



Placid Pioneer

June 2006

Craig Wood Golf Course - The Early Years

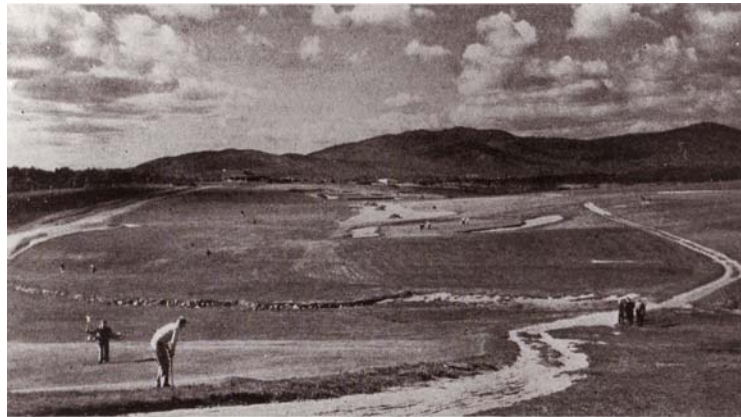
By Beverley Pratt Reid, Town and Village Historian

In 1924 the corporation known as “Lake Placid Holding Corporation” (a contingent of twenty-five local men) decided that Lake Placid needed a public golf course for locals and guests of private inns. Many hotels including Lake Placid Club, Whiteface Inn, The Ruisseau-mont, Fawn Club, etc. owned their own courses that were restricted for their members and patrons only.

Mr. Seymour Dunn, internationally known golf architect and the golf pro at the Lake Placid Club, was hired to supervise the plans for a nine hole golf course on the property located four miles out on Cascade Road. By the summer of 1925 the club house was opened with a “tea room”. The first pro was Scott North. The course proved to be so popular that by 1927 the Corporation began work on the second nine holes. This work continued sporadically over the next few years. During these years a total of over \$100,000 had been expended.

The Holding Corporation offered the property to the Town of North Elba in 1931; this led to the necessity of a taxpayer vote. On July 30th, 1931 a proposition was presented at a special election for the acquisition of the Country Club Golf Course,

its improvements and its completion to an eighteen hole course, for a sum of \$122,000. Another proposition at the same special election was to build the Olympic Arena. The Arena proposition was passed but the Golf Course was denied.



18 Hole Championship Course of Lake Placid Golf and Country Club

Photo courtesy of Peter Martin

A year later the Park District of the Town of North Elba entered into a lease with the Holding Corporation for a sum of \$2,400, which covered a period of fifteen years. The town was given the privilege of purchase within ten years for the sum of \$25,000. Not only did this lease facilitate the completion of the eighteen hole course, but aided in the unemployment problems of the depression years. On April 8th, 1935 the Town con-

tracted for the purchase of the completed eighteen hole course.

During the years many pros and famous golfers came and went. Among them was local hero Craig Wood. On July 19th, 1948 the “Lake Placid Golf and Country Club” name was changed to “Craig Wood Golf and Country Club”. The property is still under the auspices of the Park District of the Town of North Elba and one of the most popular golf courses in the North Country.



Why are these women smiling?

**Because they VOLUNTEERED
at The History Museum, of course!**

That’s right, and you can join the happy people who know they are making a difference in their community by volunteering at The History Museum! It’s a big job, keeping history alive, and we can’t do it without your help. We are looking for friendly, energetic people who would like to work as volunteer museum staff during the summer and fall. Duties will include greeting visitors and answering questions as well as some light cleaning. We also need assistance with the ongoing project of cataloguing our collections. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact Jennifer Van-Benschoten, Museum Director, at 523-1608. It’s your history – please help us ensure that the future has an anchor in the past!

A Message from the President

by Peter Roland, Jr.

2006 has brought some exciting changes to The History Museum! Our new Director, Jennifer VanBenschoten, brings extensive experience with non-profits and grant writing to the Society. Along with Museum Committee chair Ed Lynch, she has enthusiastically tackled reconfiguring the Museum to do a better job telling the "stories" that have been selected. The Main Room now features well organized exhibits on Hotels, Founding Families, Mining, Agriculture and Transportation. It is a whole new look; please stop by to see it and say hello to Jennifer sometime soon!

The Board of Trustees has nearly completed the year-long process of developing a Strategic Plan for the Historical Society. With limited resources we cannot be "all things to all people", and this process has allowed us to define our goals for the short and long term and the strategies and actions that will be necessary to achieve those goals. One important goal that emerged from this process is that of bringing programming into the community in a variety of ways in addition to improving the Museum experience. This plan will not only better position us for receiving funding for our activities but will serve as a valuable "roadmap" as we move forward.

The second Winter Lecture Series was a resounding success. Each of the programs was extremely well attended, and finished up with over 65 people coming out to hear the final April program on "Early Skiing in the Town of North Elba". Our thanks go out to each of the presenters and Howard Johnson's for hosting this series. Look for it again next winter!

The new museum configuration will now allow us to host events in the station. If you need an "exciting old place" for your next party, event or wedding please get in touch with us regarding renting the museum. It's a great way to support the Society and provide a new and interesting venue for your event.

