AARCH MATTERS

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2020 VOLUME 29 NUMBER 1

BUSTING Historic Preservation *MYTHS*

Myths pervade most aspects of life and they can be very persistent. Whether it's "We only use 10% of our brain" or "George Washington had wooden teeth" these myths can be relatively harmless or really get in the way of true understanding and action. Especially in a time when there is no shortage of misinformation, it is incumbent on all of us to tear down myths when and wherever they occur.

Historic preservation has its own set of myths. Some originate from a grain of truth, many are outright wrong, and still others require a more nuanced understanding. We run across these myths all the time in our work and constantly push back against them through education, persuasion, and the wisdom of our own experiences. Here, we take on the ***four*** *most persistent and sometimes damaging myths in our field.*

The Town of Westport completely restored and rehabilitated its existing town hall at a much lower cost than building a new one. Photo courtesy of the Press-Republican.

MYTH #1: If my property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, I will never be able to make any changes to it.

This is the most common myth we encounter. **The truth is that, in and of itself, National Register listing *does not* restrict an owner's right to make changes to a building, including demolishing it,** except in two specific circumstances. First, if a building owner receives public support for work on their National Register eligible or listed building, then the work will be reviewed by a state agency and must conform to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. You can understand the trade-off. In exchange for getting public money, the funder wants to ensure that the public goal of preserving and enhancing the state's architectural heritage is achieved, or at least not diminished. Our experience is that such reviews are usually extremely reasonable and apply mostly to building exteriors.

Second, where a *local municipality* has enacted a *local law* to protect its designated historic properties, then a *local board* may scrutinize an owner's plans. Such ordinances usually grow out of a local interest in achieving historic preservation and community revitalization goals. These ordinances are developed and approved through a public input process and are administered by people who understand the circumstances in their own community. These also mostly apply to exterior changes to a building. Although sometimes these do cause controversies, on the whole, the ordinance have been found to greatly enhance community character, cohesion, and vitality. Essex is one of the most architecturally rich and intact villages in our own region, in part, because of the measures taken by the town to protect its cultural resources. Warrensburg also recently denied an application to demolish a historic building to build a Dollar General store in an historic district, thanks to its local zoning ordinance. Otherwise, **such ordinances are extremely rare in the Adirondacks**.

So, if you own a National Register listed property but are using your own money and live in a community without a historic district law, you are free to do almost anything you like, within the limits of building and other municipal codes. On the other hand, National Register designation carries many benefits. This is true for individual building owners but it is especially true for historic neighborhoods and downtowns. A selection from PlaceEconomics' *Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation is Good for Your*

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"It all comes down to this simple fact: We can't build our way out of the global warming crisis. We have to conserve our way out. That means we have to make better, wiser use of what we've already built."

Richard Moe, Esq. (President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation 1993-2009)

Dear Friends,

As I complete my first year as president of the Board of Directors, it is a good time to reflect on the progress we have made in support of our mission to "promote public understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the Adirondacks architectural heritage and unique communities through education, advocacy, technical assistance and direct action." Despite changes in key personnel, members of the board of directors, and other new challenges in 2019, AARCH remains financially stable, thriving in its programming and activities, and well situated for all current and future challenges.

Jessica Parker, Office Manager, who succeeded Virginia Siskavich in August, comes to us with valuable experience, lots of personality and the ability to keep dozens of things running smoothly. Christine Bush, Preservation Services Director, comes to AARCH with a great deal of history in the design, construction and preservation fields. She has already completed several of the National Register nominations initiated by her predecessor Mary Cirbus, including a downtown Malone historic district, Echo Farm in Essex, and Hague Baptist Church. Christine also fields questions from all kinds of historic building owners. Nolan Cool, Educational Programs Director, is busy planning another far-ranging and sure-to-be-popular series of educational programs for 2020, including a series of new events that will explore how individuals and communities produce energy, grow food, sustain craft traditions, and build and care for buildings in creative and sustainable ways. And then there's the good work of our intrepid Executive Director, Steven Engelhart, who has his hand in so many of our projects and activities, from creating a new waterfront park in Keeseville, to initiating the largest restoration project yet undertaken at Camp Santanoni, to giving public talks far and wide, to leading our effective advocacy work. We are so fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated staff.

