AARCH

Adirondack Architectural Heritage

29th Annual Preservation Awards

War Cannon Spirits, Crown Point — Friday, October 4, 2024

29TH ANNUAL PRESERVATION AWARDS

AARCH's Annual Preservation Awards Ceremony recognizes the individuals, businesses, communities, and organizations whose efforts exemplify the best of historic preservation work in the Adirondack region. This event shines a light on the passions and extraordinary work of the people who make historic preservation such an important part of the region's vitality.

Stewardship Committee

Special thanks to the AARCH Stewardship Committee for their planning and oversight of this annual awards presentation.

Rich Frost, Chair

Jan C.K. Anderson	Susan Harral	Diane Newbury
Sally Berk	David Hislop	Peter Sefton
Christine Bush	Susan Lynch	Erin Tobin
J.B. Clancy	Jackie Madison	

Thank you to our generous event sponsors:

Sanders Berk, MD and Sally Berk

Essex Community Heritage Organization

HISTORIC E·S·S·E·X

2025 PRESERVATION AWARDS

DO YOU KNOW OF A GREAT PRESERVATION PROJECT? NOMINATE IT FOR AN AARCH PRESERVATION AWARD!

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2025 AARCH Preservation Awards, which recognize exemplary preservation projects throughout the Adirondacks. These 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 and to submit a nomination, visit our website at **aarch.org/aarch-awards** or contact Preservation Services Director Christine Bush at christine@aarch.org or 518-834-9328.

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Council on the Arts

AARCH programs are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

Thank you to our event host, War Cannon Spirits!

For nearly 30 years, our annual awards program has recognized sensitive restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic structures. These projects and individuals embody AARCH's mission to promote better public understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the Adirondacks' unique and diverse architectural heritage.

We are celebrating this year's preservation awards at **War Cannon Spirits** in Crown Point, a 2023 awardee. War Cannon Spirits is a restaurant and whiskey tasting room housed in a rare 200-year-old mill. Owner Paul Besignano reimagined the space as a unique place for people to gather with good food and drink while also celebrating the community's history. At the core of the current building lies a mill built by Job Howe in the 1820s. It harnessed the power of the Putnam Creek as a grist and lumber mill until it was repurposed as the Crown Point Agway store in 1957, which subsequently became Porter's Mill Hardware & Feed from 2000 to 2008.

At that point, the building was in dire structural condition due to almost two centuries of heavy use. Most people believed the building could not be saved. Although it was neither cost effective nor practical, Paul ignored this advice because he felt that demolishing the mill would have been an injustice to the community. Instead, he partnered with noted regional architect, Nils Luderowski, to transform the former mill site into War Cannon Spirits, a restaurant and flagship store for their whiskey. The team spent over seven years rehabilitating the structure with respect to its vernacular construction and ensuring that any changes were sensitive to the original building. War Cannon Spirits exemplifies the spirit of our preservation awards and we are proud to partner with them this year.

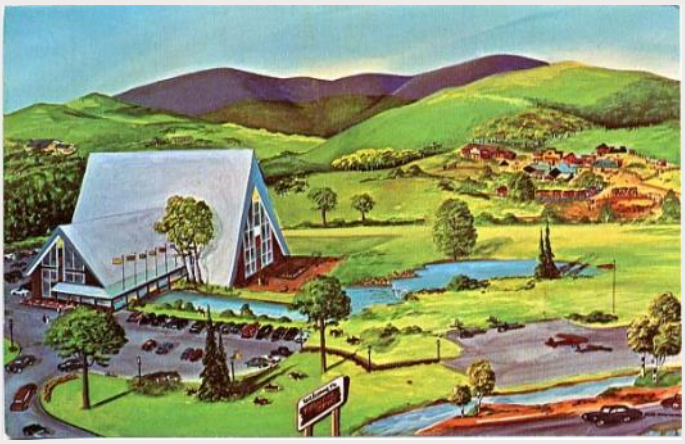
Photos courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.

Muhammad "Mo" Ahmad

For the rehabilitation and restoration of the Frontier Town A-Frame

North Hudson, Essex County

Owner: Muhammad "Mo" Ahmad
Key Individuals: Sajid Mughal, Khuram Khan, Dean Nadeau, Wasif Khan and Mo Ahmad
Engineer: Mr. Joe Moryl and Erik Sandblom
Project Dates: 2018 – 2022



Postcard c. 1955.

Located just off I-87's exit 29, this iconic A-Frame building was once the entrance to the beloved theme park, Frontier Town. Staten Island entrepreneur, Arthur Bensen, brought Frontier Town to life in 1952 as a family-friendly destination with unique Wild West-themed attractions such as Prairie Junction, Pioneer Village, Indian Village, a rodeo arena, and a small railroad.

