

The Nash House, c. 1860

LAKE PLACID-NORTH ELBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY THE HISTORY MUSEUM

May
2010

PLACID PIONEER

FEATURE ARTICLE—Forces Fueling the Golden Age of Hotels

Crowded cities, infection and lack of air conditioning made the cool air of the Adirondacks appealing to those that could afford the journey, but other forces were at work to make Lake Placid a tourist destination. Improvements in transportation kept strengthening this corridor: completion in 1846 of the stage-coach from Canada to Albany with connection to Lake Placid, improved rail services, Henry Ford's Model T, in the early 1900s and finally The Adirondack Northway in the 1950s.

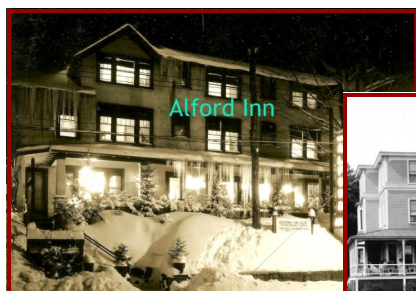
In 1885, the NY Forest Preserve and the Adirondack Park was formed. Governors Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the century to Nelson Rockefeller in the 1960s initiated conservation movements which increased interest in the "wilds." Melville Dewey's Lake Placid Club started winter sports in the area in the early 1900s making it a year round destination.

But perhaps it was the romantic vision of artists that lured the most people to the Adirondacks. James Fenimore Cooper wrote the series "Leatherstocking Tales" and William H. H. Murray wrote "Adventures in the Wilderness; or, Camp-Life in the Adirondacks". Who could resist the visions of photographer Seneca Ray Stoddard and his book "The Adirondacks: Illustrated"? The second generation of artists in The Hudson River School, including Frederick Church and John Kenesett, brought our glorious landscapes to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other venues in NYC and beyond. Is it any wonder that the rush was on to see and experience the Adirondacks?

FLASH BACK

200 years ago.....Spain is having a bad year with Columbia, Argentina and Chile declaring independence, Seville is surrendered to the French, Mexico begins its revolt and the U.S annexes Western Florida; meanwhile Japan invades Korea, and the composer Frederick Chopin is born.

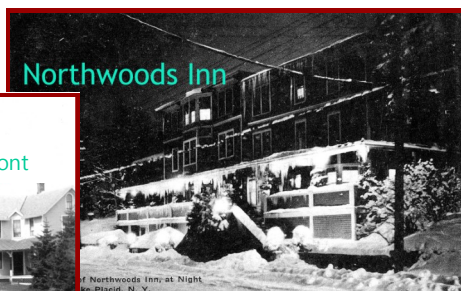
100 years ago.....Boy Scouts of America & Campfire Girls are founded, earth passed through the tail of Comet Halley causing panic, NY Penn Station opened as the worlds largest rail terminal, the average salary was \$12.98 per week for 59 hours, milk was 32 cents/gallon, Ruisseau Hotel's insurance paid \$180,000 for the total loss to fire, the first airship carrying passengers set afloat "Zeppelin Deutschland", events in Germany and Russia were moving us to WWI, Black and Decker was started with a \$2,000 investment, Father's Day was founded and 70% of bread was still baked at home. Vitamin B, teeth braces and neon signs made their debut while credit cards still didn't exist.



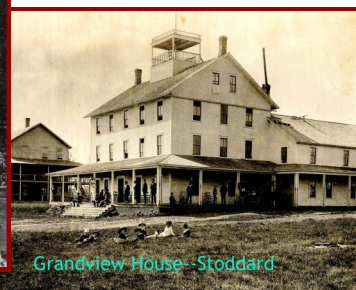
Alford Inn



The Belmont



Northwoods Inn



Grandview House - Stoddard

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE—Chuck Damp

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

We have asked and you have answered. For the first time in anyone's recent memory we have made an appeal to the community for funds in the form of an annual appeal. You have responded generously and helped us close what could have been a fairly large budget gap. We are quite appreciative and promise we will utilize the funds to further our collective cause.

Most of you are aware that currently the governor's budget calls for the closing of John Brown's Farm Historic Site here in North Elba. The town through the Park District has indicated that it is willing to figure out a way to keep this important site open. The Historical Society Board of Trustees unanimously agreed to work with the town to try to keep this site open. Hopefully the funding will be restored by the state, but if not, we are at the ready to help in the ways we can.

As we have mentioned in the past, please consider volunteering an hour or two a week to help us accession our collections. We have many open time slots which will make this ambitious project move along more quickly. Remember, we are only as good as our volunteers; please contact me or any trustee, Jenn Tufano or Pat Kelly for more information and to start working.



