

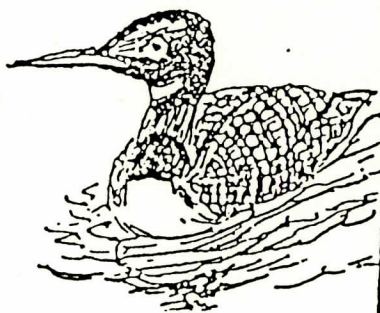


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Hamlets of the Adirondacks



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**Hamlets of the Adirondacks:
History, Preservation and Investment**

Credits

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Roger Trancik was principal-in-charge, Dan Krall, project planner and Paula Horrigan, project assistant. The work was performed for, and with the continued input from the four participating counties and their planning directors: Fred Aufchlager, AICP - Clinton County, William Johnston, AICP - Essex County, Ernest Lorenzen - Hamilton County, and Mary Burns Verlaque - St. Lawrence County. Staff members of each county planning office also made significant contributions. James Hotaling, Chief of Local Government Services of the Adirondack Park Agency, provided valuable and ongoing input.

We are most grateful to the above client group for their patience, insight and lively dialogue they provided at our biweekly sessions which made this project particularly rewarding.

Many other individuals and groups provided valuable information, encouragement and assistance. Dr. David Allee and his team of Adirondack researchers at Cornell University were particularly supportive and helpful on a daily basis. Without their guidance, especially in the data gathering phase, this project would have fallen short of the mark. We are also grateful for their financial support toward publishing the work. Dr. Theodore Hullar, Director of Research, Professor Stuart Stein and Professor Richard Booth, Esq., all of Cornell, provided invaluable ideas during the project's early conceptual stages. Craig Gilborn, Director of the Adirondack Museum, and his able staff

were primary supporters of our efforts, providing us with accommodations at the Museum, historic knowledge and images of which several are printed in this document. David Gross, North Country Cooperative Extension, also made significant contributions through numerous meetings and conversations, as did Roger Tubby and the Adirondack North Country Association.

The implementation of the work was assisted by the capable services of Rosemarie Tucker, typist and administrative aide. Cornell's Graphic Arts Division was responsible for printing and photo services, and Davis Graphic Services for the reproduction work and typesetting.

The preparation of this document was financially aided through a grant from the State of New York pursuant to Chapter 53, Subdivision I of the Laws of New York of 1982; Contract Number: C000116. The Adirondack Park Agency administered the contract and funding for the study. Printing was assisted by the four participating counties, the Adirondack Park Agency and the Adirondack Museum in memory of Harold K. Hochschild, founder of the Adirondack Museum and former chairman of the Temporary Study Commission on the Future of the Adirondacks.

The contents of this publication reflect the views of many individuals and institutions, yet do not represent the official position of any sponsoring agency.

August 31, 1983

Cover image:

"Old Adirondack"—home of the McIntyre Iron Works, one of the earliest Adirondack investments

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Preface

This publication is about the 135 hamlets located within the Adirondack Park. It intends to introduce the hamlets of the park and to prepare the way for new investment opportunities for human resources and commitments to the cultural development and preservation of Adirondack hamlets. It attempts to recognize the special problems of the hamlets and to set the stage for their solution in later phases of work involving local, state and federal participation.

Most Adirondack Park hamlets have been bypassed by time and technology—in a sense, **frozen in time**. This is their charm, but also their plight as they struggle to survive. In the Adirondacks, every hamlet succumbs to the presence and power of nature. The great Adirondack wilderness is both the backdrop for their survival and opportunity for their success. The “forever wild” lands of the Park have been amply planned for and safeguarded since a constitutional amendment was enacted to protect them in 1894. What has gone unattended is planning for the future of the settled area of the Park.

How do we address the settlements of the Adirondacks in the future? The first step toward achieving the answer is to develop a way of dealing with them, their problems and outstanding qualities, and planning for these settlements within their own physical, economic and cultural setting.

History is important toward gaining a fuller knowledge of the Adirondack hamlets as places in time, as part of an historic continuum that dates back to the very first settlements in the Park. By understanding and interpreting the evolved form of Adirondack settlement, guidelines for the hamlets that are sensitive to the Adirondack region can be established. Such an interpretive program can become an important avenue for presenting a unified regional image of the Adirondacks and stimulating widespread interest in the settlements of the Adirondack Park.

The basic objective of the planning approach for the Adirondacks is to strike a **balance** between economic development and environmental preservation. By doing so, man and nature can be considered true partners in future planning and development efforts. In the Park, natural resources and man-made influences are inseparable—a reality that is essential in marketing the amenities of the hamlets. The ultimate goal is to encourage investment in the settlements of the Adirondacks by people inside and outside the Park. To meet the goal, this Phase One publication presents 135 hamlets and their unique qualities, past and present. Determining a clear path for their future and how to achieve it will become the important next step in Phase Two of the planning process.

"This publication explores the investment potential of human resources and cultural development of Adirondack hamlets."



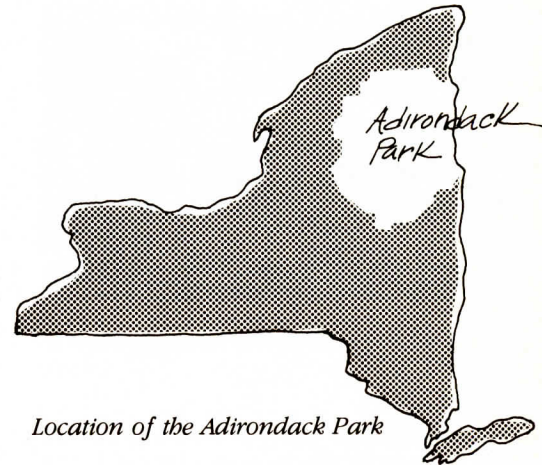
Chapter One

The Process Begins

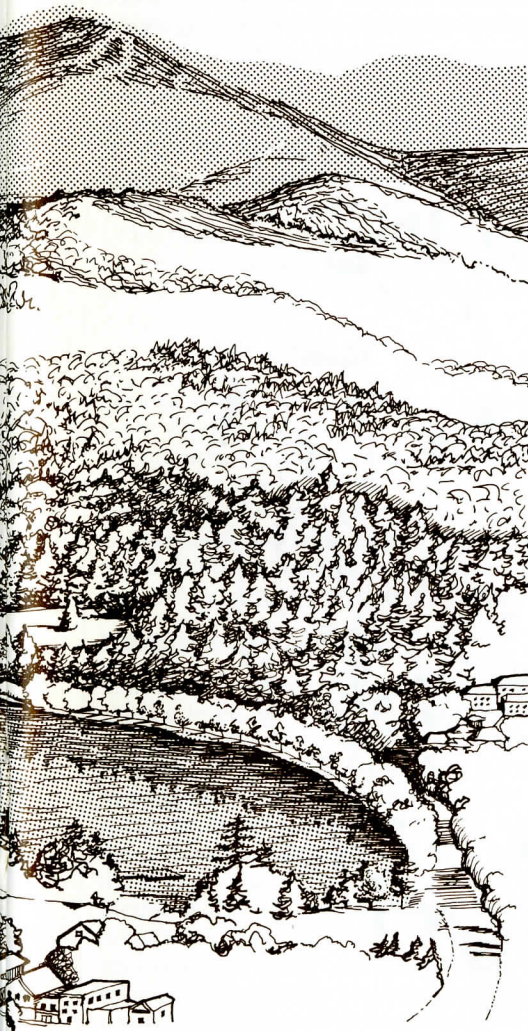
Development and Preservation

"The people [of the Adirondacks] have long since become accustomed to living with nature; they are a part of it, married to it in a way that visitors from drearier topographies can never understand. It is their institution, their civilization, their art . . . Spring and fall are dearly loved, winter is barely tolerated and summer is mostly for making money."

(Bernstein, *The Sticks*, 1971)



Location of the Adirondack Park

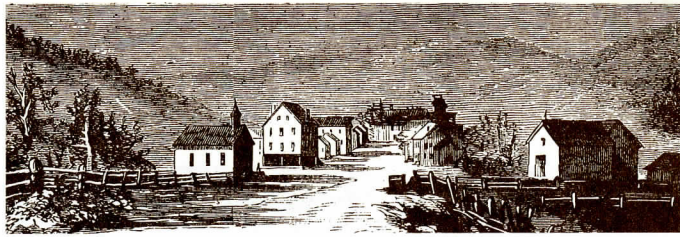


Rural settlements throughout the country are confronted with a major contradiction of goals that can be summed up in the following question posed not too long ago by a resident of Essex, New York: "How can we preserve the positive rural environment that we call 'home' and at the same time improve our economic condition so that we and our children can remain here?" This basic question raises the central issue in rural community planning today shared by virtually all villages and hamlets of non-urbanized regions. While recent demographic figures show rural America's population growing faster than urban America's, the rural villages and hamlets are struggling to survive. They are at once popular and poor, educated and illiterate, beautiful and deteriorating. The restructuring of public expenditures has broadened even further the rural policy gap where limited resources are spread too thinly over a given region resulting in little, if any, impact on revitalizing small rural settlements. Public institutions as well as private concerns are aware of the relative lack of political and economic power of rural areas as compared to urban areas and the ramifications of increasing environmental, energy and fiscal constraints on future development.

In the early 1970's New York mirrored national concern for ecology and pollution control with a resource protection program for the private lands of the Adirondack Park that regulated new regional-scale development as well as providing a planning process for the vast state owned lands in the park. As noted in the Preface, the private land use plan calls for a balance of natural, social and economic needs. The APA Act is similar in some respects to state laws passed in Vermont, Florida, Oregon, Hawaii, California, New Jersey and elsewhere.

The state's rules and land ownership contribute to a significantly different physical and institutional setting for Adirondack settlements. Though they share problems with rural settlements elsewhere, they may not fit the yardsticks used by state and federal programs, or a private developer, to repair roads and bridges, assist with redevelopment, or to carry on day-to-day business.

This report is intended to introduce these settlements, so often unnoticed or ignored in literature about the Adirondacks; it is an initial prospectus, intended to mobilize the human and institutional resources that are necessary to realize tangible investments.



As of this writing, Phase One of the study is complete. This publication is aimed not merely at the county planning officials, but at the many inhabitants and visitors to the Adirondack region, the state-level decision makers, and the many to whom the Adirondack region remains a mystery. While the descriptive survey lists many of the problems peculiar to the Adirondack communities, it at the same time reveals the great potential for economic revitalization in the region's settlements and speaks to the unique quality and character that only the Adirondacks and its people can take credit for. So, as the bearer of both good and bad news, this report, and the study results it contains, is the stepping off point for Phase Two.

Reasons for the study

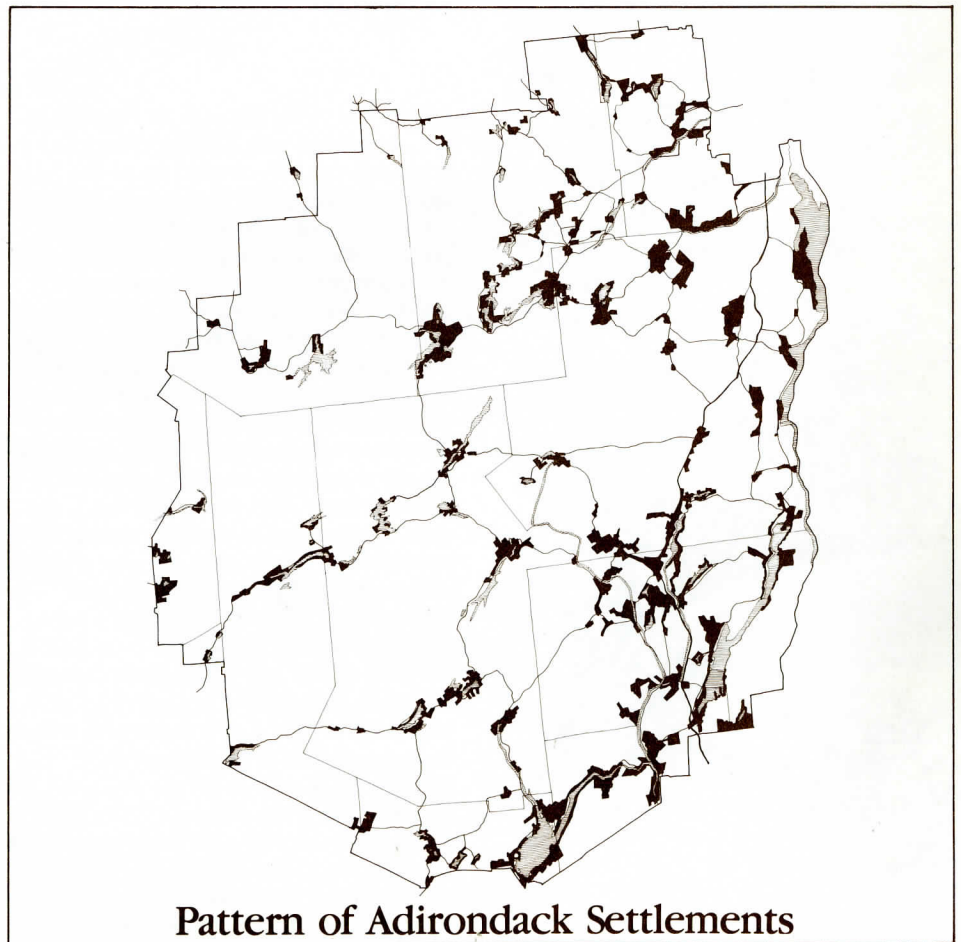
Three fundamental ideas lay the cornerstones of the study:

1. to analyze common problems and potentials in the hamlets for determining types of settlements in the Adirondacks and their pressing needs,
2. to develop revitalization strategies and policy plans for counteracting physical and economic deterioration of hamlets in the Park,
3. to market opportunities of Adirondack hamlets to inside and outside audiences by interpreting and communicating their important natural and cultural heritage.

Designing the Study

Faced with the visible deterioration of Adirondack hamlets and villages, and eager to compensate for the impact of limited resources spread too thinly over the region, four Adirondack counties (Clinton, Essex, Hamilton, St. Lawrence) and the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) contracted with Roger Trancik, Urban Design Consultant, to explore creative and unique ways to close the rural policy gap. It was decided that a two-phase study would take place. The first phase, a descriptive phase, would look at all the settlement areas in the Park and determine how and why they came into existence. It also would involve grouping them into logical categories for purposes of studying their common characteristics and eventually selecting sample communities representing the larger group of Adirondack hamlets. It was hoped that this process would inform the policies and priorities for directing state and federal assistance programs toward the actual needs of the Adirondack region.

The second phase of the study would be prescriptive using the sample communities derived from Phase One. Phase Two would develop detailed plans and strategies for the sample communities and would outline action programs for their implementation.



Pattern of Adirondack Settlements

"While other sections of the country developed and prospered, the mountain regions were left in isolation." (Aber and King, Tales from an Adirondack County)



Present-day view of Old Adirondac



A trading post in the hamlet of Number Four

Plight of the Hamlets

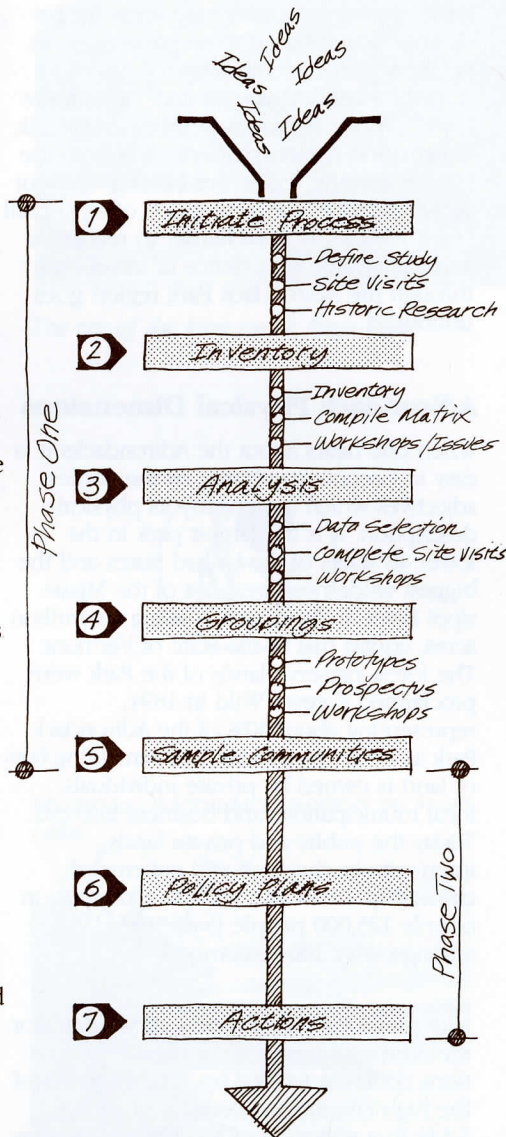
Hamlets of the Adirondack region share a number of common problems which are important to understand before speculating on their future. The list is lengthy and in many cases one problem's solution is increasingly complicated by the way in which all problems are interconnected. The need for a comprehensive understanding of these problems is therefore important to bear in mind.

