present.

No tour was the same. Depending on the people and what interested them, we would discuss history, famous visitors, construction techniques, building materials, the political climate, even the geological concerns regarding any shift of the structures. By involving the visitors, and including their impressions and knowledge, these tours became educational for me as well, never more so than the occasion on which I unknowingly pressed my guiding services on one of the camp's former owners. Instead, he guided me, and told me stories that enriched my knowledge as well as my tours.

The summer I expected; enjoying the Adirondack wilderness, living at such a stunning place, and periodically working on the roofing of the buildings, was wonderful. But it was what I had not expected that made my time at Santanoni rewarding, especially the interaction with a public that is both informed and concerned. The vast majority of visitors would like to see the buildings saved and restored, and most are equally concerned about the camp's wilderness setting. Furthermore, almost everyone felt that there is room at Santanoni for a productive use of the buildings that would not interfere with the wilderness. Whatever the future holds, public interpretation of Camp Santanoni benefits the camp, the visitor, and those charged with administering the preserve.

HAL HUTCHINSON

Grant to Study Farm Complex

AARCH was recently awarded a $12,000 grant from the Preservation League of NYS/NYS Council on the Arts Grant Program, which supports locally-based projects across the state undertaken by municipalities and not-for-profit groups. The grant will pay consultant Wes Haynes to produce an historic structures report for the farm complex at Camp Santanoni.

Built in 1902, the farm was largely designed by Edward Burnett, a leading specialist of the time. At the height of its use, this complex of almost a dozen buildings set amid acres of fields included a Guernsey dairy herd, horse teams, pigs, poultry, pigeons, vegetable gardens, a sugarbush, an orchard, a smokehouse, root cellar and beehives, all of which provided the Pruyn family and their guests with a wide variety of fresh farm products. The farm was run by local families, some of whom lived in the three farmhouses.

The historic structures report will document the history and significance of these buildings, evaluate their condition and make recommendations for future repairs and restoration. The completed report will guide management of the site and planning for its future.

SE

News & Notes

Albany: The NYS Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau (518 237-8643; FAX 233-9049) has reorganized its staff along regional lines. Lynn Garofalini (ext. 267) is the contact for the National Register and Survey Unit in Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Warren and Washington Counties. Ray Smith (ext. 260) handles Fulton, Herkimer, Oneida and Saratoga Counties. Call Tony Opalka (ext. 278) regarding Technical Assistance and Grants for all of the above counties.

Elizabethtown: Essex County has donated vacant Hubbard Hall, most recently the offices of several county and non-profit agencies, to the town of Elizabethtown. Built in 1840 as the home of Congressman Orlando Kellogg, the house was remodeled in 1895 to its present Queen Anne style. Used as a community hospital from 1925 to 1967, the house was converted to use as the local branch of North Country Community College, and later turned over to the county. The newly formed Rediscover Elizabethtown Association hopes to find a private buyer to restore and use the house, well-located on the main street of the county seat.

Essex: The Essex Community Heritage Organization (ECHO) received $5,000 in September from the Preservation League of New York State to support their Design & Technical Outreach Program.

Lake George: The wreck of the radeau "Land Tortoise" on the bottom of Lake George was approved by the State Board in June for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The 53-foot-long floating gun battery, deliberately scuttled on October 22, 1758, has been established as a New York State Submerged Heritage Preserve for divers.

Lake Placid: A series of suspicious fires has continued to destroy the remaining buildings of the Lake Placid Club, one at a time. About May 5 the porch of the Larches cottage was damaged. On May 19 the Mt. Whitney ski lodge was destroyed. On October 21 Colden cottage sustained severe damages. All were unoccupied at the times of the fires. A bearded young man seen by several passers-by is being sought as a suspect.