For even more about our 2019 accomplishments, please revisit our 2019 *Year in Review*. All of this, of course, depends on the generous support of our members, sponsors, foundations, New York State, and the general public, to whom we are most grateful. Please consider increasing your support for AARCH, encourage others to become members, participate in our tours, or consider joining us on one of our international adventures in 2020 or 2021.

Once again thank you all for your continued interest, participation, and support. We can't do our work effectively without you!

Kind Regards,

Dean

Dean Melville
Board President

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Council on the Arts

This publication was made possible, in part, through the generous support of the New York State Council on the Arts, Architecture + Design Program.

Community provides substantial evidence that historic preservation:

- Creates jobs
- Stimulates downtown revitalization
- Promotes heritage tourism
- Provides affordable housing opportunities
- Improves property values
- Is at the heart of a healthy small local business economy
- Provides space for new business start-ups
- Creates walkable, human-scaled, environmentally responsible communities

All of the above happens because well-preserved historic communities are attractive, intimate, and dynamic places to live, work, and visit. Communities with designated historic properties are further advantaged by a number of financial incentive opportunities available to historic building owners (see Myth #2).

MYTH #2: If I buy an historic property, there is lots of government money available to help fix it up.

If only this were true! Unfortunately, **public funding for historic preservation is fairly limited** but, when it is available, it falls into two major categories. State and federal **grants** are available to municipalities and nonprofit organizations for historic preservation and community revitalization projects. At the federal level, there's the *Save America's Treasures* program, which has funded projects at Eagle Island, Camp Sagamore, Fort Ticonderoga, and Camp Santanoni over the past decade. At the state level, most of the historic preservation funding comes through the *Environmental Protection Fund*, which has funded projects at the Santanoni and the Frazier Bridge in Ticonderoga, to name a few. Grant funding for churches is also available through the New York Landmarks Conservancy's *Sacred Sites Program.* These programs are competitive but yield big results. Historic preservation and community revitalization projects funded in 2019 by these grant programs are listed in the *News & Notes* section of this newsletter.

TAX CREDITS AT WORK

A Conversation with Local Tax Credit User Hannah Hanford

AARCH recently sat down with Hannah Hanford to discuss her restoration project utilizing New York State's Historic Homeowner Tax Credit Program. In 2010 ***Hannah Hanford*** *purchased an 1897 Cure Cottage in Saranac Lake, and although the house was in overall good condition, some critical issues needed to be addressed. She was able to use the state's Historic Homeowner Tax Credit Program to rehabilitate her home.*

Hannah Hanford, Molly, and Cooper on their restored front porch

Tell us a little bit about your project.
The old knob and tube wiring needed to be replaced, the front porch was failing, and dangerous, some vinyl windows needed to be replaced, and the house had no insulation. Dormers on the 3rd floor had aluminum siding, which was to be removed and replaced with clapboard. In addition, multiple layers of paint (many with lead) needed to be abated, and some of the trim details needed replacement.

Did you feel the process was easy to understand and navigate?
Yes, it was quite straight forward and easy to follow the steps. Quite honestly, it was like a recipe in a cookbook. I just filled out the blocks and followed the directions. I did not feel it was onerous at all. NYSERDA provided a detailed plan of what types of insulation and where it was going that was submitted as part of the proposed project.

How helpful was OPRHP to you in navigating the tax credit approval process?
I was able to work through the process quite easy and only called a few times with questions which were quickly answered. OPRHP did not come out before, during, or after and accepted photographs and documents to complete the process.

If the tax credits were not available, what would you have had to do differently?
The project would have taken substantially longer as I would have waited to raise funds for each step, knowing that the tax credits would help overtime allowed me to do more at once. It also allowed me to get a great quality contractor.

Would you recommend the tax credit program to others?
Yes, definitely. Other than it took some time to complete the process, it was a very positive experience. ***The house had been a cure cottage; it was a welcoming and healing place. When finished I just had a feeling the house was smiling, it was proud of itself again.***

The much bigger opportunity for financial support for historic preservation projects are the **state and federal tax incentive programs.** Let's break these down into two project types – for homeowners and commercial properties. If you live in a National Register listed home and meet other program guidelines, you can receive a state income tax credit of up to 20% for qualified rehabilitation expenses through the New York State Historic Homeowner Tax Credit Program. In simple terms, for instance, if you were to spend $50,000 to rehabilitate your home, you could receive up to $10,000 in the form of an income tax credit. The minimum project size is $5,000

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and the maximum credit is $50,000. The credit can be spread out over several years and one can use this tax credit program multiple times, if breaking a project into smaller pieces makes more sense.