Small and Isolated

Because of their small size and relative isolation there is not available in most hamlets the minimum level of human and fiscal resources to actively deal with the complexities of development planning. Consequently the hamlets lack organizational abilities to administer, communicate and review planning programs.

Unstable Economies

Unstable local economies, below poverty income levels and high unemployment present another set of frequently occurring problems in the Adirondacks. First, because many settlements have been historically tied to one industry their economic base lacks the diversity which safeguards them against the impact of an industry's departure. Furthermore, the substantial fluctuation of an Adirondack hamlet's local economy from season to season may be due to a heavy reliance on recreation and tourism—an economy affected by the vagaries of the weather and swings in the nation's economy. The resulting instability of annual



Process Diagram

income and the limited prospects nationwide for rural industrial development, compound to create a situation in which the region's youth leave Adirondack communities and seek employment elsewhere. A general lack of support from state and federal agencies and private financing establishments leaves the small local businessperson, who is willing to take a risk, to struggle to make a living. In order to compete in the marketplace, the business often resorts to unusual advertising modes—the small business gets the big colorful sign—the result of competition for a limited clientele. Often these signs are out of character with both the place they advertise and the hamlet, creating a visual assault along the roadway.

Local Perceptions

Local perceptions of state regulatory constraints on development compound physical and transportation factors that discourage new development. Without new tax revenues and public/private investment initiatives municipal revenues and services languish. Municipalities cannot maintain and improve the hamlet's physical appearance including its public areas, buildings and water and sewer systems. The vacant sites and buildings, which in other communities appear as opportunities to investors, remain vacant and abandoned. Streets and sidewalks, lacking commercial activity, remain in a state of disrepair. Dying trees are not



replaced, further adding to the image of a ghost town where boarded-up facades and overgrown sites predominate. The community perceives itself in a double bind. On the one hand, the state gives scant attention to its special problems with state land ownership, regulations and policies. On the other, a deteriorating service capability discourages those investors who might be attracted by the pristine natural environment.



The Housing Dilemma

The need for affordable quality housing for young and old populations has become a key concern in the region. The prohibitive costs of housing often lead young couples to consider the mobile home as an alternative which seldom benefits the owner in equity building and is rarely in keeping with the overall visual character of a rural hamlet. The lack of appropriate housing for the elderly is apparent throughout the region as well. In many cases, opportunities for overcoming the housing problem do exist but remain unknown to the majority of the people who stand to benefit from them.

A Visitor's Perception

Unable to improve housing, encourage economic development, and upgrade their community appearance, hamlets have difficulty attracting visitors and tourists to the area. Few communities have areas for pedestrian activities, off-street parking, parks, village squares, picnic areas, or places to stop for a cool drink, rest and "take in the town". Public restroom facilities and public information centers that advertise both the hamlet and the region are lacking. Without these amenities the perception of an overall "park feeling" is even harder to recognize and the unique experience of travelling through the Adirondack Park region goes unnoticed.

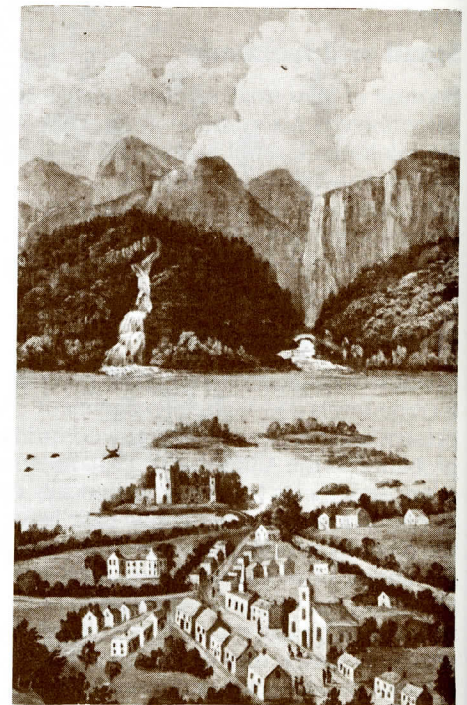
Adirondack Physical Dimensions

When one hears about the Adirondacks it is easy to become captivated by the endless adjectives which accompany its physical description. It is the largest park in the lower 48 states of the United States and the biggest wilderness area east of the Mississippi River. Its land area, totaling six million acres, equals that of the State of Vermont. The forest preserve lands of the Park were proclaimed Forever Wild in 1894, representing about 40% of the Adirondack Park as we know it today. The remaining 60% of land is owned by private individuals, local municipalities and business interests. Today the public and private lands intertwine in checkerboard patterns of ownership. In an area so vast, a population of only 125,000 people lives, spread amongst over 100 settlements.

Like punching the numbers on a calculator, the Adirondack region's immense proportions continue to total up. The 46 peaks of the high country are dominated by the 5,344 foot elevation of Mt. Marcy as it rears up majestically on the horizon and falls abruptly to the east, in a 40 mile distance meeting Lake Champlain at 100 feet above sea level. Lake Champlain, the "inland sea", forms the eastern boundary of the Park and

stretches on a north-south axis for 136 miles from Whitehall, New York to St. Johns, Quebec, connecting the great St. Lawrence and Hudson Rivers by way of a canal system. To the west of the Park the foothills reach out to Tug Hill, Watertown and Lake Ontario. The St. Lawrence Agricultural Valley forms the northern edge and to the south the Adirondacks blend into the urbanized corridor along the New York Thruway—one of the major access points from which 55 million people, 1/4 of the US population as well as millions from Canada can find themselves within a day's reach of the Adirondacks!

These endless facts and figures only measure the surface and fail to communicate the total picture about the unique lure of the Adirondacks—that quality which sets them apart from any place else. The adjectives and the descriptions may entice one to visit or even to settle there, but there is much more that encourages them to stay.

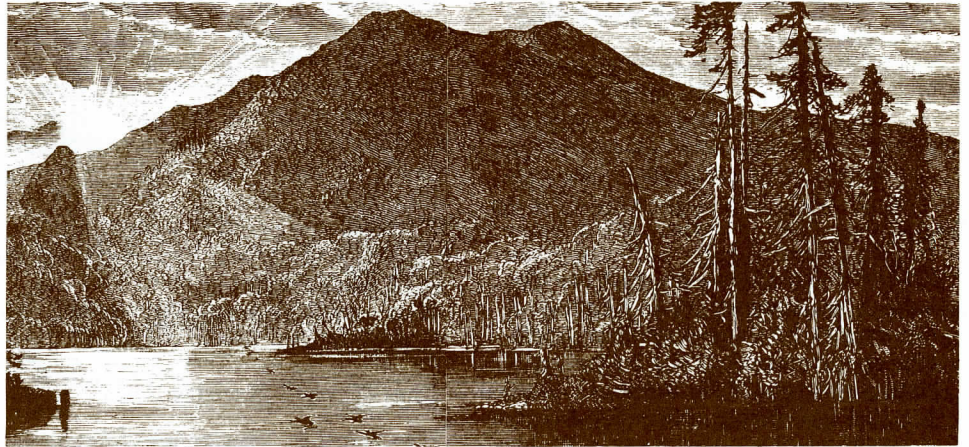


Allegory of the Adirondack Region (R.A. Savage)

"On canvas, the human figure became almost lost to the panoramas of mountains, woods, and water spread with brush and pen over the page."

Mysterious Adirondack Qualities

An aura of mystery hovers over this area where one can hear the lonely cry of a loon echoing across some distant lake on a summer evening or walk the damp fern-bordered path of a mountain glade. The region's mystery is contagious and few leave the area without having been cast under its spell. For more than a century writers have captured the Region's mysterious quality between their pages. Verplanck Colvin, a mountaineer of the 19th Century wrote, "few fully understand what the Adirondack wilderness is. It is a mystery even to those who have crossed and recrossed it by boats, along its avenues, the lakes and on foot through its vast and silent recesses." More than 100 years later Jane Keller in her book **The Adirondack Wilderness** went on to write "generations of people have noticed how different the Adirondacks seem from their neighbors, the Green Mountains in Vermont, the Berkshires in Massachusetts and the Catskills farther south in New York." Grandeur, more mysterious, more interesting, becomes the writer's language of description. But the Adirondacks have long captured the sensibility and spirit of others. The deep silent forests, the tumbling streams, the waterfalls, and the still lakes with their soaring mountains beyond provided the inspiration to artists who were quickly lured by the desire to transfer the region's untamed quality to the canvas. On the canvas, the human figure became almost lost to the panoramas of mountains, woods and water spread with brush and pen over the page. Evocative because of its unknown silent and sublime mystery, its wildness and romance, the landscape looms ever larger. To artists such as Thomas Cole and Asher B. Durant, arriving at Schroon Lake in 1837, the rock strewn overgrown islands floating on glass-like lakes, the craggy weather-beaten pines, the moss-shrouded bogs, became their subject matter. The lithographers stone and the engravers plate allowed artists like John W. Hill and Cromwell Ingham to send the message of the Adirondacks' wildness and beauty to press—through popular magazines, newspapers and histories of the region.



The cry of the loon on St. Regis Lake



Mysterious Adirondack qualities on Swan Lake



Searching for a Unified Image . . .

So today, with physical dimensions and mysterious qualities in mind, what exactly is the unified image of the Adirondacks that emerges? Picture postcards, glossy public relations' flyers, ads for resort vacations, Olympic attractions, fishing and skiing promotions, I LOVE NY brochures, seem to transfer yet another image of a place that isn't really that much different from other tourist meccas offering mountains, motels and recreational events. And what of the settlement areas—the people who live in the Adirondacks—the true heirs to the beauty, the history and the hardships of life in a wilderness area which has seen periods of tremendous exploitation and transition? Close your eyes and imagine a typical Adirondack hamlet—*not* a quaint Vermont town or a Maine fishing village. And how would one characterize a native Adirondacker? Not a Yankee, not what a mid-westerer would call a "New Yorker". Perhaps the Adirondacks lacks today that unified image captured by the artist and writer of the last century. Capturing that image in a contemporary context where romance is woven with reality, is what this publication attempts to begin. Alongside the facts, the figures, the mystery, belongs the story of the region's people and its settlement areas—the combination which creates a unified image of what the Adirondacks truly are.



What Is a Hamlet?

... a special place

The Adirondack settlement is a special place in a mysterious natural setting. Its distinct characteristics separate it from hundreds of similar communities throughout the northeast. William White describes the special qualities of the Adirondack settlement this way:

No other state or national park has the unique development that is Adirondack history. Few have thriving villages right next to state woods at the back door, setting a pattern of life unique in America. It is that inseparable connection between the Adirondack woods, open on all sides, and the Adirondack people that makes the area what it is.

This inseparable connection between man and nature bestows upon the Adirondack settlements a unique sense of place. One cannot imagine an Adirondack hamlet without thinking of its natural setting. In addition to nature, those who live in the Adirondack settlements are also special. In his book, *The Ancient Adirondacks*, Lincoln Barnett observed that "no special cultural ties, no unique language or accent, no historical traditions unite the people of the towns and hamlets within the Park. But they do share a fierce independence, a love of the woods, and a spirit of isolationism." Describing the quality of an Adirondack hamlet and its inhabitants is easier than defining what the term means.

The Term "Hamlet"

The confusion of terms was the first obstacle to overcome in this study. In the Adirondacks, "village", "hamlet", "town", "settlement", and "community" all seem to mean different things to different people. "Hamlet" means one thing in planning terminology, "village" is understood to be an incorporated entity, and "town" is taken to mean a township rather than a settlement. It was decided to eliminate such distinctions. As a result, the definition of a settlement became a group of 40 or more structures with at least one commercial facility in a prescribed area.

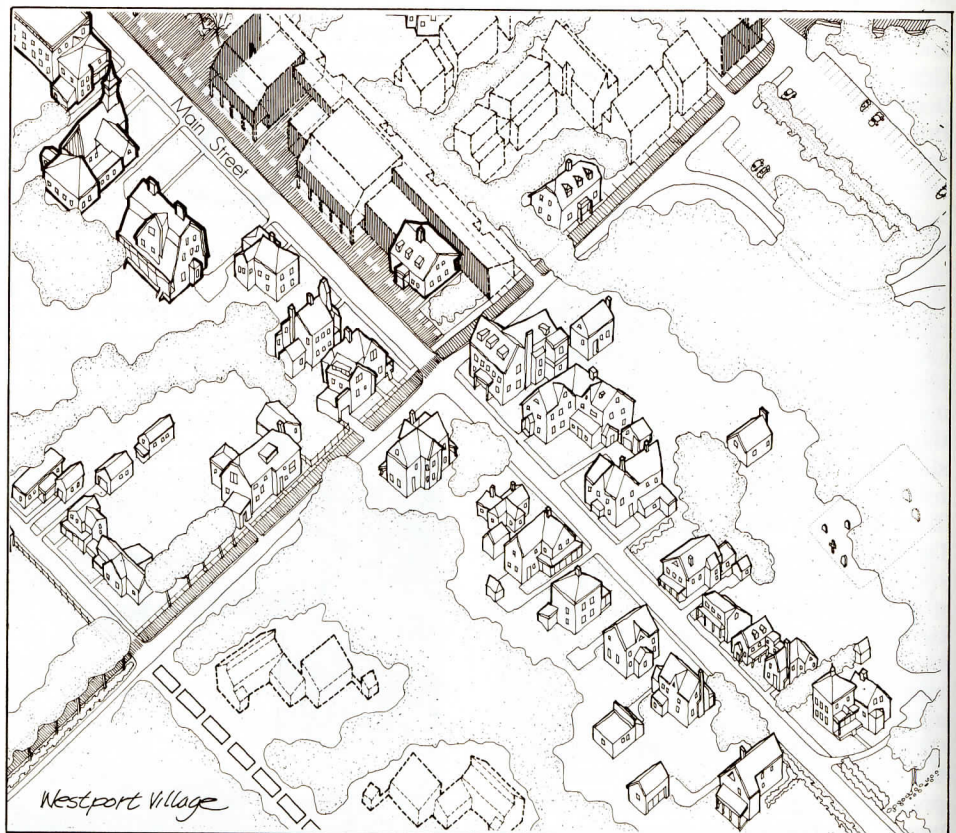
Any settlement, whether large or small, meeting this criteria was included in the project. Therefore, the terms villages, hamlets, towns and communities have been used interchangeably throughout this report. Even the simple definition above proved sometimes difficult to interpret. The boundaries of many Adirondack settlements are dispersed and indefinite making the physical limits difficult to measure. In spite of such difficulties with definition, the image and characteristics of a "typical Adirondack hamlet" began to emerge.

The Typical Hamlet

What would be the essence of the typical Adirondack hamlet if one could be identified? It would be small in population and number of structures, with the residents being predominantly permanent rather than seasonal. The village core would consist of

three or four major structures including a general merchandise store, post office and volunteer fire station. Most hamlets have a very close relationship to water, whether it be a spacious lakeshore setting or a noisy river rushing through the center of the village. Settlements are often found in a valley corridor and the plan of the village is generally informal (unlike the villages of Vermont organized around the central green) being almost "frontier-like" in character. The outstanding quality of the Adirondack hamlet remains ever present—its close tie to nature and the intermingling of human activity and natural resources.

In order to truly understand the uniqueness of an Adirondack hamlet, it was necessary to delve into the historic evolution of settlement patterns in the Adirondack Park as a whole. This historical summary is the theme of the following chapter, *The Hamlets in Time*.



Chapter 2

The Hamlets In Time

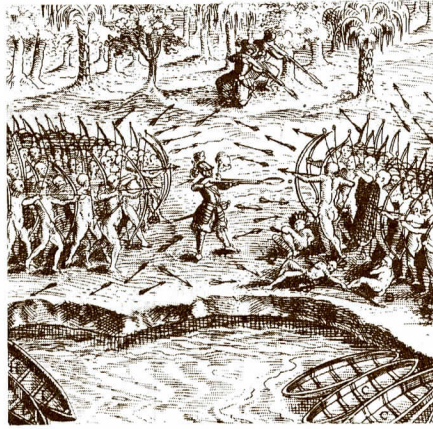
The story of the birth and evolution of Adirondack hamlets is a fascinating chronicle of unusual events and the boom and bust cycle of the frontier carried forward to the present. Unique to the settlements of this region is the large number of hamlets which have experienced major periods of growth and decline in their short histories. From small pioneer settlements, to stagecoach stops, bustling mining and mill towns and resort enclaves of the wealthy, no Adirondack community has remained untouched. While settlements were experiencing these transformations, forces outside of the Adirondacks were also affecting their growth and evolution. These forces included wealthy investors, state government officials, and unscrupulous land speculators all of whom figured in the histories of Adirondack settlements. Realizing the influence of these forces which shaped settlements in the past will lead to a better understanding of the Adirondack settlements today.