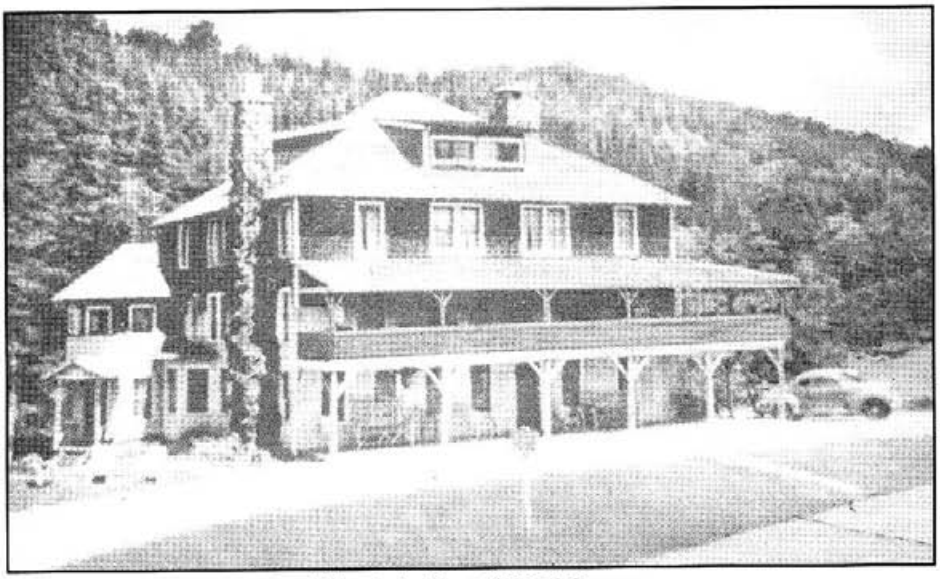
Lake Placid: Very extensive public hearings were held on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Wal-Mart store proposed for a site at the intersection of Whiteface Inn Road and Route 86. Revisions have not yet been labeled complete by the North Elba Planning Board. A local law was passed by the town in June to transfer jurisdiction over new stores bigger than 40,000 square feet to the Adirondack Park Agency.Wal-Mart is suing both the town and the agency, which has also accepted the additional responsibility at its August meeting.

Merrillsville: The Merrillsville Town Hall has been approved by the State Board for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A modest former cure cottage, it was part of a facility operated by Margaret Merrill, a registered nurse, on the former Port Kent and Hopkinton Turnpike (Rte. 99), and later moved down the road to the corner of Old State Route 3.

Minerva: Aiden Lair Lodge (Haven of Rest), which has a long history as an Adirondack resort and which was listed on our Most Endangered Places List in 1994, may have a new lease on life. It was recently purchased by Robert Morrison of Albany, who is the grandson of Mike and Lillian Cronin, who were the proprietors of Aiden Lair beginning in 1893. The 6000 square foot building, built beginning in 1914 after a fire destroyed the earlier hotel building there, has been vacant, for sale and deteriorating for many years now. Bob intends to thoroughly rehabilitate the building and to open it again as a year round resort hotel.

North Creek: A Rural New York Historic Preservation Grant of $4,000 was awarded to the North Creek Railway Depot Preservation Association for architectural services to guide its interior rehabilitation.

Paul Smiths: In compliance with covenants placed on the deed when New York State first sold Camp



Postcard Provided

Aiden Lair, Route 28N, Minerva

Topridge, its new, private owners have contacted NYS Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau. The staff has given them technical assistance regarding possible changes, but the owners have not as yet submitted concrete plans.

Paul Smiths: In its Fall 1995 publication *The Sequel*, Paul Smith's College announces an ambitious plan, called "Back to the Future," to build a new library and remodel existing buildings in the style of the former Paul Smith's Hotel. Administrative offices will be moved to the last three lakeshore hotel cottages, which will be renovated and rebuilt.

Port Henry: Christ Church (1872) was approved by the State Board for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. It is a modest wooden version of a High Victorian Gothic church. Though its Episcopal congregation closed its doors in 1993, the building is now owned by the Town of Moriah Historical Society.

Saranac Lake: Both the lease for the Union Depot and the contract for an ISTEA grant with DOT for its rehabilitation were signed this fall. The Working Committee has reviewed the credentials of 22 architects, and chosen four to interview. Work should begin in the coming season, with completion targeted for 1997.

Wadhams: The Wadhams Church of Christ was given a $2,500 grant in September by the Preservation League of New York State for architectural services in the renovation of its parish hall.

Warrensburg: To complete an historic district nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places for 215 properties, Warrensburg Beautification, Inc., received $2,000 from the Rural New York Program of the Preservation League of New York State.

Westport: In September the Preservation League of New York State awarded Essex County $5,000 for an economic analysis of the County Fair, which takes place each summer at its historic fairgrounds in Westport.

Willsboro: The Samuel Adsit log cabin (1778), perhaps the oldest surviving log cabin in the Northeast, is being restored for public use with a $12,500 grant from the State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Listed on the National Register in 1992, it was donated by John F. and Tom Kiehl to the Town of Willsboro in 1994. The Kiehls had kept it open to the public for 35 years. The grant money will be used for structural work to the foundation and replacement of deteriorating logs.