Communities in the Adirondacks with the largest number of National Register listed buildings, and therefore in the best position to use this program, are Essex, Saranac Lake, Warrensburg, and Keeseville.

"In 2016 alone, Historic Tax Credit projects in New York State generated $45.6 million in state taxes, along with $53.9 million in local taxes and $142.9 million in federal taxes, more than any other state in the country." *Preservation League of New York State*

Owners of commercial or income-producing properties can take advantage of both the New York State Commercial Properties Tax Credit and the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which together provide a 40% tax offset for the cost of rehabilitation. Again, in simple terms, for a $100,000 investment, the owner would receive credits of $40,000, which can be spread out over several years. This can have a substantial impact on the viability of a project. The commercial program is a little different in that projects have to be generally much larger (meeting a "substantial" test) and not all property owners are able to effectively use the credits. Projects in the Adirondacks that have used the commercial tax credit incentives include Hotel Saranac, the Champlain Valley Senior Community in Willsboro, Hubbard Hall in Elizabethtown, and the Old Brewery in Keeseville.

For both programs, most rehabilitation expenses qualify, including exterior restoration, roofing, refinishing interiors, plumbing, energy efficiency improvements, masonry repair, and a host of other projects. All work plans need to be approved **before** work begins. For more information about both tax credit programs, see https://parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/ or call the NYS Historic Preservation Office at (518) 237-8643.

But remember - National Register listing is a prerequisite for both grants and tax credit program incentives. This is another great reason to get your historic property listed.

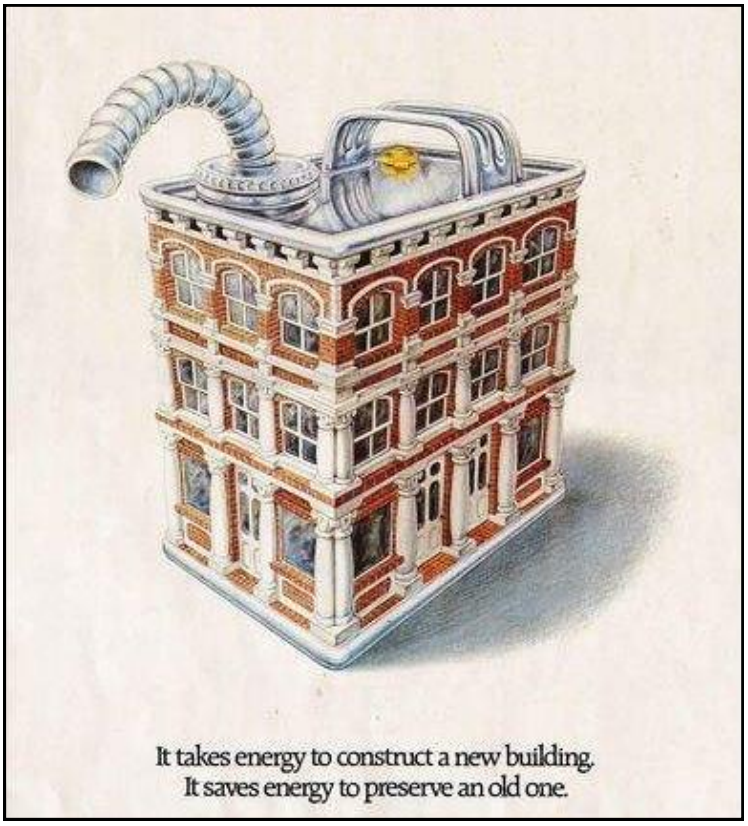
MYTH #3: Historic buildings are hopelessly energy inefficient and cannot meet current demands for sustainability.