Early Settlement

The early development of the Adirondack region, described as the "Great Northern Wilderness," was markedly late compared to the rest of the Northeast. This late settlement was due to both a general ignorance of the region and the formidable barrier the mountains and forests presented to the first settlers. For many years following the arrival of the early French explorers, the only people in the region were trappers and hunters seeking game. In fact, as late as 1830 much of the interior of the present-day Adirondack Park remained largely unknown.

Military Communities

The first permanent settlements in the Adirondacks were military communities established because of the area's strategic position between Canada and the eastern coastal settlements. The years of conflict between the French and British and later the British and the American colonists generated the need for military forts to defend transportation corridors between Canada and the American colonies. For example, the transportation routes on Lake Champlain and Lake George led to settle-



Samuel D. Champlain's early military encounter

ments at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Similarly, by the time of the Revolution William Gilliland had planted the settlements of Willsboro on the Boquet River. He hoped to establish a large, inland empire and constructed several major buildings in a growing community of settlers. The increasing traffic on the lakes also brought the appearance of early ports-of-call such as Bessboro (later Westport), Essex, and Sabbath Day Point. These earliest settlements were all destroyed during the last years of the Revolutionary War by various armies.

New York Fever

Many veterans of the colonial armies received government land grants as payment for their wartime service. The grants included most of the land along the western shores of Lake Champlain where, as soldiers, many had earlier seen tall stands of virgin timber, fertile land and abundant fish and game. This influx of New England settlers became known as the "New York Fever Rush" of 1783. Hundreds of pioneers, especially from Vermont, deserted worn-out farms and moved west to the much talked-about lands and riches of the Adirondacks. They settled the shores of Lake Champlain, spreading west on the lowlands north of the Adirondacks, and turning south to the flatlands of the Saint Lawrence country. Vermonters using oxen-pulled sleds crossed the frozen lake and became the first citizens of many farming communities in the Lake Champlain Valley.

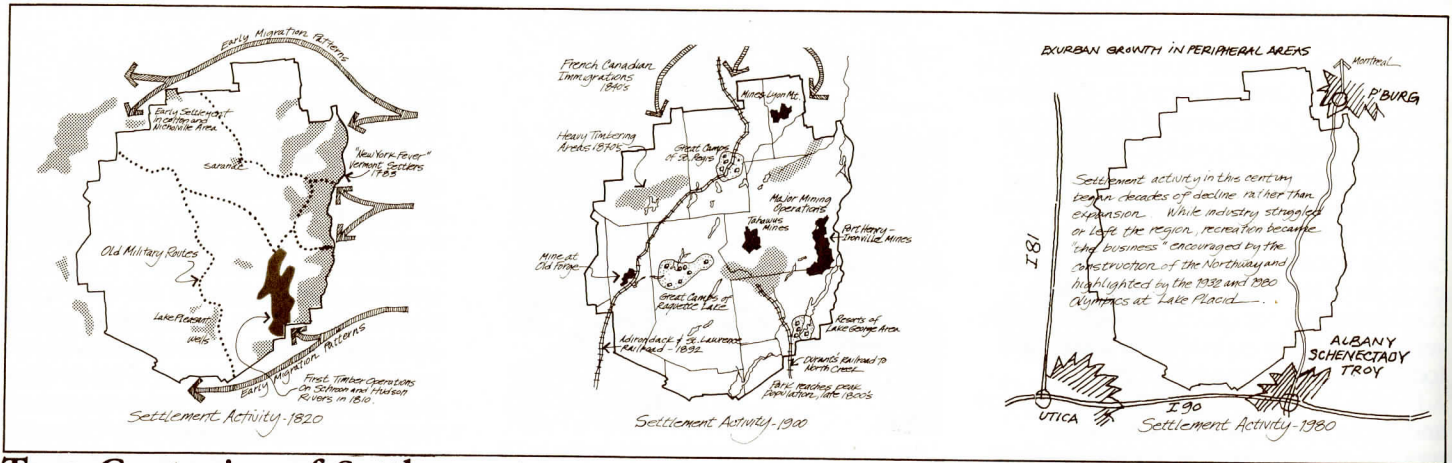
The Cornucopia Never Fills

Arriving full of hope, many of the early pioneers soon experienced bitter disappointment. Much of the land was even rockier than in New England and the short growing season of the Adirondack region made farming a risky undertaking. Farms that did remain and prosper were generally those which raised horses and hay crops.



Saranac Lake in 1880

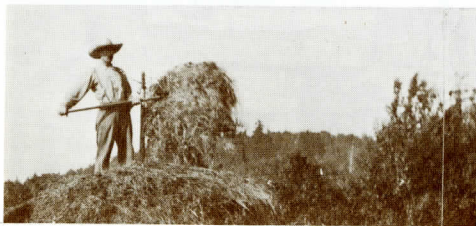
"It was the lure of the wilderness that brought the first white settlers to the mountains' vastness." (Aber and King, Tales from an Adirondack County)



Two Centuries of Settlement

The horse and horse-drawn vehicle were for many decades the only source of freight-hauling and transportation in the area. Many farms at the end of the 19th Century evolved into small truck farms with the coming of the large hotels and their thousands of guests needing to be fed. Farming, however, never became the economic backbone of the region as the first pioneers had envisioned.

Early settlements continued to remain on the edge of the Adirondacks occupying the flatter lands and avoiding the more rugged interior areas. By 1815 a sprinkling of small villages, including Elizabethtown, Keeseville, Keene Valley and Jay, had appeared in the eastern hill country. To the west and north Boonville, Canton, Gouverneur and Malone emerged as fast growing communities. Five years later isolated settlers were scattered throughout the Adirondack interior, but the population grew very slowly. A visitor to Long Lake in 1841 found only eight or nine families carving out homesteads in the wilderness.



Farming at Morebouse

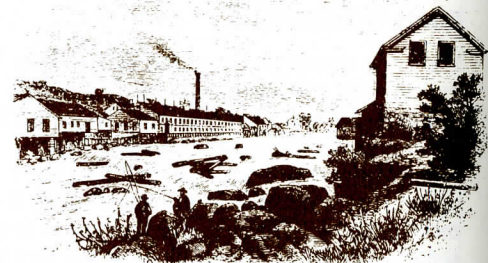
Eyes to the West

The influx of pioneer farm families to the Adirondacks saw a dramatic decrease after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. This newly created water highway from New England to the fertile farmlands of the Upper Midwest turned the eyes of land hungry settlers from the Adirondacks to destinations farther west. The dwindling number of pioneers in the Adirondacks gave greater freedom to a growing lumbering industry in the region by reducing the competition for land.

The Quest for Resources: Lumbering

By the first decades of the 19th Century astute businessmen were beginning to recognize the vast potential offered by the great forests of the Adirondacks. These men soon transformed lumbering from a few early saw mills constructed along rushing streams into the first boom industry of the Adirondack region. Lumbering had begun on the Lower Raquette River in 1810 and on the Schroon River in 1813, but the problem of transporting logs to the mills was a major obstacle. This was overcome with the practice of floating branded logs down river with spring flooding. Begun in 1813, this initiated the Adirondack lumbering boom. As early milltowns sprang up at Glens Falls,

Keeseville, and Ticonderoga, lumbering concerns continued to move into the interior of the Adirondacks.



Lumbering in Warrensburg

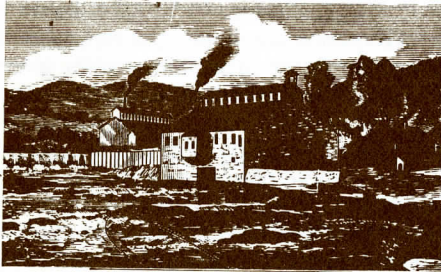
Settlers from the North

The rapidly growing lumber industry brought the second major wave of immigration to the Adirondack region. Great numbers of French Canadians and Irish immigrants came south in the 1830's and 40's seeking jobs in the lumber camps. Tupper Lake and Saranac Lake emerged out of the wilderness in response to loggers and their families in need of communities. In 1850 New York surpassed Maine as the leading lumber state in the nation. As lumbering techniques and transportation improved, the trees were felled with greater speed and efficiency. By 1885 at least two-

"Much of Adirondack history is keyed to the ups and downs, supplies and demands . . . from 'outside' as natives say." (Keller, Adirondack Wilderness)

thirds of the entire Adirondack forest had been logged at least once. The most productive years were still ahead. In the peak year of 1905, 750 million board feet of saw-timber and pulpwood were harvested from Adirondack forests. Most settlements, unfortunately, experienced a boom-bust cycle with the coming and going of the lumbering industry. Early prosperity gave way to later decline and economic recession as companies logged their way through the woodlands.

Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum



Early mills at Keeseville

Mining

The mining of iron ore quickly followed on the heels of lumbering as a second major industry in the Adirondacks. Iron ore had been discovered early in the area and some mining along the shores of Lake Champlain was being carried out at the time of the Revolutionary War. Early forges and furnaces were a common sight in many of the small settlements. Communities such as Old Forge and Lake Placid originated from such humble industrial beginnings. The news of vast ore deposits in the Adirondacks wetted the appetites of eastern investors and many engaged survey teams to explore the area. By the end of the 19th Century over two hundred iron mines and forges had been worked in the Adirondacks, although few were still operating at that date.

The mining town of Lyon Mountain

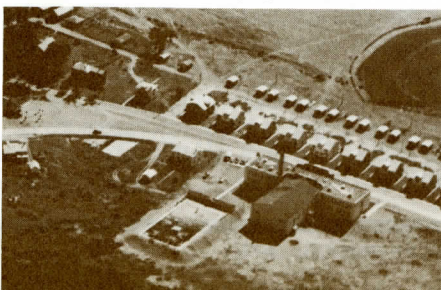


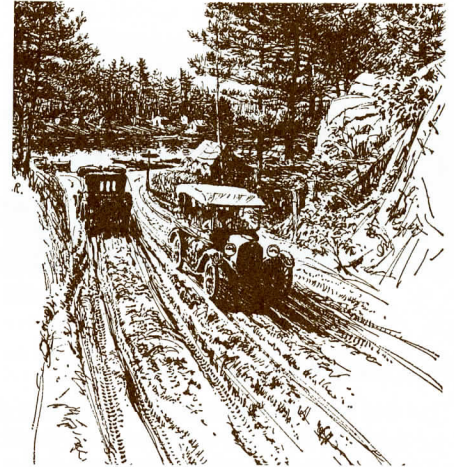
Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum

The Tale of Adirondac

The story of the McIntyre Iron Works along the headwaters of the Hudson in the central Adirondacks is a tale of a community which lived and died with the fortunes of the mining industry. With the discovery of major ore deposits in this area in 1826, Archibald McIntyre and Duncan Martin from New York City quickly bought up 24,000 acres of surrounding land and established a major mine and forge operation. The small village of Adirondac soon grew up around this industrial center. But the problems of transportation, distance from markets, and lack of water made the operations questionable for many years. Finally in 1857 the operations at the mines and forge shut down making the small community of Adirondac with its church, school, bank, stores and homes an early Adirondack ghost town.

More successful mining operations to the east and north created longer lasting communities. Major iron ore deposits in the Town of Moriah brought about hamlets like Port Henry, Witherbee, and Mineville while other deposits in Clinton County created the hamlet of Lyon Mountain. These communities were representative of a growing phenomenon in the Adirondacks. As they moved into an area to exploit its mineral and timber resources, large mining and lumber concerns constructed their own communities or company towns. Among others, the hamlets of Newton Falls, Piercefield, Mineville, and Lyon Mountain began in this way. Unfortunately this practice created a total dependence of the village and its inhabitants on the company. As a reporter for the Syracuse Herald American observed in 1967:

The Village (Lyon Mountain in the 1950's) was simply an extension of the mine. Republic Steel Corporation owned the houses, the fire department, the water company, and the stores. If a child grew ill, the company doctor was called; if a light bulb burned out in the kitchen, the company supplied a new one.

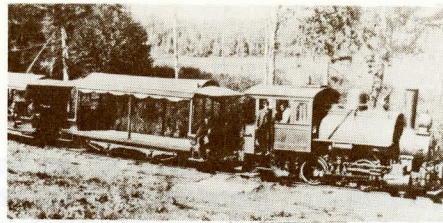


The mud season

With such a limited economic base, these communities have experienced very difficult times in recent years as mills and mines have shut down their operations. Nothing could have been further from the minds of Adirondack settlers of the 1830's and 40's. At that time the growing lumbering and mining operations seemed to present a great industrial future to the region if only the perennial problems of transportation could be solved.

The Impassable Wilderness

Transportation within the Adirondack region has always been a major obstacle to settlements and investments in the area. The problems associated with construction in the rugged terrain and heavy forests have deterred access along everything from one-lane horse paths to railroads and major highways. Early Adirondack travel was both by foot and over a few military roads constructed by the various armies during the war years of the late 18th Century. These early roads were expanded by settlers as they cut paths through the forests in an attempt to join one small community with the next. On the whole, roads remained crude affairs often described as passable enough in winter, impassable in spring and impossible in summer!



Railroad heydays



Road to the high peaks

Resources Bring Roads

The real push to build roads accompanied the demand for good transportation to and from the growing mining and lumber industries. Isolated Adirondack mining operations required dependable transportation to outside markets. Recognizing this fact, iron entrepreneurs played an important role in the building of plank and corduroy roads during this early period.

Land developers also pushed the construction of roadways in order to enhance the value and accessibility of their properties. As stage lines began penetrating the region, many small service hamlets made their appearance along transportation routes. In most cases, an inn or hotel for weary travelers and a livery or blacksmith for care of the animals were among the first buildings in the hamlet. Later the area post office and school were added.

Along the shores of Lake Champlain travel was far simpler. Boats had plied the waters of the lake since the time of the Indian and the ferries connecting New York and Vermont had existed since colonial times. The country's second steamboat, the **Ticonderoga**, began runs up and down the lake in the 1830's. For a short time a flurry of activity along the lake's shore transformed communities such as Port Henry, Essex and Westport into bustling ports-of-call.

Railroads and Steamers

The construction and success of early canals and railroads did not go unnoticed by Adirondack settlers and investors. As the first

steam-powered train in America completed the seventeen-mile journey between Albany and Schenectady in 1831, the demand for railroads and canals through the Adirondack region began to mount. But Adirondack settlers encountered disappointment once again when they realized it would be many years before railroads were constructed in the area. The first came in 1871 when Thomas C. Durant financed a short line between Saratoga and North Creek. Still, it wasn't until 1885 that a line was built into the central Adirondacks. Finally, in 1892 the Adirondack-St. Lawrence Line opened passenger service between New York and Montreal and brought thousands of new tourists to the region.

Along with the railroads came a form of transportation unique to the Adirondacks alone. This was the lake steamer. These boats collected passengers at lakeshore rail stations and transported them to resorts and hotels along the lakes and rivers of the area. The lake steamer remained a colorful part of the Adirondack scene until the early 1920's.

The Gilded Age

What became the greatest investment industry of the Adirondacks began almost unnoticed by early settlers. This was the magnetic draw of the region to sportsmen and vacationers. In 1818 one of the earliest records of this phenomenon reported that a group of Yale men came into the southwest Adirondacks not for wealth, woods, or land, but for a vacation and some fishing. The lure of the Adirondacks as a vacation-land was not without precedent. The Villages of Saratoga Springs and Lake George had already become great summer resorts for

Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum

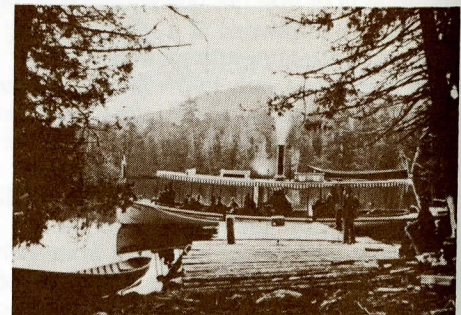


Burdick's gracious camp



An Adirondack tourist hotel

the wealthy classes of the east and south. By 1825 Saratoga Springs had accommodations for a thousand guests and the reputation of being "a mixture of society, politics, gaiety, and sin." Trenton Falls, north of Utica on the West Canada Creek, was on its way to becoming a resort of some renown. Vacationers at these playgrounds for the rich began making excursions into the wilderness. There they would find settlers at isolated lakes and mountaintops who would open their homes for overnight accommodations. Keen investors sensed in this activity another opportunity, and by 1875



Steamer at the docks

the remotest areas of the Adirondacks saw the construction of grand hotels. The few rustic inns and private homes of earlier years gave way to magnificent structures as plush and commodious as any urban establishment. A proliferation of railroads and guidebooks encouraged increasing numbers of tourists to visit Adirondack resorts. As a result, during the years between 1870 and 1914 the Adirondacks were among the most fashionable and popular resort regions of the nation — a time which many historians call the "Gilded Age" of the area's history.

