



# Adirondack Architectural Heritage Talks & Lectures

*Numerous presentations and talks are available through AARCH. For more information or to schedule, please contact Nolan Cool, Educational Programs Director, (518) 834-9328 or [nolan@aarch.org](mailto:nolan@aarch.org).*

## **Preserving Patrimony: Lessons of the Cuban Experience**

Presentations by: Steven Engelhart



When AARCH took a group of Adirondack residents to Cuba in 2016 and 2017, we went looking for the extraordinary architecture and cultural heritage and to learn firsthand from the people working to save their national treasures. What we found and will share in this talk is both surprising and delightful.

Cuba has a rich legacy of historically significant buildings, with nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites throughout the country. Havana itself is renowned as one of the most architecturally diverse cities in the world. Preserving the structures of the past and revitalizing and reusing these

resources are ongoing challenges that Cuban preservationists and historians are addressing in unique and innovative ways. And there are many similarities in the effort to preserve historic places in Cuba and in the Adirondacks. The lecture will talk about these and other aspects of our visit to this amazing island.

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## **The 100 Mile House: Why Old is the New “Green”**

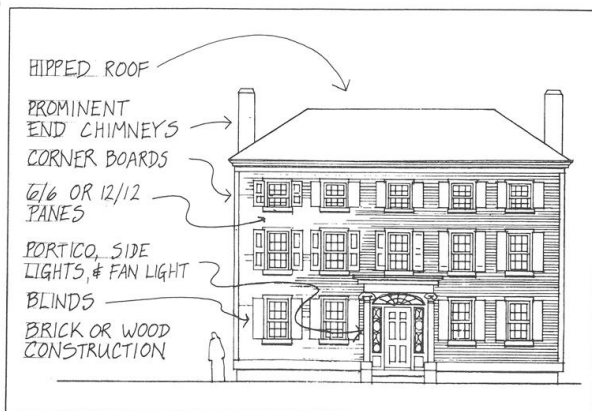
Presentation by: Steven Engelhart

This program explores the idea that the preservation and reuse of historic buildings not only protects our architectural heritage and makes for more vibrant communities but that it can also be a good choice in terms of energy conservation and sustainability. The program starts with creating an appreciation for the very local nature of an historic building – where its materials came from, how it was made and who made it. From this comes an understanding that these existing buildings contain a tremendous amount of “embodied” energy, energy spent a long time ago and, if you factor this into the existing building versus new construction equation, existing buildings look very good in comparison. The program also discusses how to make historic buildings much more energy efficient and where to best spend one’s energy improvement dollars. (Hint – it’s not by replacing windows!)



## What Style Is It?

Presentation by: Christine Bush and Steven Engelhart



This program explores the range and variety of architectural styles found in the Adirondack region and the historical and cultural forces that shaped them. Using examples from all over the Northeast and from throughout the Adirondack region, the program will inform audiences about architectural styles and the language of architecture. By the end of the program, people will be able to identify Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival, French Second Empire, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and a few early 20th Century architectural styles.

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## Adirondack Architecture: Great Camps and the Rustic Tradition

Presentation by: Steven Engelhart



New York State's Adirondack Park, a six-million-acre mixture of public and private lands, is the largest park east of the Mississippi River. Sixty percent of the region's lands are constitutionally protected as "forever wild" and these lands include vast forests, hundreds of mountains, thousands of lakes and ponds, and miles of wild and scenic rivers.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the region became a mecca for sportsmen and other people seeking recreation and revitalization in the wild places of the region. In response to this, native builders and professional architects developed a rustic style of architecture that is best represented by a series of building complexes known as Great Camps. These buildings were often built for wealthy urban clients and were constructed with a variety of natural materials so that they were harmonious with the rugged Adirondack landscape. A number of these camps, including Sagamore, Santanoni, Pine Knot, and Eagle Island are National Historic Landmarks. This rustic style eventually influenced the design of western lodges and hotels built for the National Park Service.

