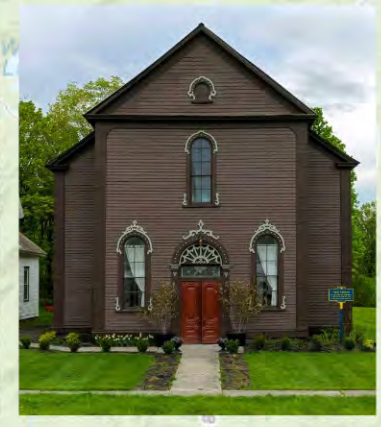
2026
AARCH PRESERVATION AWARDS

Friday, October 2 | 4–6 PM | The Lodge at Schroon Lake

Since 1996, AARCH's Annual Preservation Awards have recognized 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.



Kessel Park Inn: Long-Term Stewardship

Richard L. & Zoanne K. Schnell

Port Douglass, Essex County

Owner: Richard L. & Zoanne K. Schnell
Key Partners: Fuller Excavating, Inc.; AES Northeast; Crest Solar, LLC; BT Repair; Eric Buzzell (carpenter); J. Hogan Refrigeration & Mechanical, LLC; Roger Canning (painter); Begor's Gutters; Architectural & Engineering Design Associates
Project Date: 1978–present

Constructed circa 1890 and perched overlooking Lake Champlain, the Kessel Park Inn not only reflects the era's Adirondack camp and Craftsman architectural influences, it also offers a window into early American cinema.

From 1912 to 1946, pioneering film director and producer Adam Kessel Jr. made this building home. As co-founder and president of the New York Motion Picture Corporation, Kessel played a central role in developing the company's many subsidiary studios, including Universal Pictures, the oldest surviving film studio in the United States. He also recruited touring vaudevillian actor Charlie Chaplin for some of his earliest film roles.

Kessel frequently hosted colleagues and celebrities at his home, where they took in sweeping views of Lake Champlain from the building's broad porches and relaxed by the commanding cobblestone fireplace and 21-foot-long leather padded bar in the Great Room. The building retains key features like these along with Douglas-fir beams and wall paneling, a coffered ceiling, and converted gas light fixtures with Art Nouveau lamp shades.

Richard and Zoanne Schnell have lovingly stewarded the Kessel Park Inn since the 1970s. They have carefully preserved the structure, focusing on retaining the original layout, finishes, and architectural character while ensuring long-term structural stability. They created a T'aoist Stone Garden on the grounds as an homage to Adam Kessel's English circular gardens, which are visible in historic photographs. They have also revitalized the site as a center for arts, culture, and environmental stewardship through partnerships with regional organizations like AARCH and AdkAction.

The Schnells' dedication and generosity ensure that this rare combination of architectural integrity, breathtaking natural setting, and nationally significant cultural history will continue to serve as a place of beauty, learning, and community engagement for years to come.

Top: Kessel Park Inn in the early 20th century
Upper middle: present-day Kessel Park Inn
Lower middle: Kessel Family in the Great Room (Adam Kessel far left)
Bottom left–right: present-day interior of Kessel Park Inn

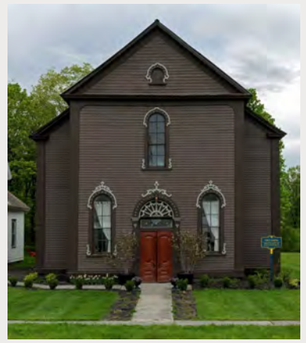
All photos courtesy of Richard & Zoanne Schnell.