“...the villages and farms are flawless, scaled-down representations, clean and white, disclosing nothing of the troubles within.”
(Bernstein, *The Sticks*)

The Wilderness Cure

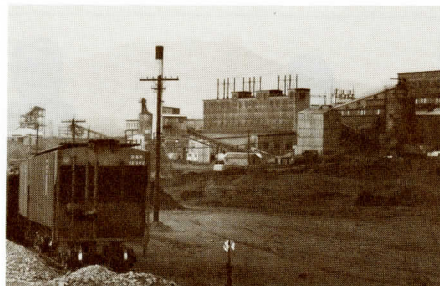
The late 19th and early 20th Century brought the popularity of the Adirondack “wilderness cure.” People suffering from tuberculosis and asthma discovered the curative qualities of fresh mountain air and sunshine. Soon they were visiting Adirondack resort hamlets for rest and recuperation. Foremost among these resorts was Saranac Lake where under the direction and work of Dr. Edward Trudeau research institutions to combat tuberculosis were established. Saranac Lake’s world famous health industry was at its peak in 1922 when more than sixteen hundred new patients came to the village.

The Modern Era: Growth of Tourism

During the last fifty years a period of great change has occurred in the villages of the Adirondacks. Nothing has been more instrumental in this change than the automobile.

With the advent of automobile travel in the 1920’s, the entire way of life in the Adirondack region changed. Farming activity decreased as goods became easily transported into the area from the outside. This led to a diminished level of self-sufficiency in the hamlets and villages. As changes occurred regionally, the patterns of travel and tourism of the American family changed nationally. Suddenly not just the wealthy, but thousands of middle class Americans could vacation in the Adirondacks. Auto campgrounds, tourist cabins, inns, and motels began dotting the Adirondack landscape. The more wealthy easterners, tired of the Adirondacks, abandoned the once great resort playgrounds and shifted their summer vacationing to Long Island and Cape Cod. Summer camps for children became a growing industry during this period.

An increased interest in winter sports led to the 1932 Winter Olympics held at Lake Placid. Events that year included nordic ski racing and jumping, speed skating, curling, and dogsledding. This scene was repeated at Lake Placid in 1980 with a much larger field of participants and events.



The mines at Tabawus

The Economy Struggles

During the 1920’s the mining and lumbering industries continued to remain in the doldrums. Cheaper lumber and ore in the west made the Adirondack sources less and less economical to market, a problem compounded by the devastating economic depression of the 1930’s. Although some of these mines and mills enjoyed a spurt of renewed activity during World War II, prosperity did not remain for long. By the late 1970’s the only active mine in the entire Adirondack region was the titanium works operated by NL Industries at its Tahawus location. While lumbering operations are still present in the region, they too are at a less productive scale than fifty years ago.

What has become the “business” and the major economic base in the Adirondacks is the many-faceted industry called tourism. Skiing resorts, sailing regattas on Lake Champlain, and some of the earliest theme parks in the nation are among the attractions which have helped tourism evolve into a multi-million dollar business. In addition, the completion of the New York Northway to Montreal in the late 1960’s continued to open up the region to millions of travelers. The resulting dependence on tourism has been both a blessing and a curse for many Adirondack communities.



The Winter Olympics in Lake Placid



The prison at Dannemora

Not only does this type of business tend to be very seasonal, but as one businessman lamented, it is also very unpredictable. “The entire economy of the business and thus of the region can be critically hurt by, say, a long January thaw, a rainy Fourth of July, or a snowless Christmas.” (Bernstein)

The Last Decade

New York State has been a major institutional employer in the Adirondacks, including the tuberculosis hospital at Ray Brook, the correctional facility at Dannemora, starting in 1845, and more recently, the conversion of the Veterans Administration hospital in Tupper Lake, now the Sunmount Developmental Disability Service Office. The state Department of Corrections is considering additional development at Lyon Mountain. The State Police, Department of Health, Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Adirondack Park Agency all have major office and service facilities in the region. While state development has historically raised issues of local and regional concern, notably the establishment of additional correctional facilities, the State investment represents an important year-round employment factor.

The establishment of the Adirondack Park Agency in 1973 as a planning and regulatory agency presiding over new developments in the Adirondack Park is regarded as either a boon or problem to the region, depending with whom one talks. Regardless, the environmental regulations and directions for development dictated by the Agency will have an important influence on the evolution of Adirondack hamlets in the years to come.

In conclusion, an historic sketch of settlement in the Adirondacks provides a framework for understanding the region more fully. It is, however, only the first step in a more complete analysis of the settlements of the Adirondacks. In the following pages an analysis of the 135 Adirondack hamlets as they exist today takes place.

Chapter 3

The Hamlets Are Analyzed



Issues workshops: Designing the study

The first step in analyzing the hamlets was to develop a sound, comprehensive data base. Information was needed for each hamlet that included both quantitative and qualitative characteristics. Data derived from existing sources, such as the U.S. census reports, are referenced to civil divisions — primarily townships or counties defined by political rather than geographic boundaries. Information coded in this manner was of little help in analyzing the hamlets as physical places. Therefore, it was necessary to devise an independent data base for the project from inventory questionnaires and extensive field work.

The process of analyzing a total group of 135 hamlets located in as vast a geographic area as the Adirondacks proved to be a challenge. It was necessary that the process be thorough and exact enough to enable the study team to become familiar with each hamlet and its individual problems and opportunities, in spite of the limitation of time placed on the project. A six-part process involving the consultant team, the four participating county planning directors, and a representative of the APA staff took place. These six parts were:

- Part 1: Inventory Questionnaire**
- Part 2: Hamlet Site Visits**
- Part 3: Issues Workshops**
- Part 4: Hamlet Research**
- Part 5: Matrix Compilation**
- Part 6: Data Selection and Grouping**

Part 1: Inventory Questionnaire

— A three-page inventory questionnaire was distributed to the planning directors with the request that it be completed for each Adirondack hamlet within their county. The questionnaire was designed to inventory existing information about the hamlets through the county planners and was not intended to survey attitudes or opinions of people living in or using the Park. Researchers in the Department of Rural Sociology at Cornell University assisted the team in the inventory format which addressed the following information areas: 1) Demographic criteria: figures concerning year-round and seasonal population, ages of population, income levels, and education levels; 2) Regional location characteristics: ownership patterns of surrounding lands, transportation access; 3) Economic base data and economic potential: the hamlet's service area, seasonal retail activity, public facilities, the contribution of tourism; 4) Built environmental qualities: historic significance, visual appearance of buildings (including occupancy and condition), traffic problems; and 5) Social organization, planning and development: the presence of or plan for revitalization activities in the hamlet. These information areas were covered in a total of 34 questions and became the core data source for each community.

Part 2: Hamlet Site Visits — Each of the 135 individual settlements in the Adirondack Park was visited by the study team. Upon arrival at each hamlet, the team conducted a brief visual analysis. Utilizing a form developed for recording the physical qualities of the hamlet, the team took note of: the hamlet's setting, the built-in design assets of the hamlet, the visible economic activity in the hamlet, and the hamlet's proximity to other communities in the Park. In addition, the team surveyed other aspects of the hamlet's built environment noting the presence of neighborhoods, districts and village core, and the condition and character of buildings, signs, and monuments. Finally, an objective observation of the hamlet's unique character or personality as perceived by a visitor was noted.

With these written notes the team also used pictorial imagery to conduct the analysis. In each hamlet a cognitive map was drawn, diagramming its physical layout. Photographic images of the settlement were taken with an eye on recording the essence of the place and for reference in identifying the communities. Photographs were developed on contact sheets to make them more accessible.

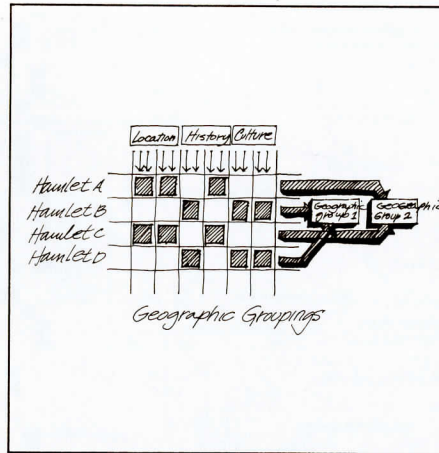
Part 3: Issues Workshops — Biweekly issues workshops were conducted with the client group by the consultant

"The first step in analyzing the hamlets was to develop a sound, comprehensive data base."

throughout the duration of the project. At these sessions the conceptual direction of the study was established and the interpretation of information discussed. The interactive nature of the sessions allowed for continuous rethinking of the questions and issues generated by the analysis.

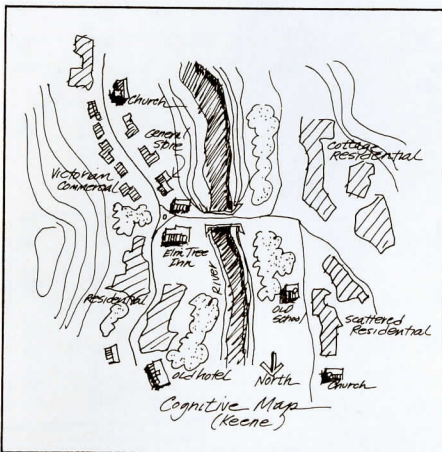
Part 4: Hamlet Research —

Research material was added to the questionnaire and site visitations outlining the historical and cultural backgrounds of the Adirondack hamlets. Writers Alfred Donaldson, William White, and Frank Graham, Jr. were among the primary and secondary sources utilized to achieve a greater knowledge and appreciation of Adirondack Park settlement areas.



assigned value ratings to certain selected variables and gave each hamlet a rating based on the sum of individual ratings. This approach was utilized to determine the physical and visual environment rating of each hamlet. Rather than numerical values, variables were given qualitative ratings such as average, below average, or above average.

The three approaches to data correlation enabled the study team to identify a hamlet's geography, function, and form and led to three major hamlet groupings: **Geographic Groupings**, **Function Groupings**, and **Physical Types**. These three hamlet groups are described in detail in the following chapter.



Typical cognitive map used in analyzing a hamlet

Part 5: Matrix Compilation —

Upon completion of the questionnaires and site visits, the resulting information was gathered together and plotted onto a large graphic matrix. This matrix listed across its top the 52 areas of information which had been collated for each hamlet. The 135 hamlets were listed down the left side.

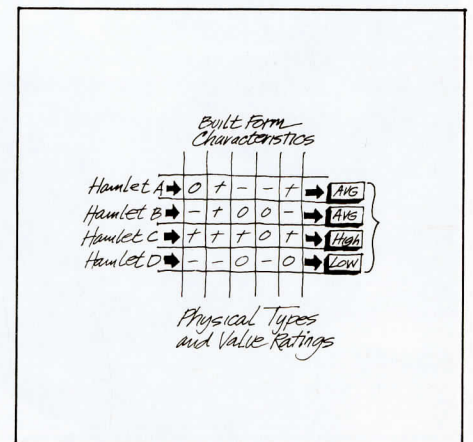
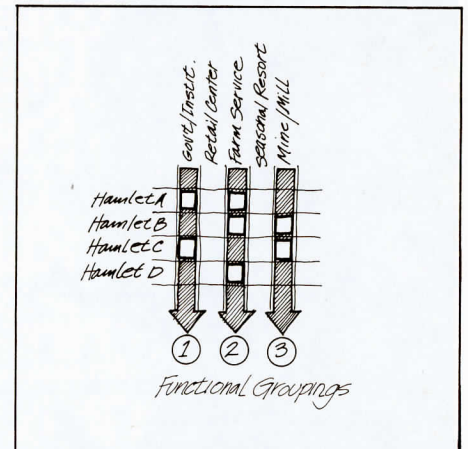
Part 6: Data Selection and Grouping —

Once the information was compiled on the matrix, it was possible to define comprehensive groupings of hamlets within the Adirondack Park. As previously stated, the primary objective of the study was to identify both the unique problems of individual hamlets and the combined problems of groups of hamlets. Therefore, the process of cross-referencing data on the matrix became essential to formulating groups.

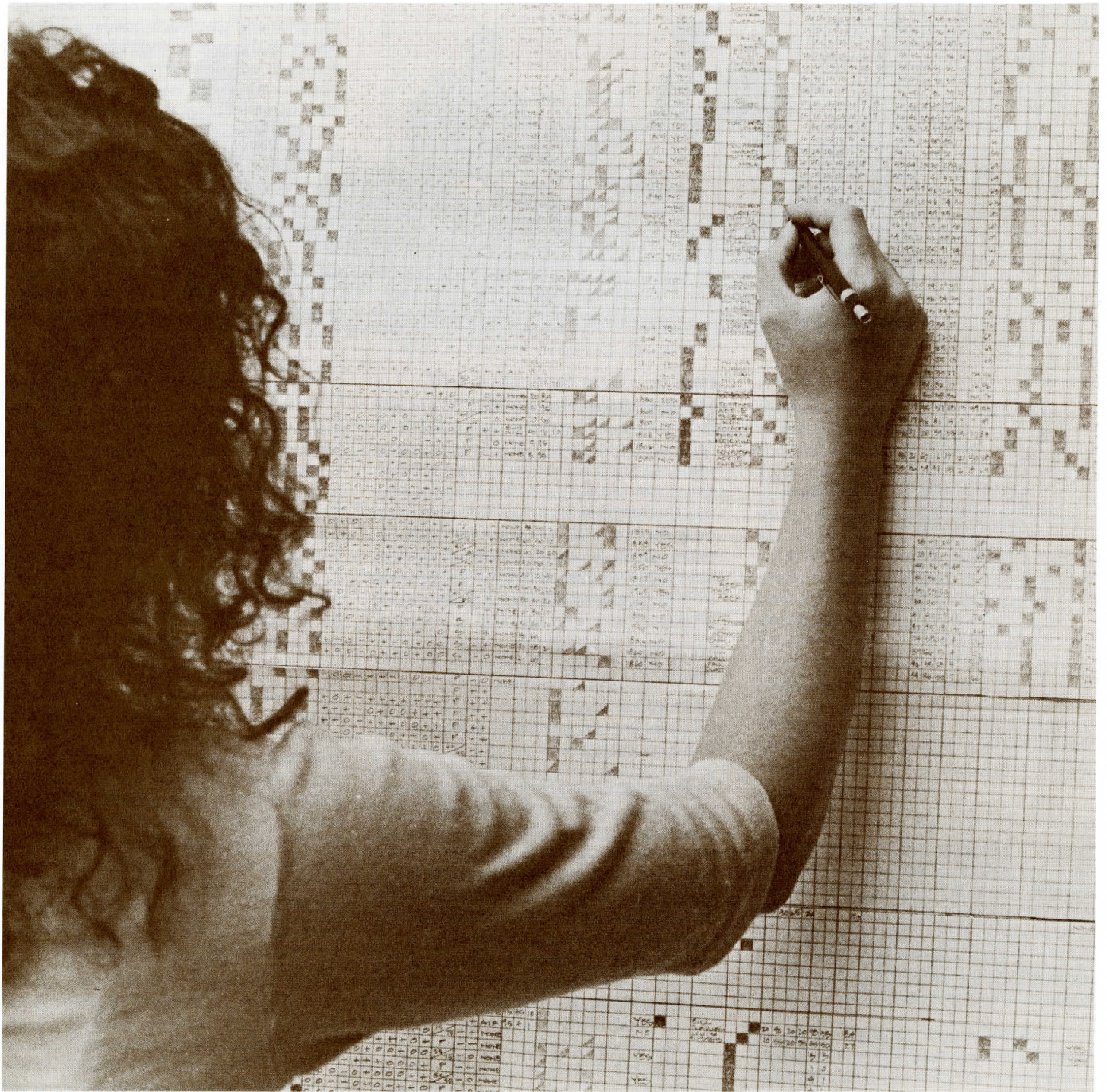
Three approaches were used to correlate data on the matrix. These were:

- Profile selections
- Groupings by key single variables
- Value ratings

Profile selections clustered variables horizontally on the matrix and grouped hamlets according to similarities. This cross tabulation method is how the geographic groupings were largely determined. The second approach selected **key single variables** on the matrix and moved vertically down the column of a chosen variable to discern which hamlets fell within a given category. This was how the functional groupings were derived. The third approach



"The matrix as a tool for analyzing the hamlets."