After Frontier Town's closure in 1998, the A-Frame sat vacant and deteriorating for 20 years until Muhammad "Mo" Ahmad bought it in 2018. Mo and his team restored the building, transforming it into Frontier Town Gateway, a vibrant restaurant and travel center. Mo completed the majority of the work with the help of friends and local craftsmen. He used wood harvested from the site or sourced locally to create the ornate log railings and other wood features. The project was completed with personal funding and a $100,000 Empire State Development grant.

The Frontier Town A-frame – the largest of its kind in the Northeast – has become a central hub for events and gatherings, and carries a variety of goods, from wares by local artisans to an assortment of camping gear and supplies. Events at the Frontier Town Gateway range from job fairs and car shows to bonfires for the Schroon Lake community. Mo has reimagined this unique Adirondack icon and we can't wait to see what other ideas he has for the site.

Muhammad "Mo" Ahmad immigrated to the United States in 2002 and found work in New Jersey as a gas attendant. In 2005, he began working as a taxi driver in Queens and Brooklyn. During that time, he began visiting friends who owned a motel in Lake George. Mo fell in love with the beauty of the Adirondacks and began to dream about moving to the North Country. The opportunity arose in 2006 when Mo leased what is now the Schroon Lake Sunoco, which was then an auto garage. In 2007, the Sunoco gas station opened, and since then it has been a convenient place for travelers to stop as they traverse Interstate 87, Route 9, or Route 74.

In 2014, Mo purchased the North Hudson Sunoco, which had been abandoned for over a decade. This move piqued his initial interest in the A-Frame — eventually leading Mo to purchase the property, renovate it, and create this incredible space for the Schroon Lake and North Hudson communities.

Mo and Marriam have three children — Aliza, Muhammad-Wali, and Horrain. The family are proud Schroon Lake residents and when asked about their favorite part of living in the North Country, Mo said, "We love the mountains — the fresh air, the lakes, the ponds, and the trails are all amazing — but most of all, we love the community. I know all my customers by name, and everyone has been incredibly supportive of our businesses here."

Top: renovated façade of Frontier Town Gateway; photo courtesy of Mo Ahmad.
Bottom left: restored A-Frame exterior; photo courtesy of Mo Ahmad.
Bottom right: restored A-Frame interior; photo courtesy of Mo Ahmad.

The Lodge at Schroon Lake

For the rehabilitation of the Brown Swan Club

Schroon Lake, Essex County

Owner: The Lodge at Schroon Lake
General Contractor & Developer: Bonacio, Inc.
Project Team: KPB Architecture; The LA Group Landscape Architecture and Engineering; Spring Line Design Architecture + Engineering, LLP; Michael Bannon; Julie & Co. Realty; Crisafulli Bros. Plumbing & Heating Contractors, Inc.; Prediletto Electric; King Enterprises; Snyder's Drywall; Garrity Brothers Construction; Flooring Authority Inc.; Casey's Painting Company Inc.; Otis Elevator Company
Project Dates: 2022-2023

The Club building c. 1925.

Prolific Adirondack architect Ward Shippey designed the Brown Swan Club for Warrensburg proprietor Philip Rice. Construction on the club began in 1916 with the erection of the first building, a brown two-story clapboard-sided cottage named "Windemere." At the time of the construction, the hillside site was cleared of most trees which provided an unobstructed view of Schroon Lake.

Then in 1917, the "Club" building was constructed to the west of Windemere along with three guest cottages to the east. The Club building is a brown three-story clapboard structure with dormer windows projecting from the third-floor hipped roof and a front porch featuring a rustic stone foundation and stone pillars. The first floor originally contained a reception desk and lounge, dining room, kitchen, and offices. The second floor contained rental rooms and the third floor housed staff. In 1929, Philip Rice worked again with Ward Shippey to expand the Brown Swan Club by enlarging existing buildings and constructing additional cottages. This included expanding the Club building's dining room and veranda.

In 2022, Saratoga Springs-based construction and development company Bonacio, Inc. worked with the new owners to transform the property into The Lodge at Schroon Lake, an Adirondack destination. They paid close attention to retaining the site's historic character while making crucial upgrades that hadn't been addressed since the 1980s. The Lodge at Schroon Lake now features a restaurant and tavern bar in the historic Club building, as well as an indoor pool, fitness center, waterfront beach with docks, outdoor recreation space, mini golf, playgrounds, and the High Peak Ballroom. Lodging comprises over 100 guest rooms, including standard hotel rooms, suites, single-family chalets, glamping sites, and cabins. The Lodge continues to revitalize the club as the Brown Swan Resort, paying deep respect to its history.