First Church of Granville: Rehabilitation

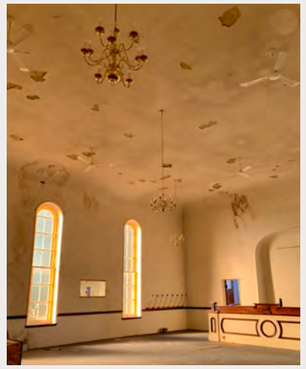
Cristiana Peña & Nick Porter

Granvillle, Washington County

Owner: Cristiana Peña & Nick Porter
Key Partners: Cheap Old Houses (project manager); Hansen's Complete Remodeling (contractor); Jennifer Salvemini (interior designer); Scott Reed (architect); Williams Plumbing & Mechanical; Holistic Homestead (contractor); Matt McKernon Heating & Air, LLC; Nate French (electrician); Megan Smith (concept design & planning); Arena Cabinets
Project Dates: 2022–2025

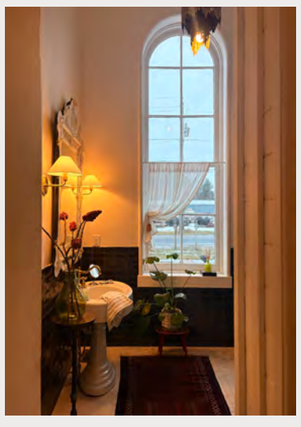


For over a decade, the congregation of the First Church of Granville met in parishioners' homes until they erected a house of worship around 1793. After hosting religious services for nearly 200 years, the First Church of Granville's parish had waned and closed its doors by the 1990s. In 2022, Cristiana Peña and Nick Porter fell in love with the property and set about creatively and thoughtfully transforming the building into their home.



Little documentation survives about the church's history, but we do know that it is one of Washington County's oldest houses of worship and hosted town meetings as well. In the 1850s, Granville became known for its burgeoning slate quarries and was dubbed the "Colored Slate Capital" of the world for its rare variety of naturally occurring colors. Quarrying drew Welsh immigrants to the area, who were already skilled at working with slate. Granville's heritage inspired the couple to christen their church-turned-home "Welsh Hall."

With the help of Cheap Old Houses (Cristiana works for their sister company, CIRCA Old Houses), the couple transformed the neglected site into their own sanctuary, which showcases original features, like a frescoed ceiling uncovered during the project and whimsical Gothic Revival trim. Throughout the conversion, they allowed the building's history to inform their layout and décor choices, maintaining the soaring, open space while adapting the altar area as a kitchen and the choir loft as a bedroom.



You can watch episode three of the HGTV production, *Who's Afraid of a Cheap Old House?*, to see how they used imagination and grit to breathe new life into this quirky home and follow their Instagram (@welshhall) for more behind-the-scenes info and updates.

Top left–right: First Church of Granville in 2022 and newly christened "Welsh Hall" in 2024
Middle: Interior before rehabilitation
Bottom left: new bathroom
Bottom right: rehabilitated interior of Welsh Hall

All photos courtesy of Cristiana Peña & Nick Porter.

Eagle Island Camp: Restoration

Eagle Island, Inc.

Saranac Lake, Franklin County

Owner: Eagle Island, Inc.
Key Partners: Crawford & Stearns, Architects & Preservation Planners, PLLC; Don Bennett Building Maintenance & Repair, LLC; volunteers from Eagle Island, Inc.
Project Dates: 2015–2026

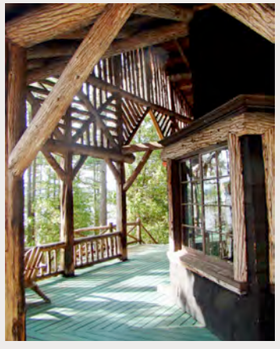
Above: Main Lodge circa 1905
Below: Main Lodge porch circa 1905

Eagle Island, a National Historic Landmark-listed Great Camp, is a stunning example of renowned Adirondack architect William Coulter's work. Over the past 10 years, Eagle Island, Inc. (EIC) has carefully restored the site as a summer youth camp.