No myth in historic preservation is further from the truth. Yes – most newly constructed buildings use less energy compared to existing and historic buildings **BUT existing buildings can be made to be competitively energy efficient** and meet the current New York State Energy Code. This is typically done by first understanding the energy characteristics of your building through an energy audit and then systematically making conservation improvements that might include adding insulation and storm windows, stopping air infiltration, and replacing conventional heating and cooling systems with heat pumps.

But there's something else we should consider in looking at the new versus existing question. All the energy to make the materials that went into an existing building has already been spent, sometimes hundreds of years ago. This we call **embodied energy**. In contrast, new buildings require a great deal of new energy to produce the concrete, bricks, gypsum, framing, roofing, and mechanical systems needed. These energy costs include the energy required to get the raw materials out of the ground or off the land, to transport the raw materials to the place of processing, to process the raw materials into a manufactured product, to transport the finished product to retailers and then to the consumer, and then to install the finished components into the building. All of these energy costs can be calculated and, for instance, an average-sized new house "consumes" about 181,000 kilowatts in energy before the house is ever occupied.

Assuming the new house is more energy efficient than an existing house, this means it will take an average of 40 years for an energy efficient new house to recover the energy and carbon expended in the construction of that house (Empty Homes Agency, 2008). We all want to live in more energy efficient buildings but, in making good decisions, it helps to understand both the energy consumed in operating a building AND the energy consumed in making a building. Add to this the fact that **existing buildings CAN often be rehabilitated and improved to be as energy efficient as new construction** and this puts the reuse of existing buildings in a new, much more favorable light.

As Carl Elefante eloquently states, "The greenest building…is the one that already exists."



Courtesy of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

MYTH #4: It will cost way too much to restore an older building, or historic preservation is more expensive than new construction.

This is certainly true about the restoration and rehabilitation of some historic buildings, where the neglect and deterioration is extreme or where a particularly high level of craftsmanship (for stained glass, ornamental plaster, or highly decorative woodwork) is required. But, in the vast majority of cases, **the preservation and reuse of existing historic buildings is more cost effective than new construction.** Why?

Eli Schwartzberg *had the imagination and business acumen to see the potential in adaptively reusing the former 1927 Willsboro High School into the Champlain Valley Senior Community. Originally slated for demolition, he was able to purchase the building at a minimal cost and then found that it was well built and that he could reuse interior and exterior features. He also put the building on the National Register of Historic Places and take advantage of the state and federal tax credit programs.*

Although he began this project as a business enterprise, he was equally delighted by the bigger impact it had on the community. Said Schwartzberg, " The social and creative aspect of renovating a historic building was quite satisfying, and I feel very positive about historic preservation, and the social and economic impact this project has had on the community.

To start with, the cost of an existing building is typically 25-30% lower than the cost of a comparably sized new building. This is primarily driven by market conditions where buyers still prefer new over old. When the condition of an existing building is substandard, the cost differential is even greater.

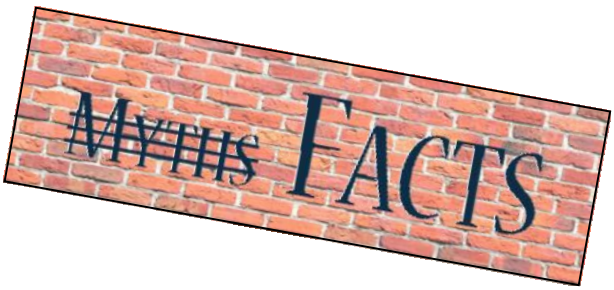
This lower entry cost makes existing buildings more affordable and is especially attractive to first time home buyers, especially those willing to roll up their sleeves and do some of the work themselves. With enough good advice, planning, the right skills, and a lot of hard work, a great deal of the work to rehabilitate an old house can be done oneself. By using your own "sweat equity," one can save a huge amount of money and have the personal satisfaction of creating your own home.

Whether you are doing it yourself or contracting all or some of the work, rehabilitating an older building can often also be done in stages, as one can afford them. It is also sometimes practical to complete a small section of the house, move in, and then complete other rooms as time and resources allow. But do-it-yourself projects in historic homes do require extra planning and research and mistakes can be costly. Not only do you want the final product to look professional, but building codes, health, and safety concerns need to be taken into consideration. Before you jump into a historic home renovation, take time to consider what's involved. Even small scale projects on an old house can deliver surprises. It is a good idea to seek professional advice for developing the scope of the project, including its design, the materials used, and how to phase it.