"The process of analyzing 135 hamlets proved to be a challenge."



The Hamlets Are Grouped

The previously discussed analysis generated three kinds of hamlet groupings: geographic, functional and physical. The **geographic groupings** are based on a hamlet's location in the Park, its setting and cultural-historic characteristics. All 135 hamlets in the Park have been grouped geographically and nineteen separate groups are presented. The **functional groupings** beginning on page 37 were derived from a close look at the economic purpose of a particular settlement and its regional or local service attributes. Hamlets of the participating counties were organized into nine functional groups. **Physical types**, the last section in this chapter beginning on page

40, present the built form of the settlements of the participating counties, their plan configuration, density and physical structure as well as visual quality, landscape type and infrastructure (water and sewer systems).

Geographic Groups

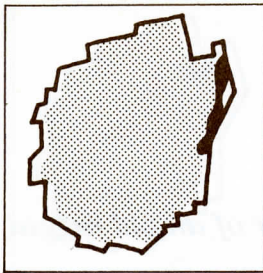
The nineteen geographic groupings highlighted on the following pages were differentiated by the shared characteristics of physical location and historic/cultural development. Hamlets sharing a physical location such as a farm setting, wooded lakes region, or lake edge tended to group together. The character of a landscape in a

particular location commonly revealed unique geographic patterns. Hamlets sharing cultural or historical development characteristics with one another comprised the second means of geographic grouping. In this case, communities settled at a similar time and by large immigrations of specific ethnic populations became aggregated. A shared history in types and periods of industrial development such as mining, lumbering, and resort/tourism led to other groupings. Often, historical events or the presence of key individuals became the basis for the formation of a hamlet grouping.

Having aligned the 135 hamlets with one another according to the above characteristics, 19 major geographic groupings emerged allowing one to look at the region's settlements in a more understandable way. First, each geographic group has a name, such as "Hamlets of the High Peaks," which immediately conjures up a visual image or association with the place. Second, thinking of themselves as 19 cohesive groups increases the capacity of the hamlets to help both themselves and one another in, for example, requests for technical assistance, or the pursuit and marketing of economic development options.



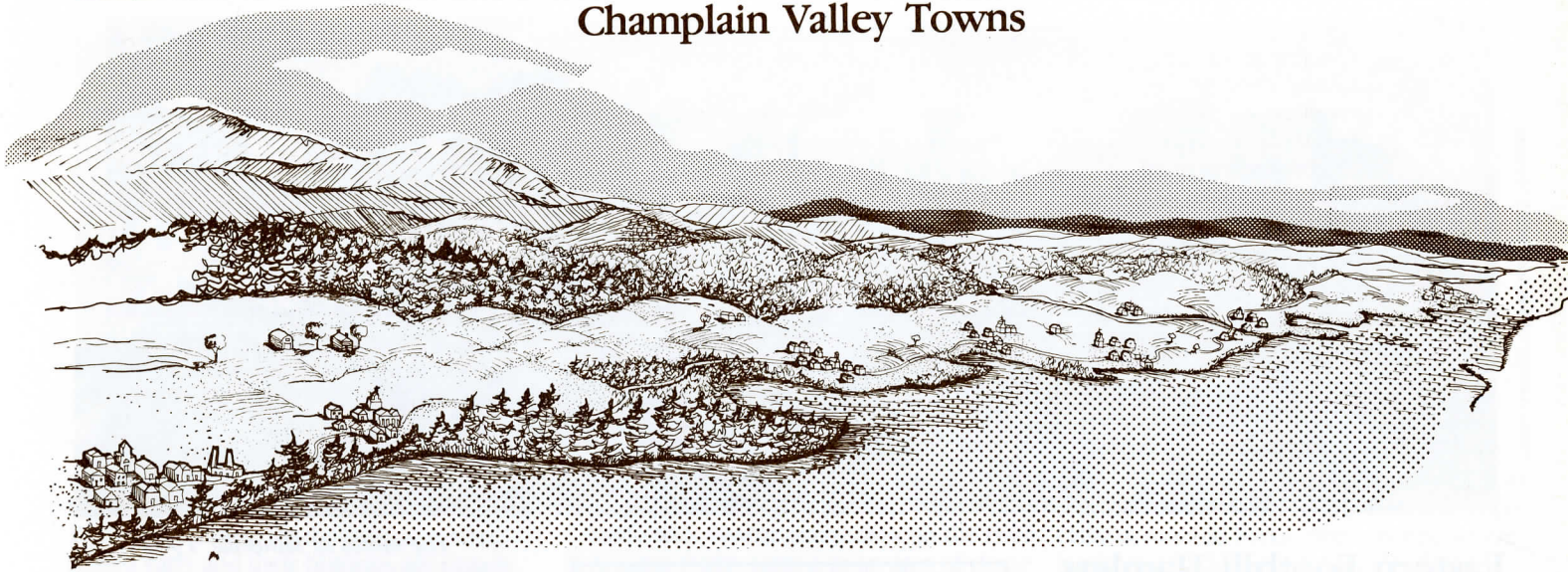
1. Champlain Valley Towns
2. Eastern Foothill Hamlets
3. Ausable River Communities
4. Saranac River Towns
5. Hamlets of the High Peaks
6. Tri-Lakes Regional Centers
7. St. Regis Woodland-Hamlets
8. Western Forest Hamlets
9. Northern Foothill Communities
10. St. Lawrence Lowland Communities
11. Adirondack Wilderness Outposts
12. Southwestern Resort Communities
13. Great Sacandaga Lake Settlements
14. Piseco/Lake Pleasant Villages
15. Sacandaga River Towns
16. Hudson Plateau Hamlets
17. Glens Falls Satellite Communities
18. Schroon River Settlements
19. Lake George Communities



Crown Point
Essex
Port Henry
Port Kent
Ticonderoga
Wadhams
Westport
Whallonsburg
Willsboro

"The geographic groupings highlighted shared characteristics of regional setting and historic/cultural development."

Champlain Valley Towns



The Walker barn in Essex

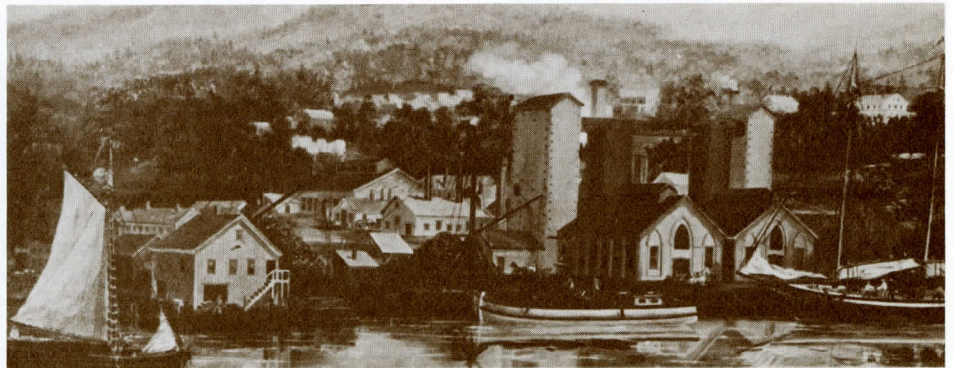
The Champlain Valley Towns, some of the earliest settled hamlets in the Adirondack region, also remain some of the most historic in the area. Land hungry Vermonters arriving on these shores quickly settled the rolling country adjacent to Lake Champlain, fully appreciating the attractive charm and economic opportunities the setting offered. While some of these hamlets evolved as lakeside ports serving ships and lake commerce, others became sleepy farm hamlets. If agriculture can claim success in any region of the Adirondack country, it would have to be here in the prosperous farmlands encircling the small communities of Westport, Wadhams and Whallonsburg. Though no longer active shipping ports,

historic Essex and Westport contain the unique charm of early 19th Century villages frozen in time. In these hamlets, beautifully restored buildings, active main streets lined with antique and craft shops, and residential areas evoking times gone by, offer an exciting day of fun and exploration to both residents and visitors. Historic military installations and battle sites at Ticonderoga and Crown Point also draw many tourists. Ticonderoga was the first great lumbering settlement in this area with scores of mill buildings lining the banks of the LaChute River.

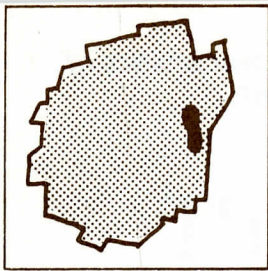
But this is not simply an area of interest to the history buff. The rushing Boquet River, which meanders through the quiet country-

side and then dashes over the old dam and fishladder at Willsboro, entices fishermen and canoeists year round. Beautiful Lake Champlain with its shining waters spreading east to the shores of Vermont is also an active travel and play area for seasonal visitors.

The magnificent hilltop locations of Port Henry and Port Kent afford panoramic views of the hundreds of pleasure craft and ferries which regularly ply the lake's water routes. Located on the shores of Lake Champlain with the high peaks of the Adirondack range rising in the west, the Champlain Valley Towns have one of the most unique, attractive settings in all of New York State.



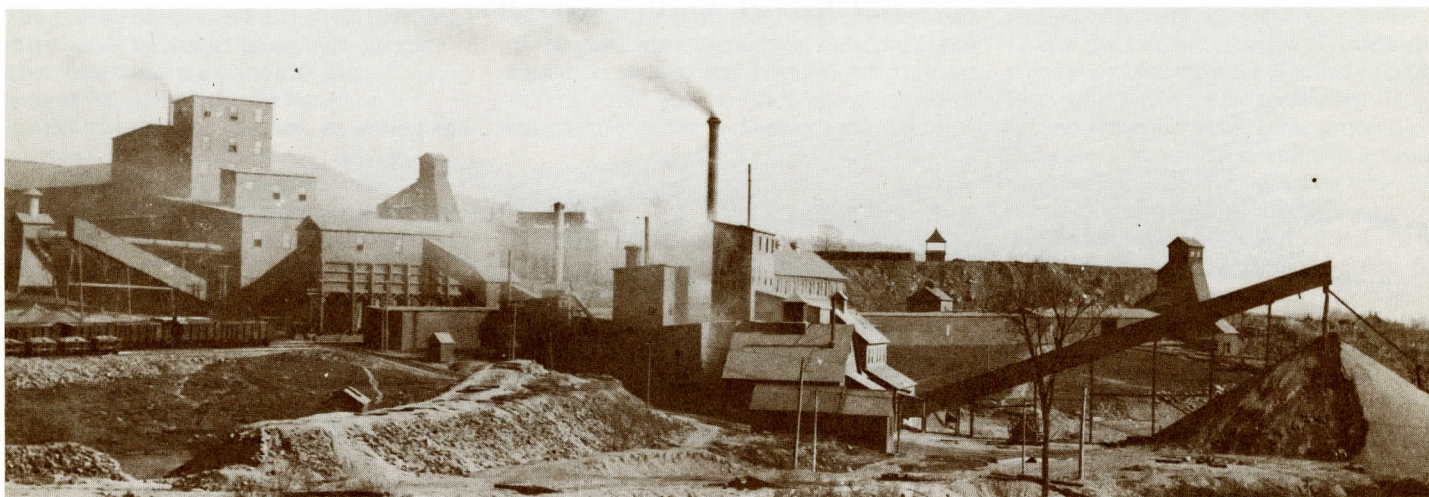
Loading docks at Port Henry in the mid 1880's



Crown Point Center
 Elizabethtown
 Ironville
 Lewis
 Mineville/Witherbee
 Moriah Center
 Moriah Corners

"The hamlets have the charm and character of an old rugged miner quietly observing the passing time."

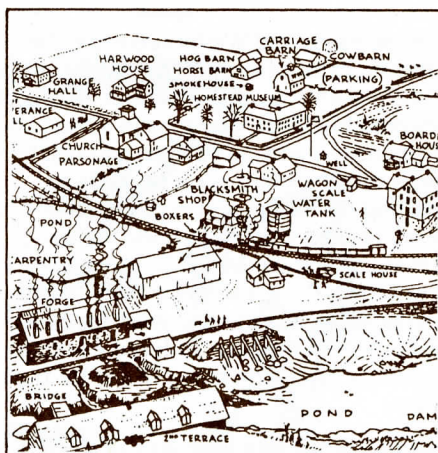
Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum



The mines at Mineville, 1908

Eastern Foothill Hamlets

The Eastern Foothill Hamlets, although a quiet and subdued group of villages today, were once the heart of a major industrial empire. It was in this region that the early discovery and subsequent mining of rich deposits of iron ore brought the settlement and growth of these small hamlets. This background has given the foothill communities a much different character from those which they overlook in the Champlain Valley below. They are also unlike the typical Adirondack hamlet one might imagine. Neither in the dense woods or along the quiet shores of mountain lakes, they have the charm and character of an old miner, rugged and crippled after a life of hard labor, now quietly observing the passing of time. Yet the group is quite varied in visual appearances. Moriah Corners is a tiny, rustic hamlet with lovely old homes, aging churches, and the ever present general store at the village crossroads. This picturesque hamlet would be typical of many throughout the Adirondack region were it not for the tailings visible several miles away. North through Moriah

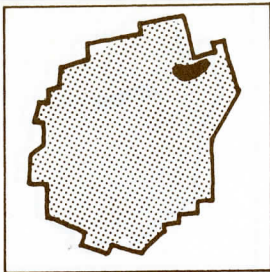


Ironville: A restored museum village

Center to Mineville and Witherbee one becomes more aware of the important role that mineral wealth has played in the life of these communities. Once bustling stores and shops now stare vacantly at passersby while the deserted structures of mining operations loom in the nearby landscape. A scene of almost eerie starkness greets the visitor in Witherbee where row upon row of identical workers' houses cling to the steep mountainside while the familiar church steeple holds court on a prominent knoll.

The villages are strangely quiet now, but reminders of a productive and prosperous past are everywhere in evidence to the casual observer. The tiny hamlet of Ironville is an example of this evolutionary process gone full circle. Once a major ore producing community in the 19th Century, its industrial demise brought it to the brink of extinction. Now a museum village owned and operated by the Penfield Foundation, the community of restored wooden structures allows the visitor a chance to understand what an early Adirondack mining hamlet would have been like.

At the northern edge of the foothills and somewhat different in character are the old communities of Elizabethtown and Lewis. Laid out and named by early settler William Gilliland, Elizabethtown has been the Essex County seat since it was moved to Pleasant Valley from Essex hamlet sometime after 1799. The community, located near the headwaters of the Boquet River, becomes the gateway to the high peaks of the Adirondacks on the northern and western horizons.



Ausable Forks
Clintonville
Keeseville

"The river brought mills, factories, and early prosperity."

Ausable River Communities

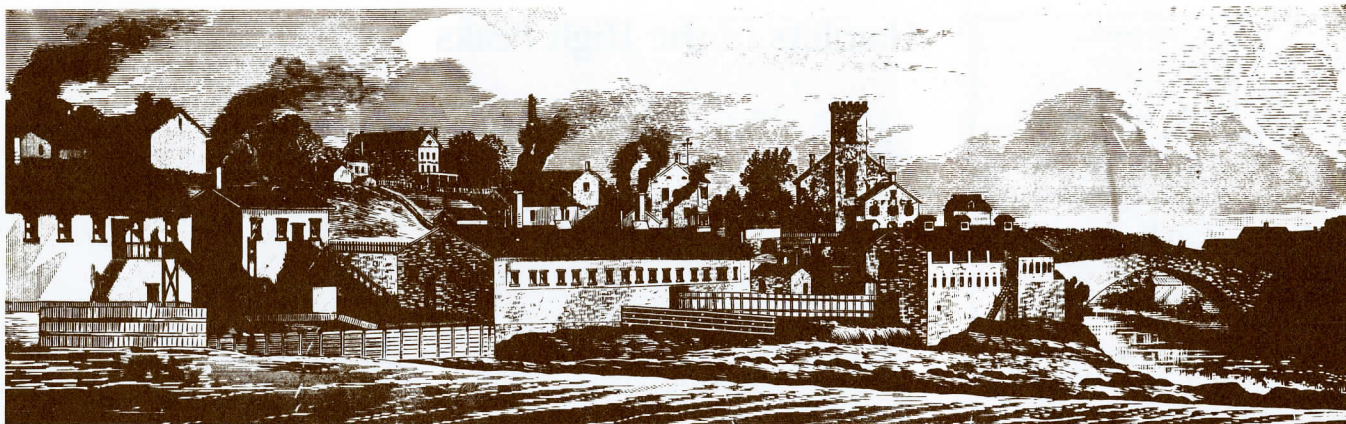


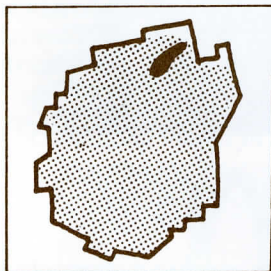
Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum

The Ausable River was one of the earliest explored waterways of the Adirondack region identified with its source on maps of 1785. The hamlets on the river also were settled early and their histories are closely tied to the river they each straddle. Water meant power to drive mills and factories in these early communities and this fast-moving water source made Keeseville and Ausable Forks early industrial centers.