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## There's More to Adirondack Architecture than Great Camps

Presentation by: Steven Engelhart

The Adirondack region of New York State is well known for a rustic style of architecture, best represented by a series of building complexes known as Great Camps. These buildings were often designed by professionals for wealthy urban clients and were constructed with a variety of natural materials so that they were harmonious with the rugged Adirondack landscape. Much less well known are the hundreds, if not thousands, of other buildings and structures found throughout the region which represent other building types, architectural styles, and historical themes and influences. These include:

bridges, dams and power houses, railroad stations, cure cottages, agricultural buildings, the commercial buildings of main streets, inns and hotels, schoolhouses, town and village halls, churches, libraries, industrial buildings, and residences that range from country estates to modest village homes to company built tenements and houses.

These structures represent the full breadth of individual and community life and history in the region. They reflect how people lived, worked, worshiped, learned, recreated and traveled. This program explores a variety of regional building styles and discusses the historical and cultural forces that shaped these buildings and the communities in which they're located.



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## Historic Bridges of the Adirondacks

Presentation by: Steven Engelhart



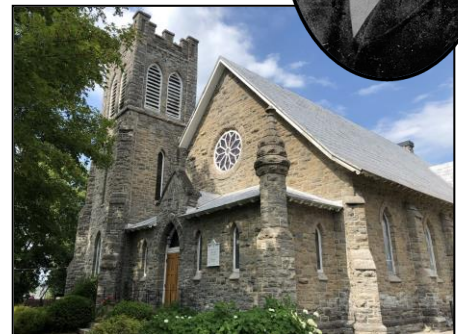
This program explores the incredible variety of historic bridges that are found in the region. These include: stone arch bridges in Keeseville and Ticonderoga; covered bridges in Jay and Edinburg; iron trusses over the AuSable, Hudson, Saranac, Raquette, Moose and Sacandaga Rivers; reinforced concrete, stone-faced, spans in Keene, Piercefield and Black Brook; and the marvelous steel arch bridge over AuSable Chasm. These bridges reflect fascinating changes in technology and transportation and also tell important stories about the growth and development of Adirondack communities. As bridges are among our most endangered historic resources, the program also looks at successful strategies for preserving these regional treasures.

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## Isaac Johnson: Stone Mason and Freedom Seeker

Presentation by: Nolan Cool

Isaac Johnson's arrival in the North Country during the late 19th century came after an eventful and tumultuous life, yet lends us an unrivaled story of black excellence and master craftsmanship. Born enslaved to his father in Kentucky, Johnson lived a relatively normal life until his father sold him, his mother, and his three siblings into slavery at age seven. Johnson sought freedom again during the Civil War, and escaped to Union Army lines in 1863. Soon after, he joined a black regiment and fought for the Union Army's 102<sup>nd</sup> Colored Troops in South Carolina. After the war, he made his way to the U.S.–Ontario borderland near the Ogdensburg-Waddington area and worked as a stone mason and master builder. His story sheds light on the African American experience in the North Country and explores the depth of Johnson's personal history, his work, and the architecture his career produced.