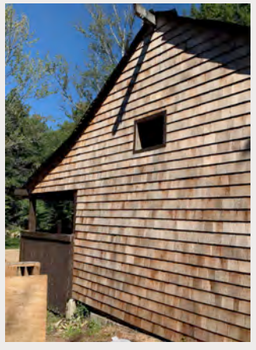
William Coulter was the first resident professional architect to establish a practice in the Adirondack region in 1897. He designed Eagle Island on Upper Saranac Lake in 1903 for former U.S. Vice President and New York Governor, Levi Morton, whose family enjoyed the sweeping views over the lake and mountains for seven years. After three decades as a private camp, the second owners, Henry and Florence Graves, generously gifted Eagle Island to the New Jersey Girl Scouts of Orange and Maplewood in 1937 in memory of their late sons, with the hope that the site would remain a place to keep the spirit of childhood alive. The Girl Scouts made minimal changes to the property during their operation of the site as a youth camp from 1938 to 2008. When they decided to sell it in 2010, a passionate group of alumnae and supporters formed the Friends of Eagle Island, Inc. and purchased the island through the generosity of an anonymous donor in 2015.

Over the past 10 years, strong partnerships and enthusiastic volunteers have come together to faithfully restore Eagle Island's 15 historic structures. After many years of neglect and vacancy, weather and water had taken their toll on the complex. In addition to skilled construction crews that stabilized the buildings and updated the island's infrastructure, volunteers played a key role in the restoration, from cleaning and painting to replacing rotten shingles and re-glazing windows.

Thanks to the vision and dedication of their partners, EIC has not only enthusiastically embraced the historic site, but has redeveloped Eagle Island as a summer children's camp and rustic retreat center, while welcoming the public and partnering with regional groups like AARCH.



Left: Main Lodge and Family Cabin after restoration
Right: Main Lodge porch after restoration



Left: Ice House during restoration
Right: Ice House after restoration

All photos courtesy of Eagle Island, Inc.

Caddie House: Long-Term Stewardship

Karl Beckwith Smith & Harold Hilton Truesdale

Loon Lake, Franklin County

Owners: Karl Beckwith Smith & Harold Hilton Truesdale
Project Dates: 1978–present

Built in 1895 as part of Ferdinand and Mary Chase's Loon Lake Hotel, the Caddie House originally served as a place for their guests to gather, meet their caddies, and pick up equipment before heading out to the hotel's golf course. Possibly designed by Stanford White, it displays the widespread influence of East Asian architecture at the time, which is also reflected in many Adirondack Great Camps. The pagoda-inspired style created a natural gathering place for golfers and other hotel guests, with its wide wrap-around porch and deep boxed eaves.

The first nine holes of the golf course were completed in 1895 and the front nine in 1922. Professional Golf Association member Harry "Zeke" Pimstein from Tupper Lake operated the Golf Pro Shop in the Caddie House in the mid-20th century. He also ran Loon Lake's post office out of the building from 1946 to 1966 while he served as its Postmaster. Throughout this period, the site remained a gathering place for locals and visitors. The course remained active until 2007.

In 1978, Karl Beckwith Smith and Harold Hilton Truesdale purchased the Caddie House to serve as their summer residence and immediately addressed years of neglect and deterioration. The balloon-frame building was structurally stable, so they focused on preserving original features, such as the footlockers, handcrafted staircases, pressed tin ceilings and walls, wood windows, and pine floors that had borne decades of golf cleats. Outside, they repaired the iconic roof and rebuilt the chimney and porch. They even preserved the initials carved on the clapboards by caddies as they waited for their patrons on the rear porch. Karl and Hal undertook much of the early preservation work themselves.

Although the golf course has closed, the Caddie House still welcomes friends and visitors to rest on its porch, including during AARCH's popular Loon Lake tours. Thanks to Karl and Hal's patience and generosity, this piece of Loon Lake's history continues to share its distinctive Adirondack story with the community and beyond.

Top: Caddie House with patrons in the early 20th century
Upper middle: present-day Caddie House on an AARCH tour
Lower middle: interior of the Caddie House on an AARCH tour, photo by AARCH
Bottom: drawing of the Caddie House by Karl Beckwith Smith
Images courtesy of Karl Beckwith Smith, unless otherwise noted.