Forges, a woolen factory, flour mills, a plaster mill, and several foundries were located in Keeseville in the mid 19th Century with similar enterprises up the river at Ausable Forks. Settled in an area of dense forests, Ausable Forks also experienced early prosperity with the lumbering industry. Clintonville was laid out with the anticipation of hosting a major industrial center which never materialized and the settlement failed to match the bustling activity of its neigh-

bors. The river which brought early prosperity to these communities also had its unfriendly side. Major spring flooding, especially at Ausable Forks, often created severe hardship and financial losses for village inhabitants and industrial operations. With the factories now gone, these communities are struggling to find a new and more diversified economic base. But the close physical ties of these settlements with the rushing waters of the Ausable River still remain.

Saranac River Towns



Bloomingdale
Clayburg
Redford
Riverview
Saranac/Moffitsville
Vermontville

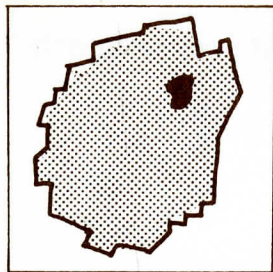
white waters of the river following its path closely, as do the settlements of Saranac, Moffitsville and Picket's Corner. Clayburg remains even more isolated in the vast landscape while Vermontville displays its

early New England heritage in the church steeple poking up through the trees, in the roomy old houses, and in a pace of life gaited not to the frenetic rush of tourism but to the slower rhythms of agriculture.

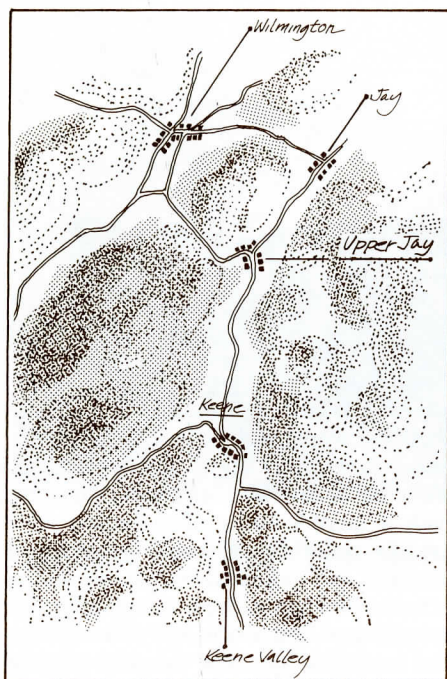
Unlike the Ausable River Towns, these hamlets in the Saranac River Valley did not experience the great industrial prosperity of those communities. Smaller and more isolated, these settlements relate both to the river and the often magnificent landscape around them. Bloomingdale has the charming character and white church spires of a small Vermont hamlet while Riverview sits on a vast, windswept knoll overlooking the Saranac River and mile after mile of spruce forest. Redford winds along the



The hamlet of Riverview overlooking the Saranac

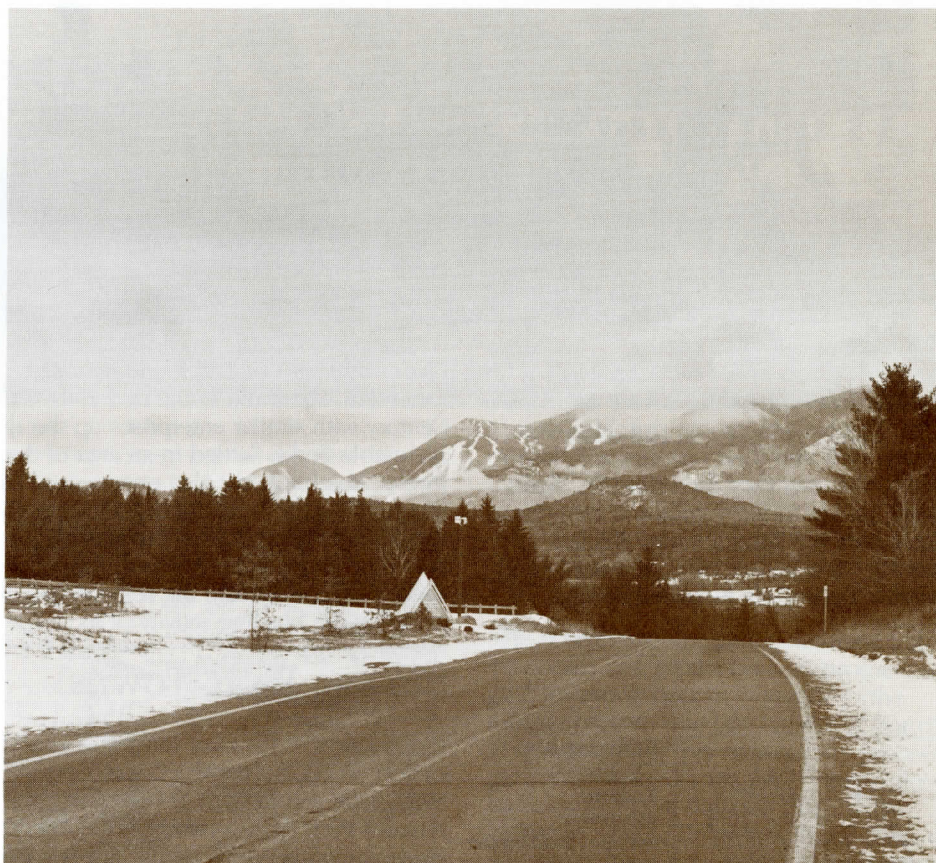


Jay
Keene
Keene Valley
Upper Jay
Wilmington



Hamlets of the High Peaks

With some 15 peaks in the immediate area over 4,000 feet high and Mt. Marcy rising to the southwest, this group of settlements is truly the "Hamlets of the High Peaks." Located in the numerous valleys at the base of densely wooded mountain slopes, they are some of the earliest settled hamlets in the Park. Many of these pioneers were part of the onslaught from Vermont with the pic-



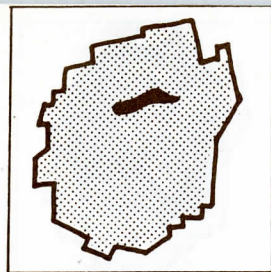
Wilmington's backdrop, Whiteface Mountain



turesque village green and covered bridge at Jay perhaps suggesting this early parentage. Lumbering remains a part of Jay's economy although its early forges and ironworks have long since disappeared. Keene is home of the famous Elm Tree Inn, although the ancient tree met its demise in the 1970's. Victorian store fronts and beautiful setting add to Keene's rustic charm. In Keene Valley, some unusual architecture and rows of towering maples enhance the community's visual attractiveness. Upper Jay has a unique treasure in the Land-of-Make-

Believe, one of the very first theme parks in the United States. Now closed, the well-known landmark is being considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

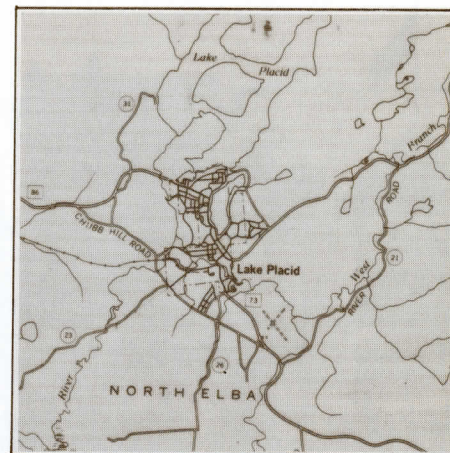
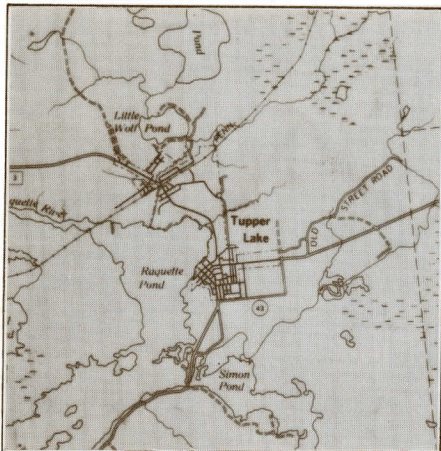
The bustling village of Wilmington, located on the northeast approach to Whiteface Mountain, has one of the most spectacular settings in the Adirondacks. The home of Santa's Workshop and a haven for skiers and other winter sports enthusiasts, it is also well known for its outstanding fishing and hiking opportunities.



Lake Placid
Ray Brook
Saranac Lake
Tupper Lake

"Tupper Lake may not be the most fashionable of the summer resorts . . . (but it) has something that many Adirondack towns wish devoutly they had . . . industry" (White, Just About Everything in the Adirondacks)

Tri-Lake Regional Centers



Tupper Lake - As one of the Tri-Lakes Regional Centers, Tupper Lake owes much of its existence to the growth of the lumbering industry in the 1880's. Settled as an early lumber service center by a few solitary residents, the village experienced rapid growth following the arrival of the Northern Adirondack Railroad in 1889. At once, settlers began to arrive in considerable numbers, and founded industries, and established stores and hotels. With the growing lumber industry and the mills and factories it fathered, Tupper Lake soon became an Adirondack industrial center.

Main street Saranac Lake in the 1930's



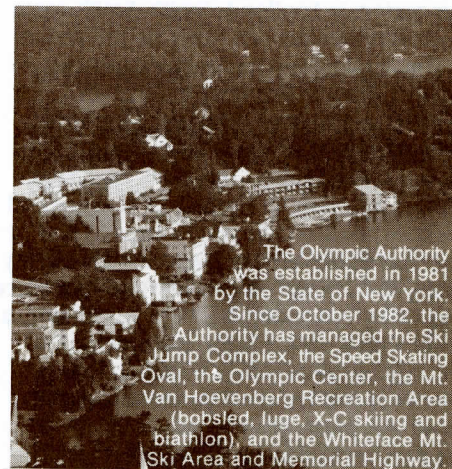
Lake Placid - "The Switzerland of America", as Lake Placid is called, holds a unique position among the hamlets of the Adirondack region. Perhaps best known as the location of the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics, the community is unusual in the extensive development it has experienced. The narrow main street with its small and colorful shops crowded with well-to-do tourists gives the village a European flavor not found in any other Adirondack hamlet.

The still waters of the lake reflecting the high peaks of Whiteface to the northeast make Lake Placid a memorable destination for many visitors.

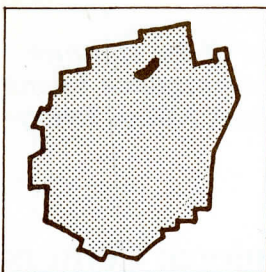
Contrasting images in Tupper Lake



Saranac Lake - Saranac Lake appears to have been one of the earliest central Adirondack settlements with records of residents in the area by 1819. Although there was soon a small mill constructed along the river, village growth was slow. By 1856 only fifteen families were living in the hamlet. The next twenty years saw more rapid expansion as the village became a center for guides, tourists, and particularly lumbering operations in the area. The arrival of Dr. Edward Trudeau in 1876, however, greatly altered the history of the community. Coming to the Adirondacks to cure his own tuberculosis, Dr. Trudeau soon established a sanatorium and research center which became world famous.



The Olympic Authority was established in 1981 by the State of New York. Since October 1982, the Authority has managed the Ski Jump Complex, the Speed Skating Oval, the Olympic Center, the Mt. Van Hoevenberg Recreation Area (bobsled, luge, X-C skiing and biathlon), and the Whiteface Mt. Ski Area and Memorial Highway.



Gabriels
Loon Lake
Onchiota
Paul Smith's/Easy Street
Rainbow Lake



The St. Regis Woodland Hamlets



An elegant camp at Upper St. Regis Lake

The St. Regis Woodland Hamlets are located in the north central Adirondacks in a rolling plateau region covered with dense pine forests and numerous lakes. Ignored by early settlers searching for agricultural lands, the remote location and wild, woodland character made the area a favorite destination of sportsmen and vacationers. This setting also generated one of the more unusual experiences to take place in the Adirondacks. In 1858, a gathering of visitors at Follensby Pond, later known as the Philosophers' Camp, took place. Several well-known men of the day, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell, and Louis Agassiz, spent six leisurely weeks in a crude camp enjoying the beauty and solitude of nature.

One of the most famous men in all of Adirondack history and especially important to this region is Apollos A. Smith. Smith came to develop his famous hotel on the Lower St. Regis Lake from an interesting background. Born in Vermont in 1825, he worked as a boatman on Lake Champlain until settling on Loon Lake in 1849 where he ran a small hotel. Ten years later Smith moved to Lower St. Regis Lake and opened another hotel, which was to expand and become world famous over the next twenty years. At its height Paul Smith's (as the place was called) included 30,000 acres of land, a hotel with annex, casino, cottages and workshops, all of which could accommodate over five hundred guests at one time. However, much of the reason visitors returned to this isolated location year after

year was due to Smith's personality. Many described him as the perfect host with a "native ability, a readiness of wit and a shrewdness of judgement" that made him as popular as he was widely known. In this century Paul Smith's College occupies the site of the famous old hostelry.

Loon Lake, with its beautiful Adirondack setting, also began as a tourist destination. Here the Loon Lake House, begun in 1878, offered pleasure seekers a class of entertainment nowhere surpassed in the Adirondacks. The facilities included golf grounds, a tennis court, pool, billiard parlors, a bowling alley, and a livery containing horses and carriages. Though less active today as a gathering place of the rich and leisure classes, Loon Lake remains a charming resort community snuggled among the woods and hills surrounding the picturesque lake.

Other of these hamlets also had early tourist connections. Easy Street began as a small village for backwoods guides who were in constant demand with the many vacationers

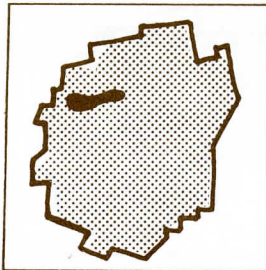


Paul Smith's Hotel, 1880's

Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum

and sportsmen at Paul Smith's. Onchiota (early known as Pine Park) was a small settlement with a store, post office and two railway stations at the turn of the century. Railroads were also responsible for the settlement of Gabriels. The tiny woodland hamlet sprang up as a station with the building of the Adirondack and St. Lawrence Railroad in 1892.





Childwold
Conifer
Cranberry Lake
Fine
Newton Falls
Oswegatchie
Piercefield
Star Lake
Wanakena

*The choppers and sawyers
Lay the timber low;
The swampers and the skidders
Haul it to and fro.
(Old Adirondack Lumbering song)*

More than any other group of hamlets in the Adirondack region, the story of the Western Forest Hamlets is the tale of large lumber operations and the many small settlements these industries spawned. The hamlets of this group are in some of the most densely wooded and isolated areas of the Adirondacks which made the region almost impenetrable to early settlers. Owing to this isolation, these were the last timber resources to be exploited by eastern investors.

Although a few pioneers had cut their way into this region by the 1850's, it was not until the appearance of large lumbering concerns that major settlement in the area began. On two separate occasions settlers arrived and then deserted the small hamlet of Fine before the first permanent resident arrived in 1843. For many years the post office and homes were the only settlement in this region which was called the "South Woods" or "The Wilderness." By the 1860's more settlers began arriving looking for land. In 1866 the first camp was constructed at Big Lake (now Star Lake) and the following year the state built a small dam on the Oswegatchie River at Cranberry Lake to aid in the movement of logs down the river. The end of the century saw a rush of lumbering operations into the region with settlements growing up with them. In the 1890's the International Paper Company began major operations and established the company hamlet of Piercefield. Although the Piercefield operations closed in the 1930's, the large mill opened at the same time at Newton Falls is still operating and employs hundreds of residents in the region. As one of the characteristic company towns, Newton Falls contains repetitive workers' housing, a company hotel facing a small village square, and the towering smokestack of the mills directly on the main street axis. Early in this century the tiny hamlet of Wanakena was begun by the Rich Lumber Company while the Emporium Lumber Company started its operations and the community of Conifer in 1910. Both of these companies have now departed leaving these small settlements in the middle of

Western Forest Hamlets



Reflections at Wanakena

vast timber lands. Wanakena was afforded some economic stability by the founding of the nearby State Ranger School. The school was established on lands given the state by the Rich Company when it left the area after completion of its lumbering operations in 1912.