LAKE PLACID - NORTH ELBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE HISTORY MUSEUM

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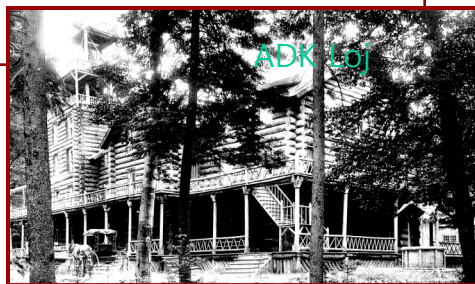
FROM OUR COLLECTION

The LPNEHS has a significant collection of photos and artifacts that we are in the process of organizing and accessioning thanks to generous grants from the Lake Placid Education Foundation and the Henry and Mildred Uihlein Foundation with matching funds raised in our community and many volunteer hours. Over this next year, we will be using the rewards of this ambitious project to add content to our website. Look forward to a slide show of the hotels featured in this newsletter and a section for "mystery" photographs that we hope that you will take the time to help us identify the content.

WWW.LAKEPLACIDHISTORY.COM



Stevens House



ADK Loj



The Grandview



Mirror Lake Inn; Lake Placid Inn



Whiteface Inn

WHO, WHERE, WHEN?



STEVEN'S HOUSE EMPLOYEES

Tell us if any of your ancestors are in this photo!
TheHistoryMuseum@verizon.net



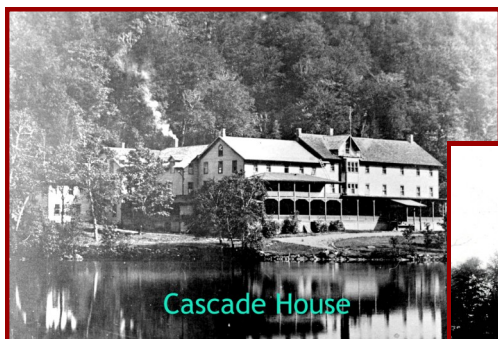
Our thanks to the 1932-1980 Olympic Museum for identifying the King and Queen as Harriet (Hillard) and Ozzie Nelson in 1935 at the Coronation Ice Show.

SOCIETY SEEKING

HELP US MAKE HERITAGE DAY A SUCCESS:

- Volunteers needed to help set up & man tables on the 17th
- We are soliciting business donations for our silent auction
- Homemade baked goods are needed for our bake sale

If you can help us, Contact Pat Kelly at 524-0959



Cascade House



Mirror Lake House--Stoddard



Lake Placid Inn



The Ruisseaumont

SOCIETY UPDATES

UPCOMING EVENTS

EVENTS WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE HISTORY MUSEUM

LAKE PLACID INSTITUTE PHOTO EXHIBIT

OPENING RECEPTION—MAY 28TH, 5—7 PM

Adirondack high school student photo competition winners of "24 Hours in the Adirondacks."

Exhibit runs through June 27th.

HERITAGE DAY

JULY 17TH, 10 AM—4 PM

Our annual fundraiser complete with craft fair, live music, children activities, silent auction and bake sale. Free admission—bring the family!

BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

AUGUST 12TH, 5:30—7 PM

The LPNEHS will host the Essex County Business Council mixer. \$2 admission to benefit the ECBC.

ANNUAL MEMBERS' DAY

AUGUST 19TH, 5—7 PM

Our time to thank our members and volunteers for their support with a reception; members have the opportunity to take a free train rides. Bring a friend!

ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

AUGUST 26TH, 4:30 PM

(LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED.)

All members are welcome to attend our annual meeting.

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

WWW.LAKEPLACIDHISTORY.COM

BEV'S BITS...*A report from the Town Historian, Beverley P. Reid*

The beginning of the hotel business In Lake Placid...

The first residence, in what was to become the Village of Lake Placid, that was enlarged enough to become accommodations for tourists, was "Nash's Red House" in 1852. By 1864 more tourists were arriving and Martin Lyon opened his "Lyon's Inn" or the "North Elba House" on Old Military Road. Robert Scott also expanded his farmhouse on Cascade Road and opened what was known as, "Mountain View House".

In 1871, the first "hotel" to accept guests was first called "Brewster's" but after years of reconstruction became known as "Lake Placid Inn" and "Lake Placid House". A little known hotel was built on River Road in 1869 known as "Hammer's Hotel". Joseph Nash in 1876 built another hotel on Signal Hill and called it "Excelsior House". John Stevens purchased the building in 1878 and renamed it "Stevens House". Moses Ferguson bought property from Joe Nash and in 1878 erected a building that was to become the "Grand View Hotel". Down the slope Henry Allen built the "Allen House" in 1880 and three years later the "Mirror Lake House" appeared.

Lake Placid Lake saw the erection of a three story log cabin house of public accommodations owned by the Leggetts and known as "Castle Rustico" in 1879. "The Westside" also on Lake Placid Lake opened in 1882 but was later torn down and rebuilt as the "Whiteface Inn". The East side of Lake Placid Lake saw the "Ruisseaumont" take its place among the hotels in 1892. The Hurley Brothers built the "American House" in 1893 on the Mill Pond. In 1897 Wes Kennedy opened "Northwoods Inn" on land overlooking Mirror Lake on the west side of Main Street. Later to become the "Hotel Marcy" in 1926.

Closing out the 1800's, "the golden age of hotels", the hotel "St. Moritz" was opened in 1900 by Albert and Etta Littlejohn Stickney.



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