Ward Grover Shippey (1885-1963) had an exceptionally long and prolific career designing homes, commercial buildings, theaters, children's summer camps, private clubs, municipal buildings, private camps, and resorts. The majority of his work is in the Glens Falls, Lake George, and Schroon Lake region.

Shippey was a self-taught architect. He took a correspondence course from an architectural school in Philadelphia and began his career at age 18 when he designed the entrance booths for Luna Park on Lake Ontario near Rochester. He became known for using natural materials sourced from or manufactured in the southeastern Adirondacks, including: rough-sawn joists and rafters, board-and-batten siding, peeled logs, Granville slate, brick from the Glens Falls Brick & Terra Cotta Company, and locally-sourced stone foundations. Shippey's early style combined the popular English Tudor style with Arts and Crafts elements. He was also noted for extending decorative hip roof rafters beyond the edge of the roof.

History courtesy of Tom Lynch and the Warren County Historical Society.

Top: the Club building after rehabilitation; photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia.
Bottom left and right: the Club building after rehabilitation; photo courtesy of The Lodge at Schroon Lake.
Middle right: view of the lake from the Club building; photo courtesy of The Lodge at Schroon Lake.
Bottom right: interior of the Club building after rehabilitation; photo courtesy of The Lodge at Schroon Lake.

White Pine Camp Associates, LLC

For the reconstruction of the Service Quarters at White Pine Camp

Paul Smiths, Franklin County

Owners: White Pine Camp Associates, LLC
General Manager: Sandy Paben
Architect: Crawford and Stearns
Project Dates: 2020 – 2023

Like many who built camps in the St. Regis Lakes area at the turn of the 20th century, Archibald and Olive White bought their land from Paul Smith's Hotel Company. The Whites purchased 35 acres thick with white and red pine overlooking what was then called Lake Osgood (now Osgood Pond).

In 1907, the Whites commissioned New York architect William Massarene to design the camp and master builder Ben Muncil began construction in 1908. Three years later, the Whites hired architect Addison Mizner to design several additions and alterations to some of the buildings.

The camp that Massarene, Muncil, and Mizner designed and built was architecturally unique among Adirondack Great Camps, featuring a subtler rustic expression of soaring roof lines, asymmetrical buildings, and the extensive use of dramatic, natural lighting. Another one of the builders' innovations was the rough-milled "brainstorm" siding they developed, which soon became a hallmark of Adirondack architecture.

After the Whites' divorce in 1918, Olive sold White Pine Camp to Kansas City Star newspaperman Irwin Kirkwood and his wife Laura in 1921. The Kirkwoods expanded the Service Quarters, among other parts of the camp, and were the first of many subsequent stewards of the property over the next 76 years, which included President Calvin Coolidge's family and Paul Smiths College, among others.

For every building used by White Pine Camp's owners and their guests, there was at least one building for the staff. The original service complex included a kitchen, ice house, water tower, laundry, guides' cabin, maids' cabin, woodshed/workshop, garden shed, greenhouse, and pump house. The Kirkwoods enlarged the Service Quarters in 1926, adding a long staff dormitory annex connected via a bridge to the rest of the service buildings.

In spring 2020, the historic Service Quarters (now the Lodge Building) burned to the ground in a dramatic fire. After the fire, White Pine Camp faced the question of whether to design a more practical modern structure or faithfully rebuild the historic Service Quarters. The former was an opportunity to generate more income with larger, winterized units. Reconstructing the historic building, on the other hand, imposed the limitations of smaller units and more creative electrical and plumbing upgrades.

White Pine Camp Associates decided to remain faithful to the site's historic integrity and rebuild the Service Quarters as they were before the fire. They enlisted the architectural firm Crawford and Stearns, which has a renowned preservation record in the Adirondacks. Key architectural features, such as the brainstorm siding, wood windows, moldings, and all exterior details were replicated by skilled craftsmen. Although the reconstructed building now includes a full basement and modern infrastructure (including a fire suppression system) it appears as it did in the early years of the camp.

White Pine Camp Associates, LLC was created in January 1997 when ownership shares were offered for sale. Today, nearly 40 owners operate White Pine Camp as a historic site. While the owners enjoy use of the camp's 13 structures for up to four weeks each year, all of White Pine Camp's facilities are open to the public on a rental basis. From time to time, camp ownership shares become available. For more information, contact the camp's manager at whitepinec@gmail.com or visit *whitepinecamp.com*.

Top left and right: the 2020 fire and its aftermath; photos courtesy of the Bloomingdale Fire Department and White Pine Camp.
Middle left and right: the Service Quarters during and after reconstruction; photos courtesy of White Pine Camp.
Bottom: the Service Quarters after Reconstruction; photo courtesy of White Pine Camp.