But the great news is that you don't have to go it alone. There are many valuable resources, materials, and people are to help, from numerous books, online resources, the plethora of information from the National Park Service, the occasional AARCH workshop, and technical assistance help from the AARCH staff.

Developers of commercial buildings realize similar financial benefits. According to Fred Burkhardt, writing in 2017 for Trade & Industry Development, "From a cost perspective, a complete building rehabilitation costs about 16 percent less in construction costs and 18 percent less in construction time than new construction." It is anticipated that this will drive 90% of new development over the next decade into the renovation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

So for many adaptive reuse and commercial projects, historic preservation make sense from a financial standpoint, based on lower initial real estate investment and the lower cost of renovating versus building new. Add to this that historic preservation results in bigger job creation, boosts community vitality in a variety of ways, and also offers something almost intangible—the opportunity to save and nourish the heart of a community, too.



ADVENTURE

Summer 2020 Tour Schedule

Two new 2020 tours will explore Colton's fascinating "barn quilts" (above, courtesy of Town of Colton) and the solar and winds farms of Clinton County (below).

In 2020, we will celebrate our 30th anniversary by continuing to delve even deeper into the fascinating intersection between past, present and future, as seen and experienced in the region's built environment.

In addition to offering dozens of our ever-popular outings, we've designed a series of new events that will explore how individuals and communities produce energy, grow food, sustain craft traditions, and build buildings in creative and sustainable ways.

Several outings will explore how we produce conventional and renewable (wind, hydroelectric and solar) energy in the region. Other outings will look at the variety of ways that Adirondack residents are "going green" to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient, even net-zero. And still other outing will explore local food production and the very distinctive craft tradition of "barn quilts." Look for a full description of these events in our summer newsletter, coming to you in mid-April.

PRESERVE

Nominate a Project for a 2020 Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2020 AARCH Preservation Awards, which recognize exemplary preservation projects throughout the Adirondacks. The awards honor businesses, organizations, and individuals who, through their preservation and stewardship work, have made the Adirondacks a better place to live, work, and visit.

For more information on the awards and to submit a nomination, contact Preservation Services Director Christine Bush by email at christine@aarch.org or by calling (518) 834-9328.

Our 2019 AARCH Preservation Award winners at The Hedges on Blue Mountain Lake. Photo by John Eldridge.

LEARN

What is an EMBEDAWATT?

In AARCH's most recent blog post, Executive Director Steven Engelhart introduces a completely new word to our energy vocabulary—the **EMBEDAWATT** – and discusses how the concept of embodied energy helps us to understand and value the complicated energy implications of restoring, rehabilitating, and reusing historic and existing buildings.

An **EMBEDAWATT** represents the value of embodied energy which can be calculated for absolutely anything, including the historic buildings we know and cherish. Embedawatts represent the value of energy already spent in materials, which often still have a long and useful life. In the historic preservation field, we like to say that a building is the largest thing you'll ever get to recycle, and that by reusing or continuing to use an existing building, you are valuing and taking advantage of its embodied energy.

To learn more, read Steven's blog post at: aarch.org/embedawatt.

*Over 1000 households, organizations, municipalities, businesses, and foundations show their enthusiasm for AARCH's mission through their contributions that sustain our good work. Membership, annual appeal gifts, and foundations grants are the most important source of our revenue. Thanks to all who contributed generously to AARCH. Names in **bold** contribute monthly to AARCH as sustaining members. An asterisk denotes a new membership. Contact Jessica about the benefits of sustaining membership or with any errors or omissions to this list.*

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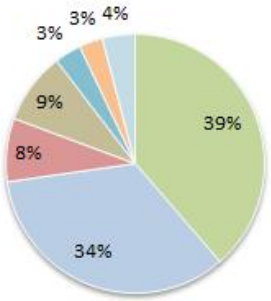
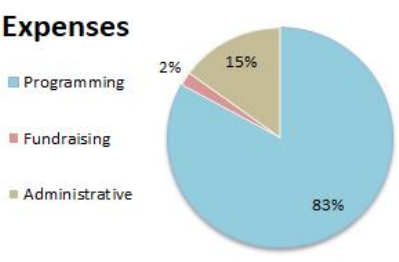


$396,712



$387,242

AARCH finished 2019 in an excellent fiscal position with healthy membership, program, preservation services, foundation, and state support. Annual financial statements are available on our web site.