MBH

Resources

Adirondack Libraries with Local History Collections

Adirondack Center Museum Library
Essex County Historical Society
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
(518) 873-6466 Reid Larson, Director

Adirondack Museum Library
Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812
(518) 352-7311 or -7312
Jerold Pepper, Librarian

Akwesasne Library
R.R. #1, Box 14C, Hogansburg, NY 13655
(518) 358-2240 Carol White, Director

AuSable Forks Free Library
PO Box 179, 9 Church Street
AuSable Forks, NY 12912
(518) 647-5596
Aleta Baker, Library Director

Goff-Nelson Memorial Library
41 Lake Street, Tupper Lake, NY 12986
(518) 359-9421 Chalice Dechene, Director

Keene Public Library
PO Box 206, Keene, NY 12942
(518) 576-2200 Marcy LeClair, Librarian
Tony Goodwin, Town of Keene Historian

Keene Valley Library Assn.
Box 86, Keene Valley, NY 12943
(518) 576-4335
Dorothy W. Irving, Archivist

Lake Placid Public Library
67 Main Street, Lake Placid, NY 12946
(518) 523-3200
Therese K. Patnode, Director

North Country Community College
20 Winona Avenue, Box 89
Saranac Lake, NY 12983
(518) 891-2915 x218
Philip L. Gallos, Coordinator

Paine Memorial Library
1 School St., Willsboro, NY 12996-3727
(518) 963-4478 Janice Allen, Director

Paul Smith's College
Frank L. Cubley Library
Paul Smiths, NY 12970
(518) 327-6313 Karen Smith, Librarian

Peru Free Library
PO Box 96, Peru, NY 12972
(518) 643-8618
Mary Kay Rillahan, Librarian

Plattsburgh Public Library
15 Oak Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901
(518) 563-0921
Katherine S. Cayea, Director

Raquette Lake Free Library
Raquette Lake, NY 13436
(315) 354-4005
Debbie Heinsler, Librarian

Richards Library
36-38 Elm St., Warrensburg, NY 12885
(518) 623-3011 Sarah Farrar, Librarian

Saranac Lake Free Library
100 Main Street, Saranac Lake, NY 12983
(518) 891-4190 Betsy Whitefield, Director
Janet Decker, Director of Adirondack Collection

Sherman Free Library
4 Church Street, Port Henry, NY 12974
(518) 546-7461 Dianna Alger, Director

Thompson-Pell Research Center
PO Box 390, Ticonderoga, NY 12883
(518) 585-2821

Ticonderoga Historical Assn. Library
Hancock House
1 Moses Circle, Ticonderoga, NY 12883
(518) 585-7898
Norma Dreimiller, Assistant Director

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

HEMLOCK

The hemlock consists of ten species of coniferous evergreen trees of the genus tsuga. In the context of the Adirondacks, we are concerned with the eastern hemlock (tsuga Canadensis) also called Canadian hemlock. This evergreen is praised for its wispy flat-needled terminus and slender drooping branches, and it is criticized for the speed with which it can dull the blades of saw and axe alike. It is lauded for providing durable siding for building without any finish at all, and yet it is apt to be splintery (and "shaky") when it comes apart at the growth rings. Hemlock is truly a species of contradiction, long prized for the tannin contained in its bark which made it indispensable to the Adirondack tanning industries, and yet the logs were generally left to rot in the forests after harvest. Barbara McMartin's book, *Hides, Hemlocks and Adirondack History* gives an impressive quantification and description of this industry, which was the subject of an AARCH tour on August 19. Potentially enormous trees with reddish gray brown bark and tiny cones, the hemlock accents hardwood forests where it grows up through the understory. It also can be found in dense and uniform stands with virtually no other species present. The short, flat needles are a deep green, almost viridian on top, but light colored and silvery beneath, where two white bands on each needle provide the contrast. The horizontality of the needles and branches alike make this evergreen a sought-after ornamental, although its importance in the Adirondacks of course has to do with forest industries.When of sound condition, the eastern hemlock is a good choice for framing timber and is available through sawmills and lumber companies within the Adirondack Park. Its structural properties, specific gravity and weight per cubic foot, are considered synonymous with tamarack, and fall between Douglas fir (south) and eastern spruce. Fiber strength under visual grading is classified with "fir" and/or Douglas fir, and its reddish grain gives it an appearance, when planed, similar to the other species with which it is graded. This appearance makes tsuga Canadensis an attractive choice for Adirondack camps and lodges where the framing is used in its exposed state, especially rough sawn (as if reciprocally sawn, so as to appear more historic in origin). The popularity of mobile band-saw mills adds another range of possibilities to this application. As weather sheathing, hemlock has a history of use on Adirondack barns and outbuildings, where it is usually applied in vertical or board and batten configuration. The durability of this material is readily apparent.

As a conifer, hemlock is not preferred for use as fireplace or stove fuel, other than as kindling into which it splits handily. In large wood-burning furnaces and maple syrup evaporators, the utility of tsuga Canadensis is still appreciated in a temperate climate.

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Adirondack Architectural Heritage

1759 MAIN STREET
KEESEVILLE, NY 12944
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22 Catherine St., Saranac Lake, NY 12983
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