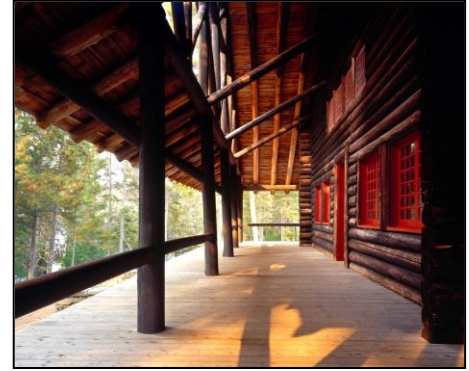




## Camp Santanoni: Past, Present and Future

Presentation by: Steven Engelhart

The Adirondack region of New York State is well known for a rustic style of architecture, best represented by a series of building complexes known as Great Camps. These buildings were often designed by professionals for wealthy urban clients and were constructed with a variety of natural materials so that they were harmonious with the rugged Adirondack landscape. One of the largest and most magnificent of these Great Camps is Camp Santanoni in the Town of Newcomb, built beginning in 1892 for Robert C. Pruyn, a prominent Albany banker and businessman. Over the next quarter century, Pruyn amassed 12,900 acres of land and built over forty buildings, including a Gate Lodge complex, a working 200 acre model farm, and the Main Camp complex on Newcomb Lake. In building this estate, Pruyn employed some of the best architects and designers of the time, including Robert H. Robertson, who designed the Main Camp, William Delano, who designed the Gate Lodge, and Edward Burnett, who influenced the farm design and operations.



In 1972, Santanoni was acquired by New York State to add to the Adirondack Park's Forest Preserve. For nearly twenty years Santanoni was neglected and allowed to deteriorate amid questions and controversy about its future. Through a concerted effort by Adirondack Architectural Heritage, the Town of Newcomb, the Preservation League of New York State and others, the State adopted a policy to preserve Santanoni. Since then, the camp has been opened to the public, and stabilization and restoration work is ongoing. Using historical and contemporary photographs, this program explores many aspects of the past, present and future of this Great Camp.

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## The Irresistibility of Historic Preservation

Presentation by: Steven Engelhart



2016 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. This program is a general introduction to understanding the importance of preserving our nation's built environment. Using illustrations from all over the eastern seaboard and from the Adirondack region, it explores the many reasons that individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations and governments are increasingly involved in promoting historic preservation, because preserving architecture adds beauty to our lives, connect us to our past, fosters community and national identity, contributes to community revitalization, helps to conserve energy, and is part of how we manage change and growth in an increasingly chaotic world. Irresistible, right?

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# Celebrating 25 Years of Historic Preservation in the Region

Presentation by Steven Engelhart



When Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) was formed in 1990, the historic preservation ethic or movement in the region was in its infancy. But thanks to AARCH's broad educational and advocacy work over the last twenty-five years there has been a sea change in the region's appreciation for and stewardship of its architectural heritage. This program will explore AARCH's considerable accomplishments over the last twenty-five years - high profile successes like championing the preservation and public use of Camp Santanoni and the region's fire towers; the rehabilitation of the Bow Bridge in Hadley; and saving the Old Stone Barracks in Plattsburgh

but the program will also explore smaller successes as well and the many preservation success stories of others, public and private, throughout the region.

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## About the Presenters



**Steven Engelhart** is the Executive Director of Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH), the regional historic preservation organization of the Adirondack Park. AARCH's mission is to promote better public understanding, appreciation and stewardship of the region's built environment. Among AARCH's many activities are sponsoring tours of historic places, conducting workshops and lectures, books and publications; staffing Camp Santanoni, and providing technical assistance to individuals, organizations and local governments.

Steven is a native of the region and has a B.A. from SUNY Plattsburgh and a M.S. in historic preservation from the University of Vermont. He is the author of *Crossing the River: Historic Bridges of the AuSable River*, a small book about bridges and local history of the AuSable Valley. He resides in Essex.



Christine Bush, has been involved in the preservation and construction industry for over 25 years. In addition to her academic training at Roger Williams University, she has worked with preservation architects, Lowell National Historical Park and as an independent contractor on many diverse preservation-related projects. Christine has a deep appreciation and love for the Adirondacks. When not exploring the lakes and woods in the region, she and her husband live on a small homestead in Jay with two miniature donkeys, a cat, and several honey bee hives.



**Nolan Cool** is the Educational Programs Director at Adirondack Architectural Heritage. He came to AARCH with an MA in Public History from the University of Massachusetts, where he studied how communities collectively view, learn, and consume history. He has previously worked at Hyde Hall in Cooperstown and consulted with several public history organizations in Upstate New York and Western Massachusetts. Nolan grew up near Utica and has long visited the Adirondack region before moving here by way of the Mohawk Valley.