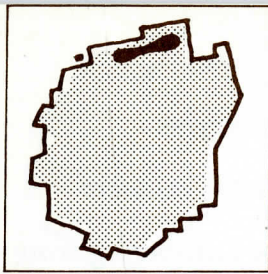
The lumbering industry at Cranberry Lake



Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum

Mining was also an important part of the region's economy with major mines and a small settlement opened up by the Magnetic Iron Company in 1889. Later purchased by the Benson Mining Company, the mines continued operations until the late 1970's.

With the influx of settlers and the opening of good roads into the region, this area soon became a destination for sportsmen and vacationers. Large hotels at Star Lake, Cranberry Lake and Massawepie Lake accommodated hundreds of visitors. Among the most famous of these were the Star Lake Inn and the grandiose Childwold Park Hotel.



Chazy Lake
Colton
Dannemora
Lyon Mountain
Mountain View
Owl's Head
St. Regis Falls
Santa Clara
South Colton
Standish

"The northern hamlets isolated and remote, face the vast St. Lawrence Valley and Canada beyond."

Northern Foothill Communities

The Northern Foothill Communities, while having great variety in size and visual character, are grouped by their location along the northern edge of the Adirondacks and their somewhat ambivalent relationship to the Adirondack Park. Many of these settlements have been strongly influenced by their Canadian neighbors to the north, whether by early French Canadian settlers looking for jobs in the lumber industry or the economic relationship with major population centers in Canada.

Hamlets such as Owl's Head began as small mill towns as did Mountain View. While the latter became a well-known lake resort, especially popular with Canadians in the early

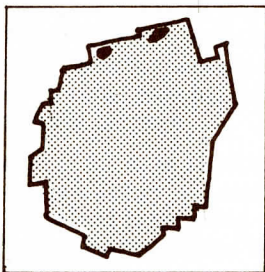
part of this century, Owl's Head experienced no such growth. Standish and Lyon Mountain were established as major mining enterprises, with Lyon Mountain evolving as a company town. Rows of well-built houses and attractive schools and churches still populate the village, though the mines stand unworked on the mountainside above the hamlet. Dannemora, on the other hand, continues to have a solid economic base as the home of the Clinton County Correctional Facility. In 1845 the State of New York established Clinton Prison for "the mining and manufacturing of iron" and the community soon grew up around it. Colton and South Colton in St. Lawrence County are more typical settlements of the region with a close relationship to water and beautiful



Company housing in Lyon Mountain

wooded settings. Both settled in the 1820's, these hamlets opened the way to the early exploration of the great forests of the northwest Adirondack region.

St. Lawrence Lowland Communities



Brainardsville
Ellenburg Center
Hopkinton
Nicholville



Santa Clara, reminiscent of northern Scandinavia

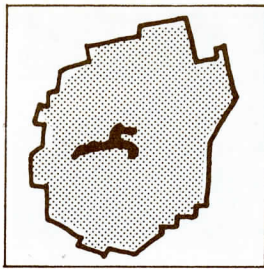
The four small St. Lawrence Lowland Hamlets in this group, while not as close in physical proximity, are similar in their strong relationship to the fertile agricultural valleys in which they are located. Hopkinton and Nicholville in St. Lawrence County were founded by Vermonters who made their way to the northern Adirondack region in the early 1800's. Located on the St. Regis River, several early mills in Nicholville took advantage of this unique topography.

Settlement at Brainardsville and Ellenburg Center came at a much later date. In 1843 a

visitor to the area said bear, lynx, wolves, and panthers were still in abundance. In the 1850's Lawrence Brainard purchased and enlarged a small mill on the Chateaugay River and gave the hamlet its name. While lumbering was an early staple of the economy, the cleared lands soon proved more valuable as agricultural investments. Today these villages, marked by farm silos and Agway supply centers, are more in character with the numerous farm communities dotting the landscape of the St. Lawrence River Valley than the Adirondack hamlets to the south.



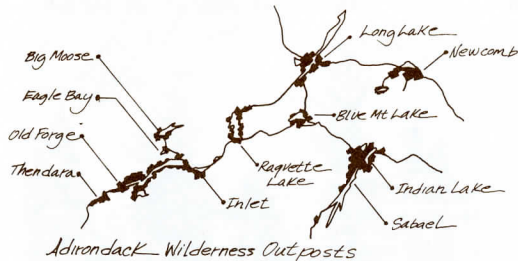
An agricultural survivor in the North Country



Big Moose
Blue Mountain Lake
Eagle Bay
Indian Lake
Inlet
Long Lake
Newcomb
Old Forge
Raquette Lake
Sabael
Thendara

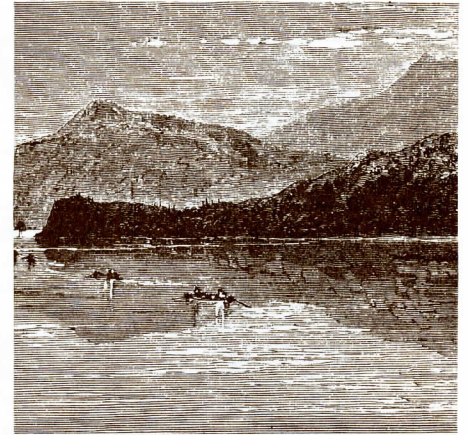
Adirondack Wilderness Outposts

The settlements of the Adirondack Wilderness Outposts are what one would generally characterize as the romantic North Country hamlet. Usually situated in an isolated mountain setting, these villages are surrounded by dense forests with the clear waters of a mountain lake or stream nearby.



Though often somewhat difficult to reach because of their remote locations, the wilderness outposts more than repay the thousands of yearly visitors with their beautiful settings, clear mountain air, and memorable sunsets that come with day's end. They have also been the locations of some of the most unusual and noteworthy people and events in Adirondack history.

The area around Raquette Lake hosted William Durant and his years of building what became known as the great camps in a truly indigenous Adirondack architectural style. Raquette Lake was also the old passenger rail terminus where visitors transferred to the early steamboats and



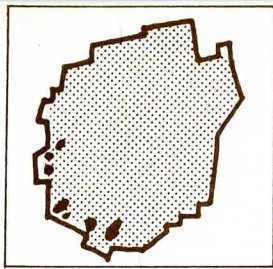
Guides into the wilderness

made their way to lakeside camps and resorts. It was at Blue Mountain Lake that the famous Prospect House was completed in 1885, the first hotel in the world to have electric lights in every room. Also overlooking the lake was Blue Mountain House, which in the 1950's became the Adirondack Museum. One of the outstanding regional museums in the nation, it yearly draws thousands of visitors to its scenic location.

All the hamlets did not experience such romantic pasts. Indian Lake and Long Lake struggled as early agricultural communities until they began emphasizing their tourist economies in this century. The Old Forge and Thendara area was promoted by an early land speculator from Rhode Island named John Brown. When his forge and mining operations were finally flooded out after years of financial struggles, Brown's son-in-law walked to the shores of a nearby lake and shot himself. Big Moose was another famous name among visitors to hotels and resorts at the turn of the century. High in a valley above Eagle Bay and Inlet, the tiny hamlet was the scene of a famous murder in 1906 which became the basis of Theodore Dreiser's novel, **An American Tragedy**. All of these communities remain active tourist destinations today except for the village of Newcomb which has experienced recent struggles with the diminishing of the great NL mining operations at the old Tahawus mines.

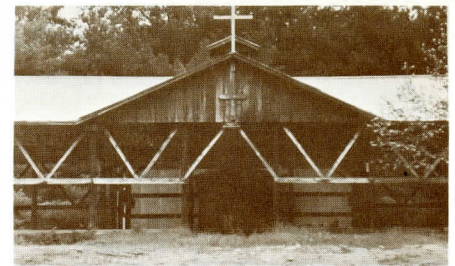


The spectacular setting of Long Lake



Brantingham
Canada Lake
Caroga Lake
Grant
Gray
Number Four
Otter Lake
Pine Lake
Stratford
Wheelerville
White Lake

Southwestern Resort Communities



The Southwestern Resort Communities, while in rather widely dispersed locations, are grouped together because of similar character and history. Each of these hamlets is a shoreline resort settlement serving as a summer vacation retreat for the large urban populations outside of the Adirondack region. In fact, these communities have an almost "sidedoor" relationship on the edges of the Adirondack Park. Although some of these hamlets did have important industrial periods in their history, such as the great tanneries around which the hamlet of Wheelerville emerged, all have evolved into resort communities today. The settlements of Canada Lake and Caroga Lake in Fulton County are typical of the history and evolution of this group.

The Canada Lake region was unpopulated until a road to the area brought settlers in the 1850's. Appreciating the outstanding

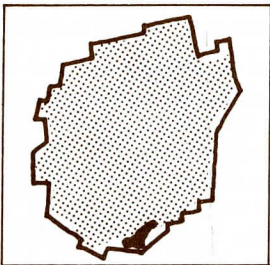
location, one of the first structures these enterprising citizens constructed was the Canada Lake House or Lake View House. By the 1880's permanent summer houses were appearing around the lake's edge. The most famous of the Canada Lake resorts, the Fulton House, was begun in 1888. In true Adirondack fashion, the resort consisted of several main buildings, though constructed

in a contemporary rather than rustic architectural style. The resort became known for the great variety of boats and water travel it afforded its guests, including many steamers which navigated the lake's waters in the 1890's and early years of this century.

Dance pavilion at Caroga Lake

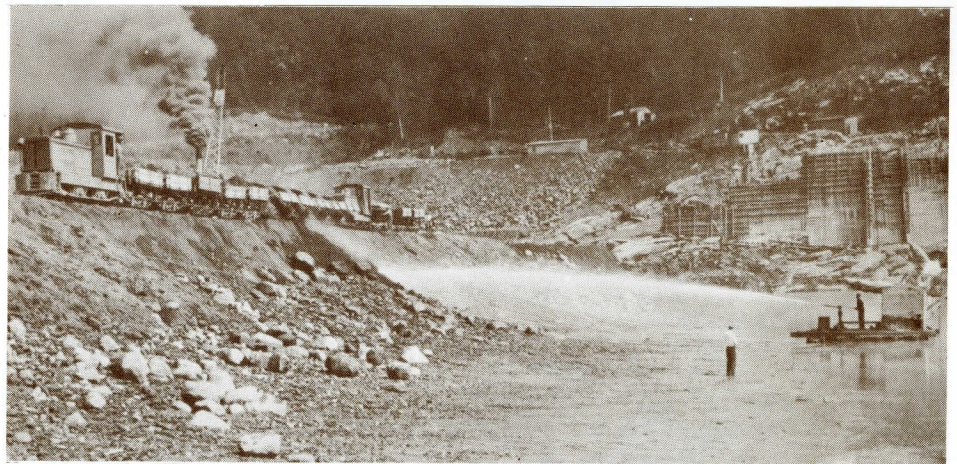


Great Sacandaga Lake Settlements



Batchellerville
Cranberry Creek
Day Center
Edinburg Center
Horsehill Road
Mayfield
Northville
Sacandaga Park

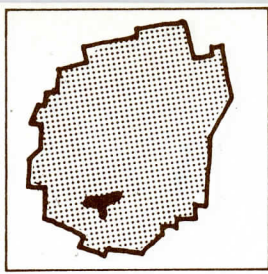
The story of the communities bordering the Great Sacandaga Lake is a tale of recent vintage, for it is since the damming of the Sacandaga River in the late 1920's that these communities have come to be what is seen today. Reoccurring spring flooding in the towns along the lower Sacandaga and Hudson Rivers during the early part of this century created the need for the construction of the Conklingville Dam. When it was completed in 1930, it brought the complete flooding of six small hamlets and parts of eight other settlements. The present-day hamlets are either partial remains of these older settlements or more recently established communities along the lake's shores.



Conklingville Dam under construction

Most of the hamlets originally in the valley had been settled for farming in the early 1800's. Soon the area's economy was caught up in the growing lumber industry, and the valley became the home of numerous mills and tanneries. These had long since fallen into disuse by the turn of the century and the valley was in decline by the time of the

lake's creation. Today's communities are involved with maximizing the many possibilities of living next to a large body of water almost the size of Lake George. The old excursion and amusement park of Sacandaga Park, once called the "Gem of the Adirondacks," is gone, but neat rows of old cottages and other sports facilities still welcome summer visitors to the area.



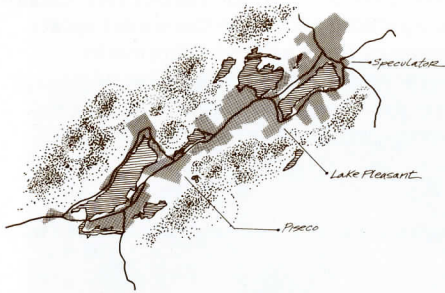
Arietta
Hoffmeister
Lake Pleasant
Morehouse
Piseco
Speculator

"Blessed with rugged terrain and dense forests, the region's lack of good roads slowed settlement for many years."



Picturesque Wells

Piseco/Lake Pleasant Villages



The Piseco/Lake Pleasant Villages group is found in the south central part of Hamilton County. The region is relatively isolated and is one of large stretches of undisturbed nature in the Park. Man's intervention is minimal throughout much of this scenic landscape. Some of the earliest families to settle in the Lake Pleasant area had established homesteads soon after 1800. By 1805 a small hamlet at the lake site was evolving. A visitor to the area in 1824 who was not aware of its potential described it as "a waste of mountain and swamp lands, abounding with small lakes." However, Lake Pleasant, originally known as Sageville, was designated the county seat with the construction of the first county buildings in the early 1840's. This came only after a strong push by land developer Andrew Morehouse to have his newly laid out hamlet of Piseco given that honor.



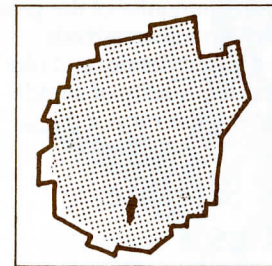
Early settlement at Piseco



One of the outstanding early promoters of the area, Morehouse was a merchant and businessman who moved to the area with his family in 1835. Though he struggled for years to induce settlers to his vast holdings, he was not very successful. One of the main problems was poor transportation. Blessed with rugged terrain and dense forests, the region's lack of good roads hindered settlements and commerce for many years.

The Village of Speculator was founded later but has a unique history among Adirondack settlements. Speculator was a small thriving tourist community by 1900 with numerous popular hotels. Although many of the large and famous resorts have disappeared, one of these marks the site of a memorable series of events. During World War I a young Marine from Speculator had become friends with another Marine named Gene Tunney. In 1926 Tunney came to Speculator, at the invitation of his old buddy, to stay at the Osborne Inn and train for an upcoming fight. He enjoyed the area so much that Tunney made the community his legal residence and trained there for his three championship fights between 1926 and 1928. Thanks to his influence and prestige, Speculator became a well-known resort and training camp for several fighters during the next few years.

Sacandaga River Towns

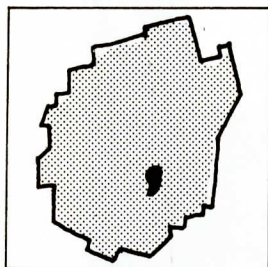


Benson
Hope
Wells

The three small communities in the Sacandaga River Towns were some of the first to be settled in Hamilton County. Wells, a picturesque village of well-maintained buildings following the river's shore, was established in the 1790's by William Wells. The hamlet has changed from an agriculturally based settlement, to a busy lumbering and tannery center in the mid 19th Century, and today remains as a beautiful river community.

Exploited early by the lumber industry, Benson also has a romantic past. Today it is a quiet and rather isolated settlement, bypassed by later development that occurred in other areas of Hamilton County. Being located on the first road built into the southern Adirondacks, Hope has had a similar evolution. Lumbering and tanneries were a vital part of the town's early years but have long since disappeared from this small, sleepy settlement.