OUR BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

AARCH is grateful for the support of many businesses in the region and beyond. We especially value our business partners' commitment to sponsoring our annual benefit event, raffle, and other special events. Please help us thank them by supporting them with your business.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE MAJOR SPONSORS

AARCH also wishes to thank these businesses and organizations for their support of our work:

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AARCH business membership and event sponsorship is a great way to show your company's support for AARCH's good work and is an opportunity to reach new audiences. Contact Jessica Parker for current sponsorship opportunities and to learn about the benefits of aligning your business with AARCH through membership (518-834-9328 or jessica@aarch.org.)

News and notes

Please feel free to send us information about preservation projects and issues in your community. We do our best to keep track of what's happening in the region but need your eyes and ear to help us do so.

ALBANY: GRANT AWARDS

Two big rounds of state funding in 2019 provided support to a number of important preservation and community revitalization projects in the region. In July, project awards from the Village of Saranac Lake's $9.7 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) award were revealed and, in December, the state's annual Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) grant awards were announced.

Historic Saranac Lake supporters gather to celebrate all the good funding news. Photo courtesy of Sun Community News.

Eagle Island, Inc. was awarded a $600,000 Environmental Protection Fund grant to continue their ambitious work to restore and rehabilitate their National Historic Landmark listed, rustic camp complex on Eagle Island in Upper Saranac Lake. The camp was designed by Saranac Lake architect William L. Coulter for Vice-President Levi P. Morton in 1903. Between 1938 and 2008, it was actively used as a Girl Scout camp and provided thousands of girls with extraordinary recreational and developmental experiences in this remarkable wild setting. So profound and meaningful were these experiences that, when the Girl Scout camp closed, a group of alumni formed Eagle Island, Inc. and purchased the property in 2015 to continue and enlarge camp experiences for girls, women, and families. The camp reopened in 2019. This project also received $320,775 in funding from the federal *Save America's Treasures* program in 2019.

Historic Saranac Lake received $325,000 through the Saranac Lake DRI to expand their museum by rehabilitating the Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau home, which is adjacent to HSL's museum and offices at Trudeau's Saranac Laboratory. They also received $19,900 in capacity building funding through the New York State Council on the Arts to hire a membership and grants manager. This support is especially important as the organization grows its facilities and expands its exhibits, programming, and interpretive offerings.

Pendragon Theater received $2.5 million in DRI funding to repurpose a downtown Saranac Lake building at 56 Woodruff Street into a new state-of-the-art theater for the 35 year old repertory theater company. Pendragon also received $145,000 in CFA funding.

In Saranac Lake, the state will also put $993,055 into renovating the former Branch& Callanan warehouse at 33 Depot Street into a children's museum called **Play ADK** and the project also received $1 million in CFA funding. The DRI funding also granted $381,000 to **Bitters & Bones** to expand and a build a brewery. It also provides $1.9 million for various park and streetscape improvements throughout the village to further enhance these local initiatives.

Other Essex County historic preservation and revitalization projects that received state funding included $100,000 towards a project to reconstruct the 1756 French sawmill on the LaChute River in Ticonderoga and $18,660 for improvements to the 1876 railroad depot in Westport, an Amtrak station and home to the Depot Theater.

ALBANY: NATIONAL REGISTER.

Several properties in the Adirondacks were listed on the State and/or National Registers of Historic Places in 2019. National Register listing provides recognition for historic properties, elevates their status, provides some protections under special circumstances, and gives owners access to grant and tax credit program opportunities.