Mark "Willie" Wilcox

For the restoration of Crystal Spring Farm

Essex, Essex County

Owner: Mark "Willie" Wilcox
Project Team: Peter Yaglou, Eric Sherman, James Farro, Nicholas Moussallem
Project Dates: 2013 – 2023

Peter Yaglou (1959-2023)

Crystal Spring Farm, also known as the Hayward House, is a vernacular Federal style farmhouse on the outskirts of the hamlet of Essex, NY. The farm consists of a circa 1790s residence, late-18th-century horse barn, granary, carriage shed, and a circa 1900 milk house. It is a great example of a typical large Federal style farmhouse and is a contributing resource to the Essex Village National Register Historic District.

The property was acquired by Mark "Willie" Wilcox in 2013 and 2018. The house and barns were suffering from prolonged neglect and disuse. With the help of his team, Willie stabilized the buildings, repairing and authentically restoring original historic features with great care and attention to detail. They salvaged period timber framing from nearby barns, employed traditional construction techniques, removed inappropriate modern alterations, and installed new wooden storm windows. Peter Yaglou, Eric Sherman, and James Farro were instrumental to the project — without their unbelievable skills and friendship, the project could not have been completed. Willie documented much of the work through a video series on his YouTube channel, @AntiqueFarmHouses.

Mark "Willie" Wilcox has been dealing in Americana (antiques and collectibles) for 34 years. His inventory is handpicked from throughout New York and New England and includes: American folk art; country painted furniture and accessories; Adirondack and rustic items; Gustav Stickley Mission oak and Arts and Crafts items; all styles of paintings and other art work including Hudson River School, Daguerreotypes, and photographs; blue decorated stoneware; Shaker community items; Native American objects; postcards and ephemera; architectural and garden items; signs and antique farm items; early golf, tennis, baseball, and football items; Oriental rugs; vintage toys; and other interesting items.

His love and stewardship of old things led Willie into historic preservation and over the last decade or so, he has meticulously restored two properties in Essex, NY. For more information about Willie and his work, visit *www.summerantiques.com*.

Top: late 19th-century photo of Crystal Spring Farm from Essex on Lake Champlain *by David Hislop Jr. Bottom: farmhouse after restoration.*

Top left and right: Crystal Spring farmhouse before and after restoration; photos courtesy of Willie Wilcox.
Middle left and right: Outbuildings at Crystal Spring Farm before and after restoration; photos courtesy of Willie Willcox.
Bottom left: kitchen at Crystal Spring Farm after restoration; photo courtesy of Willie Wilcox.
Bottom right: entryway at Crystal Spring Farm after restoration; photo courtesy of Willie Wilcox.

Adirondack Architectural Heritage

1745 Main Street, Keeseville, NY 12944 | 518-823-9328 | aarch.org

Preserving the Architecture and Communities of the Adirondacks through Education, Action, and Advocacy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ed Hodges, President
Arlington, MA

Susan Lynch, Vice President
Greenwich

Andy Prescott, Vice President
Keeseville

Maria Russell, Secretary
Keeseville

Jim Van Hoven, Treasurer
Essex

Jan C.K. Anderson
Jay

Adam Bailey
Elizabethtown

William Barnes
Wilmington

J.B. Clancy
Diamond Point

Tom French
Potsdam

Sarah Heffern
Washington, D.C.

David Hislop
Essex

Howie Kirschenbaum
Tupper Lake

Dean Melville
Upper Jay

Diane Newbury
Keene Valley

Stefanie Noble
Syracuse

Chris Rediehs
Canton

STAFF

Erin Tobin
Executive Director

Christine Bush
Preservation Services Director

Nolan Cool
Educational Programs Director

Samantha Johnson
Membership & Communications Director

Wilkes Jordan
Camp Santanoni Historic Site Manager

Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) *is the private nonprofit, historic preservation organization for New York State's Adirondack region with a mission to promote better public understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the Adirondacks' unique and diverse architectural heritage .*

Your support turns inspiration into action. To give online, visit *aarch.org/support* or scan the code at the right. You can also send us a check or give us a call at the contact info above.

Your Support Helps Us Offer:

- Over 40 educational tours, talks, webinars, and workshops each year
- Annual Preservation Awards program honoring exemplary projects and preservationists
- Newsletters and monthly e-communications
- Free consultation and assistance for historic property owners
- Architectural guides, tour brochures, and other educational publications
- Support to local advocacy efforts, such as: Camp Santanoni, the Poke-O-Moonshine and Hurricane Mountain fire towers, the Hadley Bow Bridge, Plattsburgh's Old Stone Barracks, the Steamboat *Tuscarora*, and many more irreplaceable Adirondack structures.

Travel to Portugal with us next year!
Visit *aarch.org/tour/Portugal* for more information.

A world of AARCH exists online, join us there.