Trudeau Building: Rehabilitation

Historic Saranac Lake

Saranac Lake, Franklin County

Owner: Historic Saranac Lake
Key Partners: Bishop Beaudry Construction, LLC; Landmark Consulting, LLC (architects); Brian Wishneff & Associates (tax credit consultant)
Project Dates: 2019–2026

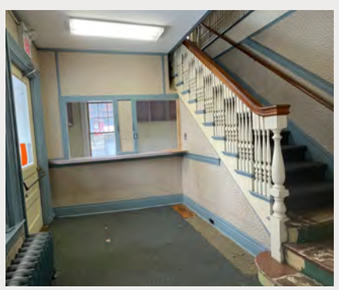
The Trudeau Building was constructed in 1894 as the home and medical office of Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, a physician and scientist internationally renowned for his research on and treatment of tuberculosis. Between 2019 and 2026, Historic Saranac Lake (HSL) rehabilitated the building and opened it to the public as an expansion of their museum campus.

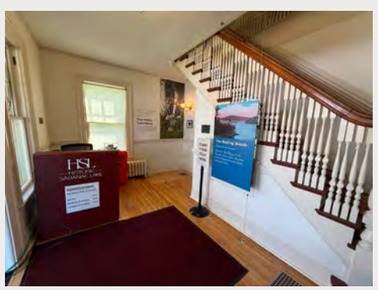
Dr. E.L. Trudeau came to the Adirondacks in 1873, ill with tuberculosis. After his health improved in the mountain climate, he commissioned a home in Saranac Lake, equipped his laboratory, and founded the Adirondack Cottage Sanitarium to serve the working poor. In 1893, a heater in Trudeau's home laboratory started a fire that burned the house down.

The following year, Trudeau swiftly contracted a new Colonial Revival home and state-of-the-art laboratory next door, designed by his cousin, J. Lawrence Aspinwall from the New York City firm of Renwick, Aspinwall, and Renwick. Trudeau's home housed the medical offices of three generations of Trudeau doctors and their associates for 125 years and retains the village's earliest restored cure porch.

Based in the laboratory next door since 2009, HSL purchased the Trudeau Building in 2019 to expand their museum campus. Over the past seven years, they raised $5.5 million to rehabilitate it as museum galleries and office space. Throughout the project, they returned some of the rooms to their original footprint and preserved original woodwork inside and out while creating fully accessible exhibit spaces. AARCH's Adirondack Rural Revitalization Program supported the reconstruction of the building's portico entrance. The expansion of their museum has reunited Dr. Trudeau's home and laboratory campus as well as enabled HSL to offer dynamic new exhibits exploring Trudeau's life and Adirondack history.

Top: Trudeau Building circa 1900
Upper middle: rehabilitated Trudeau Building in 2026
Lower middle: Dr. Trudeau's parlor during rehabilitation
Bottom: Dr. Trudeau's parlor rehabilitated as exhibit space





Left-Right: stairwell before and after rehabilitation

All photos courtesy of Historic Saranac Lake.

David Thomas-Train: Lifetime Achievement

Friends of Poke-O-Moonshine

Chesterfield, Essex County

For nearly 30 years, David Thomas-Train led the passionate group, Friends of Poke-O-Moonshine, which operates under AARCH's nonprofit status to advocate for the preservation of the mountain's fire tower. He organized the Friends alongside founding AARCH Executive Director Steven Engelhart in 1997, first volunteering his time and leadership, then serving as part-time Coordinator until his retirement in 2026. Over the years, David's dedication has not only ensured the fire tower's preservation but also fostered public engagement with the site's cultural and natural history.

Although historic preservationists and environmental conservationists alike celebrate them today, fire towers were at risk of disappearing from the Adirondack landscape in the late 20th century. After 60 years of hosting fire observers who identified and quelled dangerous fires in the Forest Preserve, their operation became too costly compared with improved airplane surveillance.

Erected in 1917, the fire tower on Poke-O-Moonshine Mountain was deactivated in 1988 and subsequently faced demolition, as did other mountaintop observation stations in the Adirondacks. A movement to restore fire towers as sites of conservation education gained momentum in the 1990s and AARCH began receiving inquiries on the topic, soon becoming involved in efforts to restore the tower closest to our Keeseville office.