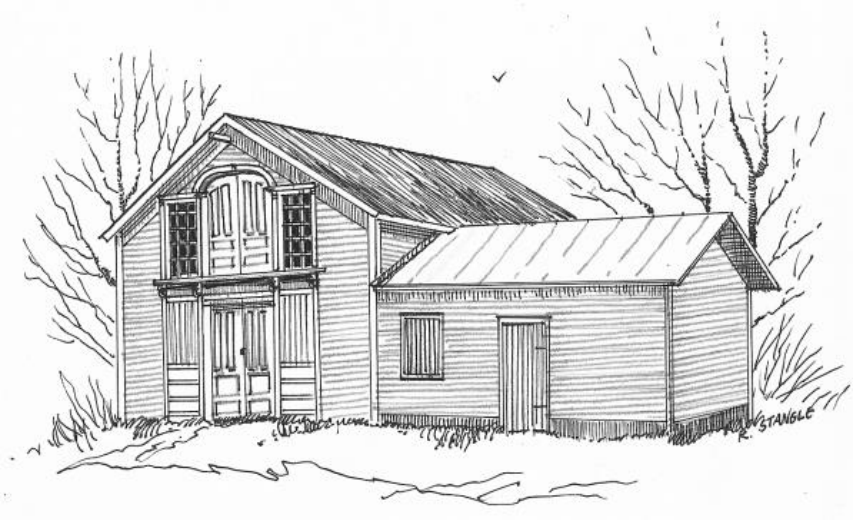
Asgaard Farm, as depicted in "Clover Fields" by Rockwell Kent.

Asgaard Farm, near Ausable Forks, was the home, studio, and farm of artist, author, and political activist Rockwell Kent from the 1920s until his death in 1971. The farm includes a handsome set of barns, house, cottage, Kent's studio, and grave, all located on 226 acres of land. The farm and its mountain views are featured in many of Kent's paintings including "Clover Fields" and "Moonlight Sleigh

Continued on next page

Ride." Asgaard Farm is now a working farm again, producing goat cheeses, other goat milk products, meats, eggs, and firewood.

When the **Hotel Saranac** was built in 1927, it was a state-of-the-art hotel and it remained an important destination and community center for many decades. After a slow decline, the Roedel Companies bought the property in 2013 and undertook a five year, $36 million project to completely restore and rehabilitate the structure. An important part of the funding for this project was use of the state and federal investment tax credits that are available for rehabilitating National Register listed properties.



Copeland Carriage Shop in Edinburg

The **Copeland Carriage Shop** in Edinburg was built circa 1830 by brothers Arad and Copeland as part of their complex of water-powered industries that included a sawmill, carding mill, machine shop, and this carriage shop. For an industrial building, it has an unusual Federal-style door and window configuration on its front façade. It is now owned by the Edinburg Historical Society and is one of several society-owned historic buildings that reflect 19th century life in the town.

AARCH continues to work on several National Register nominations and cultural resources surveys around the region. Nominations for Echo Farm, the St. Regis Presbyterian Church, Keene Valley Country Club, Hague Baptist Church, and large historic district in Malone will all likely be completed in 2020. We are also undertaking a town-wide cultural resources survey of Schuyler Falls. If you are interested in AARCH's help in getting a property on the National Register, please contact Christine at christine@aarch.org or (518) 834-9328.

AUSABLE FORKS

The architectural marvel of Ausable Forks is the **Graves Mansion.** It was built in 1870 by Henry Graves, who was the treasurer of the J & J Rogers Company, reputedly with money he embezzled from the firm. The 15,000 square foot Mansard-roofed mansion has 32 rooms, elegantly paneled walls and ceilings, nine fireplaces, nine bathrooms, and hummingbird adorned brass door handles, a tribute to the favorite creature of Henry's wife Kate. But as the wealth and economy of the village declined and shifted, so did the prospects for the mansion. Despite several very well-intentioned efforts to restore the building, the last decade or so has seen it deteriorate, be vandalized, and the last owner recently lost it to his creditors. The property is now owned by a bank but, ever optimistic, we hope that in the hands of new owner, its restoration and rebirth are possible. See the recent *Adirondack Life* magazine blog post at this link for more information: http://www.adirondacklifemag.com/blogs/2019/12/03/a-graves-situation/.

BOOKS - NEW REGIONAL TITLES

In 2019, there are several new publications about regional architecture and history that we'd like to highlight.
We had the great pleasure of working with Melissa Otis in 2019 to offer an outing that explored the presence and history of Native Americans in the region by visiting sites in Lake Placid, Indian Carry, and Onchiota. Melissa was the perfect guide, as she is the author of ***Rural Indigenousness: A History of Iroquoian and Algonquian Peoples of the Adirondacks***, a book which sheds important light on a previously little-explored area of regional history. The book is available at local booksellers and at: https://press.syr.edu/supressbooks/135/rural-indigenousness/.