Our ability to continue current operations and expand programming in the future is totally dependent on the support of our membership and other organizations which support our efforts. Please take the time to renew your membership for 2006 using the enclosed form. Your financial contributions, along with a dedicated corps of volunteers, will allow the Historical Society to continue providing service to the Lake Placid-North Elba community.

We thank you for your support and wish you a great summer!



Where has he been?

Where is he going?

Can you identify this
"carry" between
two popular lakes?

Answer: This traveler is wheeling his
guideboat on the "carry" from Lake
Placid to Mirror Lake.

In Memoriam

Norman Hess 1923 -2006

The Historical Society lost a great friend with the passing of Norm Hess this past winter. Norm made valuable contributions of his time and talents to a number of organizations in Lake Placid over many years. The Historical Society was fortunate to have Norm as a member of the Board, and benefited greatly from his love of Lake Placid and in particular his recognition of the importance of preserving and sharing the history of Lake Placid and North Elba.

Norm requested that contributions be made to the Society, and a number of generous donations were received in his memory.



Lake Placid – North Elba Historical Society

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From the Director's Desk

by Jennifer VanBenschoten

As this is my first column in the Lake Placid-North Elba Historical Society newsletter, I want to take this opportunity to invite everyone to stop by and see the renovations and rearrangements to the History Museum soon! We have all been working hard to give the museum a fresh look, and I want to make sure that I thank Ed Lynch, Peter Roland, Greg Peacock and everyone who turned up for our volunteer work day on May 20 for all their ideas and their help. On that note, I also want to commend the board for their hard work in the last year on their strategic planning. It's an arduous process, but in my experience, the benefits are well worth the effort.

My column this summer is about

choices. We make choices every day of our lives. Some of them are so simple as to seem inconsequential: paper or plastic? Chicken or



A few well chosen artifacts of local history tell a story...

fish? But the choices we make tell a lot about who we are and how we choose to live our lives. Writers, in particular, must make many choices when they tell their stories. What they choose to tell us, or show us,

influences what we think or feel about their story. This holds true in a museum. In re-arranging the exhibits at the Museum, we have had to make some choices, and that's what a good museum should do. More is not always better in the museum world. (Unless you are talking about visitors or volunteers!) A few well-chosen artifacts can speak volumes more about a particular story than a 700-page novel can. And while deciding what objects and photographs to display can seem somewhat overwhelming at times, it is a challenge I am looking forward to. The stories of Lake Placid and North Elba have always fascinated me, and I am excited to now be a part of those stories.

Community Day 2006

Please join us Saturday, July 29 as we celebrate our community!

- Craft Fair
- Silent Auction
- Flea Market
- Live Entertainment

Free Train Rides for Historical Society members!

If you would like to help with this event, please contact Laura Clark 523-4485

The Museum Wish List...

- Fax Machine
- Flat storage files for maps & documents
- 12' Stepladder
- Office Chair(s)
- Digital Camera
- Legal size File Cabinet
- Desk Lamps
- Hand Tools & Tool Box
- Folding Chairs
- Lightweight Banquet Tables

If you wish to donate any of these items to the museum, please let us know! A tax deductible receipt can be provided for the value of the item.

Need an exciting "OLD PLACE" for your next party, event or wedding?



New in 2006, the Museum Building is available for rental function space to individuals and organizations.

For more information contact the museum: 518-523-1608

Bev's Bits... A report from the Town Historian

by Beverley Pratt Reid

While rearranging the Museum for the 2006 season, it was noted that the wonderful sign that once hung in the Hotel Albert was in disrepair. It has been refurbished and is now installed in the main room as part of the hotels exhibit. The Hotel Albert was owned by the Hennesseys and was located where the speed skating oval is now. It was torn down in 1930 along with other structures in the area to clear the space for the oval.



The refurbished Hotel Albert signboard.

The beautiful old pine tree in front of the Adirondack Community Church which met its demise last month could tell many stories of the Village. It first shows up in pictures of the first church, which was built

in 1868. In 1918 it was the center of a Community Christmas festival and was wrapped in lights. The village provided the wiring and electrical effects and the Woman's Club arranged a program and decorations. During the years it became too large and the lights were moved to a front pine. It had watched hundreds of people walk under it to go into Worship and Fellowship.

For many years questions have arisen as to the idea that the Underground Railroad was a part of John Brown's Farm. I have received a letter from the Director of the Underground Railroad Heritage

Trail. It stated that "the property at North Elba was never a 'stop'." There were former slaves who stayed but they were not "refugees passing through on their way to freedom".

According to notes made by Mary MacKenzie over the years our Post Office was moved many times before settling on its present site on Main Street. She says the first one was at the Ski T Farm on River Road, second at The Stage Coach Inn on Old Military Road, at Mr. George White's store (then known as Newman), up the street to Weston, Bull and Mihill and then the Raeoil Building. During these years it was also situated in what is now the E-Magazee Building, then the Continental Shop, back to E-Magazee, the M. L. Thomas building, Masonic Building and finally its current location on Main Street. It was noted that the Newman post office was established because it was too far for the residents of Newman to go to the far end of Main Street to get their mail.

Beverley Reid, Town Historian

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Swimming lessons at Camp Minnowbrook on Lake Placid.



LAKE PLACID-NORTH ELBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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