This led to a natural partnership with David Thomas-Train, an outdoor enthusiast and retired educator. Over the past 29 years, he facilitated not only the tower's restoration and interpretive panels, but also the reconstruction of the popular Ranger Trail as a model of functional and sustainable trail design, a project for which he is particularly proud. Since 2002, the Friends have partnered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to hire an annual summer Fire Tower Steward, who educates the hiking public on the history of fire towers and the New York State Forest Preserve as well as ensuring the low-impact use of its trails.

As a member of the AARCH team, David has co-led numerous AARCH tours and helped strengthen the natural alliances between historic preservation and environmental conservation in the Adirondacks. His enthusiasm, patience, and signature good humor make him an exemplary preservation partner.

Top and bottom right: David Thomas-Train leading tours at Poke-O-Moonshine Mountain
Middle: 2017 Poke-O-Moonshine fire tower centennial celebration, courtesy of Nancie Battaglia
Bottom left: David co-leading AARCH's tour of Valcour Island

Adirondack Architectural Heritage

1745 Main Street, Keeseville, NY 12944 | 518-834-9328 | aarch.org

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

Thank you to our generous sponsors:

Granite ($1,000+)

Ed & Alane Hodges

Timber ($500+)

Jan C.K. Anderson
Brad Edmondson & Tania Werbizky
Diane Newbury & Steven Berman

Brick ($250+)

Adirondack North Country Association
Sanders H. Berk, M.D. & Sally Berk
Randy & Beth Crawford
Edward P. Finnerty
Tom & Carrie French
Rich & Marty Frost
Chuck & Meg Higgerson
The Lodge at Schroon Lake
Richard Longstreth
Paula Michelsen & Bob Goodsell
Wester & Lorraine Miga
Lauren Murphy
Nancie Battaglia Photography
Phinney Design Group
Steve & Kim Pope
Maria & Richard Russell
Anne Van Ingen & Wes Haynes

Thank you to Katie Cole for photographing the event.

Stewardship Committee

Special thanks to AARCH's Stewardship Committee for their planning and oversight of the awards program.

Jan C.K. Anderson
Sally Berk
J.B. Clancy
Richard Frost, *Chair*
Susan Harral
Wes Haynes
David Hislop
Samantha Johnson
Susan Lynch
Jacqueline Madison
Diane Newbury
Erin Tobin

Thank you to our host, The Lodge at Schroon Lake!

We honor this year's awardees at the former Brown Swan Club, now The Lodge at Schroon Lake. Designed by Glens Falls architect Ward Shippey for proprietor Philip Rice, the Brown Swan Club was established in 1916 as an Adirondack resort and expanded in 1929. 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. In 2024, AARCH honored them with a Preservation Award for their rehabilitation of the site.

Photo courtesy of Nancie Battaglia

Board of Directors

Ed Hodges, *President*
Susan Lynch, *Vice President*
Maria Russell, *Secretary*
Chris Rediehs, *Treasurer*
Jan C.K. Anderson
Edwin Anker
Adam Bailey
Samantha Bosshart
Tom French
Margaret Gorman
Wesley Haynes
Sarah Heffern
David Hislop
Howie Kirschenbaum
Jacqueline Madison
Dean Melville
Diane Newbury
Kim Pope

Staff

Erin Tobin
Executive Director

Christine Bush
Salvage Warehouse Director

Nolan Cool
Educational Programs Director

Samantha Johnson
Membership & Communications Director

Kelly Quimby
Camp Santanoni Historic Site Director

Jackie Schneider
Administrative Assistant

A World of AARCH exists online, join us there.

AARCH

Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) *is the nonprofit historic preservation organization for New York State's Adirondack region. AARCH supports the appreciation, care, and continued use of historic places – from everyday buildings to industrial and landmark sites – so these places are an active part of Adirondack community life for generations to come.*

Your support turns inspiration into action.
Scan this QR code, call 518-834-9328, or give online at *aarch.org/support.*