From 1990 until 2014, *Adirondack Life* magazine featured an **"Our Towns"** column on the last page of each issue. These provided character sketches and fascinating bits of history for each of the 139 towns within the Adirondack Park. For instance, did you know that it was not until 1963 that Lake Luzerne added "Lake" to its name or that the town of Ohio is the fourth-largest town in the Adirondacks but also the second poorest? Now these columns have been compiled into a single volume for our learning and amusement. It is available from Adirondack Life at: https://adirondack-life-test.myshopify.com/products/our-towns.

In 2019, the *Friends of the Stillwater Fire Tower* celebrated the centennial of the fire tower by holding public events and publishing ***Stillwater Fire Tower: A Centennial History…and Earlier*** by James

Fox. The book is full of historic and contemporary photos, maps, and informative text about the past, present, and future of this fire tower. It is available through the *Friends* at: https://www.friendsofstillwaterfiretower.com/book.html.

The Miles Thomas House would have been demolished to build a Dollar General store in Warrensburg. Photo courtesy of Sun Community News.

WARRENSBURG

One of the toughest choices that Adirondack communities have to make is between the lure and benefits of new development and a wish to keep the character and substance of a community intact. Sometimes this is an either/or proposition but, more commonly, it is about the scale, location, and quality of the proposed development and communities that have effective local zoning ordinances are in a better position to guide, limit, or stop such developments.

Such was the case recently in Warrensburg, when a new Dollar General store was proposed for a location in the middle of one of the village's historic districts. Not only would this development have been out of scale and out of character with the neighborhood but the project also involved demolishing a large, handsome historic building as part of the project. Luckily, the village had a zoning ordinance in place that provided some protections for historic buildings and the integrity of the historic district and a good public input process that people to weigh in. Finally, on December 12, the Warrensburg Zoning Board of Appeals determined that the proposed development was not an allowable in this "Hamlet Mixed Use" district.

Resident and advocate Teresa Whalen said about the decision "This decision is a big step forward in preserving the quality of life in our town. It reaffirms the effectiveness of our zoning code that many of our citizens worked so hard to establish."

WHALLONSBURG

Over the last ten years, the Whallonsburg Grange Hall has become a dynamic community center, offering live music, movies, lectures, theater, a commercial kitchen, and a place for Election Night dinners, wedding receptions, and other special events. The revitalization of the 1915 Grange Hall was recognized with an AARCH Award in 2017. Recently, the Grange purchased the former Whitcomb's Garage building across the street and began an ambitious plan to rehabilitate the building into three artisan work spaces and a small room for general community use. This project has received support from the Cloudsplitter Foundation and is made possible by the incredible group of volunteers that makes the Grange hum throughout the year.

Rendering of repurposed Whitcomb's Garage (by Mark Hall).

Join our Board of Directors

Our **Board of Directors** plays an integral part in AARCH's success as an organization. Members of our board come from all walks of life—we have full-time preservation professionals, real estate agents, attorneys, educators, and others who represent varied careers, interests, and communities.

We are **currently seeking new candidates** to join our Board of Directors, especially people from the western and southern regions of the Adirondack Park, with a willingness to fundraise, collaborate, lend a helping hand, and help AARCH continue to thrive. Please let us know if you have interest in joining our board, or know someone who would. Our goal is to have a slate of candidates for our April Board of Directors meeting. Please contact Steven Engelhart by email at steven@aarch.org, or call the office at (518) 834-9328.

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SAVE THE DATES

SAVE THESE DATES!

- **Saturday, June 13**
  Annual Meeting, Grace Memorial Chapel, Lake George, with special guest John Mesick
- **Friday, June 19**
  Classical Music Benefit Concert at the Greystone Mansion, Essex
- **A Saturday in August**
  Our Summer Benefit TBD
- **Monday, September 14**
  AARCH Awards Luncheon at Elk Lake Lodge, North Hudson
- **September 17—September 27**
  International Adventure to the Baltics & St. Petersburg
- **February 26—March 8, 2021**
  International Adventure to Guatemala