Hudson Plateau Hamlets



Baker's Mills
Johnsburg
Minerva
North Creek
Olmstedville
Riparius
Wevertown

The hamlets of the Hudson Plateau group lie amidst some of the most rugged terrain of the south central Adirondack region. As the Hudson River twists its way from the high country down to Glens Falls, the valleys and gorges formed by it and its tributaries become the location of the hamlets. The northern most community of the group, Olmstedville, is a charming crossroads village in southern Essex County and like nearby Minerva has the quality of an Adirondack community at the turn of the

century. Both of these hamlets were settled by a large immigration of Irish settlers in the 1830's. Surrounding these tiny settlements, deep forests mantel the hillsides which are periodically broken by the many lakes and ponds found throughout the area.

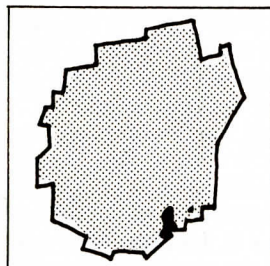
Riparius, Wevertown, Johnsburg and Baker's Mills are Warren County hamlets equally as small and hidden among the forests of the river plateau. Baker's Mills today is a struggling farm community that had its heyday during the logging era. Wevertown experienced its major growth at the same time. The village was home of the large Wevertown Tannery, but its closing brought the beginning of the hamlet's decline. The appearance and history of Johnsburg are almost identical to that of Wevertown, although it had the honor of being named after the region's first and most energetic settler, John Thurman. Riparius, located along the swift flowing Hudson, was at one time an important rail station for buses to Chestertown, Johnsburg, and Brant Lake.

Described as a "mountain village in the big woods," North Creek is the largest of these plateau hamlets. No longer an active lumbering community, the hamlet has remained economically active as the winter sports center of the southern Adirondacks. Numerous ski trails lining Gore Mountain rise above the busy shops of downtown North Creek.

The crossroads hamlet in the Hudson Plateau



Glens Falls Satellite Communities



Corinth
Hadley
Lake Luzerne
Lake Vanare
Overlook
South Hadley
Stony Creek
West Fort Ann

The Glens Falls Satellite Communities, located in the southwestern corner of the Adirondack region, are in a transitional area where the landscape changes from the wooded elevations of the Adirondack foothills to the flood plain of the Hudson River basin. Most of the settlements in this group were early lumbering centers which have evolved in various ways since the lumber industry's decline. All are tied socially or economically to the major population center at Glens Falls.

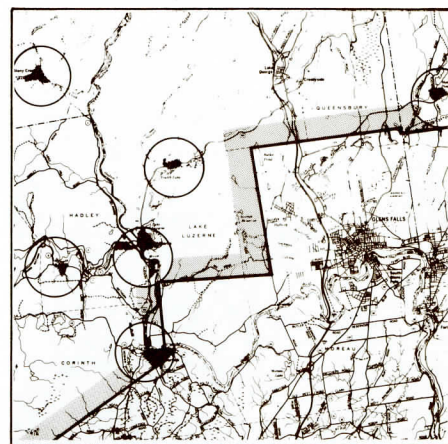


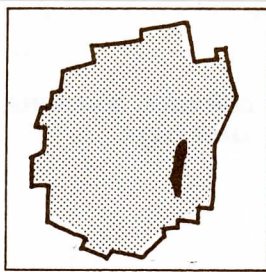
Corinth, once a great lumber town

Lake Luzerne was settled in 1770 by two brothers who were early Adirondack land speculators. Their beautiful colonial mansions and elegant furnishings were burned by Revolutionary forces as Edward and Ebenezer Jessup remained loyal to England and later fled to Canada. Located at the confluence of the Hudson and Sacandaga Rivers, Lake Luzerne, as well as Lake Vanare and Hadley, has evolved as a summer trading center for the hotels, cottages, and tourists on the surrounding

lakes. Corinth was at one time a major economic center for the region. Until the large International Paper Mills closed in recent years, the settlement supplied many jobs that are now being found in Glens Falls.

Glens Falls settlements





Adirondack
Athol
Brant Lake
Chestertown
North Hudson
Paradox
Pottersville
Schroon Lake
Severance
Warrensburg

Schroon River Settlements



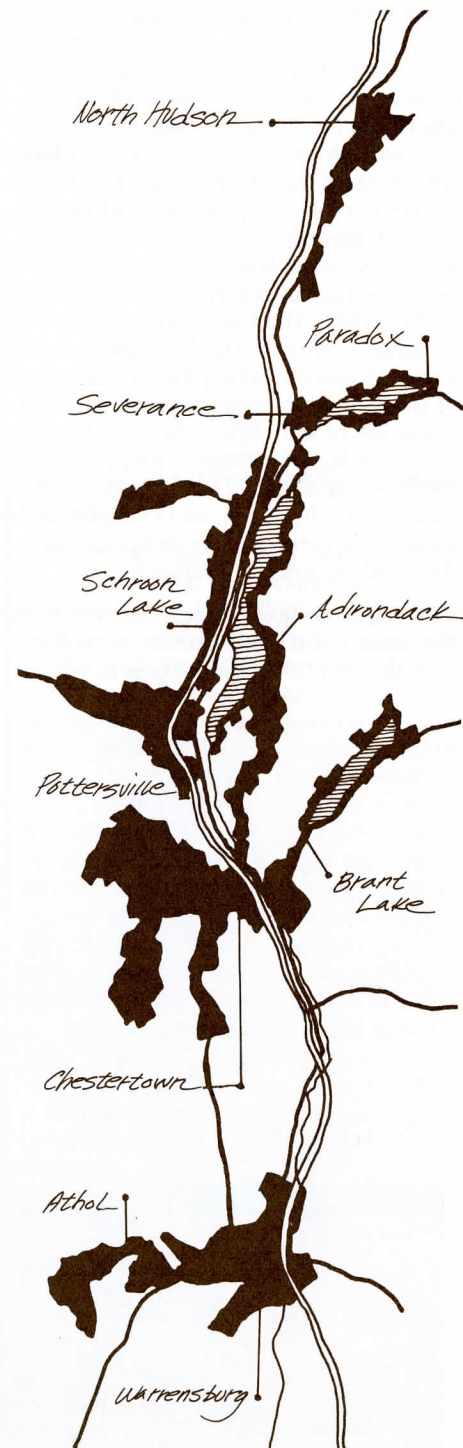
The central water feature at Brant Lake

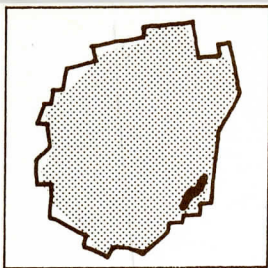
The settlements which follow the Schroon River Valley from Warrensburg up to the northern reaches of the Schroon Lake basin are the Adirondack settlements most significantly affected by the completion of the Adirondack Northway (I-87) in the late 1960's. These hamlets were settled early in the valley where gentle slopes and low hills guard the flowing waters of the Schroon. The area experienced some of the first and most extensive lumbering operations in the Adirondacks with the practice of floating logs down river to mills initiated in 1813.

In 1804 James Warren established a tavern and store on a new road running north into the Adirondack wilderness and eventually gave his name to the growing settlement. The lumber industry soon made Warrensburg a community of numerous sawmills, potash factories, and tanneries. Paper making and the manufacture of woollens and textiles also became leading industries. Farther north, at what was to become the hamlet of Chestertown, there were two crude log cabins in 1805. By 1820 it had become a growing community in a region fast being cleared of its dense forests. When

the lumber industry finally waned in the 1860's, the hamlet turned to serving summer tourists and to the business of trading with local farmers. The village of Brant Lake, formerly called Horicon, is a picturesque, lake-centered hamlet which from its earliest days has served the many hotels and cottages surrounding the lake.

Pottersville, Adirondack, Schroon Lake and Severance are small hamlets tied directly to Schroon Lake. As with the others, Pottersville grew with the expanding lumber industry but had only small sawmills, tanneries, and gristmills in the hamlet. Schroon Lake has become the largest of these lakeside hamlets as a major destination resort immediately off of the Northway. An important economic factor is the Word of Life Institute headquarters which holds many religious conferences and other gatherings throughout the year. North Hudson shows one of the negative aspects of the coming of the Northway. Once a bustling village of many quaint motels and tourists cabins along busy State Route 9, the community is now bypassed by Northway travelers. However, many visitors do stop to enjoy its Frontiertown theme park.





Bolton/Bolton's Landing
Cleverdale
Glenburnie
Hague
Hulett's Landing
Lake George
Pilot Knob
Sabbath Day Point
Silver Bay

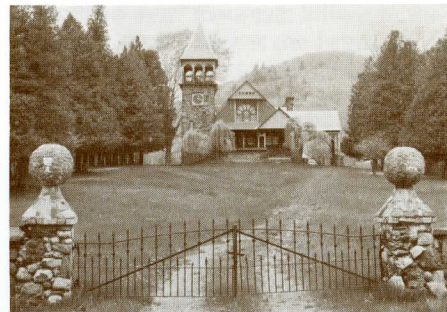
"Beautiful Lake George with its cottage colonies, spacious mansions, and scores of islands, points, and bays . . ."

Lake George Communities

Beautiful Lake George, the largest lake in the Adirondack region, is the magnet around which this group of settlements clusters. Stretching thirty-two miles northward from the Village of Lake George, the blue-green waters of the lake are studded with wooded islands and ringed with towering, pine-clad peaks and ridges. The lake cottage colonies, spacious mansions, and bulky frame hotels cling to jutting points, stand out boldly in clearings, or hide in the forests. The Lake George region has a romantic history. Along the highways and smaller roads encircling the lake are scores of islands, points, and bays with names reminiscent of skirmishes, massacres, prison camps, military hospitals, encampments and fortifications. They recall the days when Indian, French, British, and Colonial armies struggled for the mastery and possession of the North American Continent.

The Village of Lake George was one of the first great resort communities in the Park with the Old Lake House open to visitors by

1800. In 1817 the steamer *Caldwell* began circling the lake to service shoreline hamlets and resorts. The arduous and uncomfortable stage travel of the mid-19th Century to Lake George gave way to railroad travel with visitors in growing numbers summering in the area by the 1880's. The village remains the center of a busy summer tourist season, as do all the hamlets on the lake. Near the communities of Bolton and Bolton's Landing is an area known as "Millionaires Row" where a group of elegant mansions look out over Lake George. At Bolton's Landing one can also get a fine view of the Sagamore Hotel on Green Island, now undergoing a major restoration and redesign. Hague is a smaller resort community up the lake and remembered as the location of the old Trout House and the Hillside House, well-known hostelrys at the turn of the century. Sabbath Day Point is said to have been named from General Amherst's religious services which he ordered when his troupes made a Sunday halt at this location enroute to the north.



Sabbath Day Point

The large and well-maintained camp buildings of the Silver Bay Association give this particular hamlet an attractive character. During the summer the area comes alive with hundreds of campers under the sponsorship of the YWCA and YMCA. The remaining settlements in this region include mixtures of older bungalows, modest cabins, and modern structures offering summer refuge to city dwellers amidst the pine woods and clear waters of Lake George.



Lake George from Bolton's Landing

Functional Grouping

The reasons for a hamlet's existence in 1983 involves a careful look at its service attributes, social organization, and economic base. The combination of these variables determines a hamlet's **function**, the second form of grouping in this study. For example, a hamlet which functions as a residential settlement usually has little or no industrial base, limited commercial activity and generally operates as a bedroom community to a large adjoining settlement. In many cases, the hamlets of the Adirondack region have witnessed dramatic changes over time in their reasons for being. In fact, a hamlet that functions as a residential settlement in 1983 was in most cases a thriving mining or lumbering community at the turn of the century.

The primary criteria applied in this portion of the analysis included: economic activity and diversity, number and location of permanent and seasonal residents, accessibility to and from markets and population centers, and availability of public and private institutions. In some cases a hamlet falls into more than one functional group because of the multiple activities it serves. The hamlets, as they appear within each of the nine functional groups, are arranged in alphabetical order and no rating or evaluation is made within the group. The projected outcome and advantages of functional grouping are discussed in greater detail at the end of this section.

"Farm-service, residential, or seasonal resort . . . the functional characteristics identify a hamlet's reason for existence in the 1980's."

1

Greater Regional Service Centers:

Communities identified as greater regional service centers have major commercial activity including retail trade, a full range of services, and seasonal tourist and vacation traffic. The economic base of these settlements is viable and diversified supplying jobs not only to local residents but also inhabitants of the greater region. Various transportation facilities are available including good highways, railroads and, in some cases, water and air transport. These communities also provide the location for major institutions serving the greater region such as schools, hospitals, libraries and financial centers. In addition to supporting a large number of year-round residents which provides for strong continuing economic activity, the settlements in this group have a large influx of seasonal visitors at various times throughout the year.

Hamlets:

Lake Placid
Saranac Lake
Star Lake
Ticonderoga

2

Sub-regional/Township Service Centers:

The sub-regional/township service centers are similar to the larger regional centers but with more limited retail and commercial services in the community. In some instances the settlement may have once been a greater regional center, but in recent years has declined in regional importance. Some have light industry or the remains of a once thriving factory or mill. The key factor is that even though commercial activity is more limited than in the first group, the community serves an area much larger than the hamlet itself. Several sub-regional/township centers have important institutions within the community such as high schools or medical facilities. All have a large percentage of permanent residents and varying numbers of seasonal visitors and recreational activities. These hamlets have good highway access and some have other forms of transportation facilities, such as the Amtrak stations in Port Henry and Keeseville.

Hamlets:

Ausable Forks
Dannemora
Elizabethtown
Indian Lake
Keeseville
Port Henry
Schroon Lake
Speculator

3

Seasonal Recreation-Resort Communities:

The season recreation-resort hamlets are often thought of as the most typical Adirondack settlements. Names like "Raquette", "Blue Mountain" and "Keene Valley" ring a bell for those even vaguely familiar with the Adirondacks. These are the communities in which recreation and tourism predominate as the major source of economic activity. Often seasonal in nature, the hamlet essentially closes down during the off-season — the time of year when income-generating recreation and tourism activities are slow. Most of these hamlets have a small number of year-round residents and their populations often double or triple during the peak tourist seasons. Generally there is an absence of a diversified industrial base other than services directly derived from the recreation economy. While most of the settlements have fairly good highway connections, many are located in isolated areas somewhat remote from other population centers.

Hamlets:

Blue Mountain Lake
Chazy Lake
Cranberry Lake
Essex
Indian Lake
Inlet
Jay
Keene
Keene Valley
Lake Pleasant
Long Lake
North Hudson
Paradox
Piseco
Port Kent
Raquette Lake
Schroon Lake
Severance
South Colton
Speculator
Star Lake
Upper Jay
Westport
Willsboro
Wilmington

4

Government/Institution Hamlets:

The primary characteristic of these communities is the dominance of a major public or private institution which provides the settlement with a continuing economic base throughout the year. These institutions vary from the county government offices in Lake Pleasant and Elizabethtown, to the State Ranger School in Wanakena. In each case, the hamlets have a large percentage of permanent residents and a healthy economic infrastructure supported by the institution(s). The dominant facility may also create a great deal of traffic through the community such as the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake and the Word of Life Institute in Schroon Lake.

Hamlets:

Blue Mountain Lake
Dannemora
Elizabethtown
Ironville
Lake Pleasant
Ray Brook
Schroon Lake
Wanakena
Wells/Speculator

5

Farm Service Communities:

The hamlets of the farm service communities group are all relatively small and located within active agricultural areas. While several have other economic functions, all are involved to some degree in agricultural-related commercial activity and provide the necessary services to surrounding farmlands. Some are in more prosperous farming areas, such as Nicholville and Ellenburg Center, while others, like Olmstedville and Bloomingdale, are in agricultural regions which have become increasingly marginal in recent years. While some of these settlements are also seasonal resorts, most have generally a high percentage of year-round residents.

Hamlets:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Bloomingdale | Nicholville |
| Crown Point | Olmstedville |
| Crown Point Center | Wadhams |
| Ellenburg Center | Westport |
| Essex | Whallonsburg |
| Hopkinton | Willsboro |

6

Highway Service Hamlets:

The highway service hamlets are settlements in which the service of automobile and other transportation activity forms the major economic base for the community. Obviously, all of these settlements are located along primary traffic routes leading into and out of the Adirondack region. Some serve heavily traveled state roads, such as Oswegatchie and Cranberry Lake, while Schroon Lake and Pottersville service the hundreds of travelers using the New York Northway. While most are small residential settlements, their economies serve an almost entirely non-local population.

Hamlets:

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| Childwold | Pottersville |
| Cranberry Lake | Schroon Lake |
| Hoffmeister | South Colton |
| Oswegatchie | |

7

Active Mill/Mine Settlements:

Although the Adirondack region was once dotted with prosperous mill and mining operations, communities now supported by such industries are limited in number. The active mill/mine settlements continue to have resource-based industries as a major part of their economic structure. These operations vary in size and work force, from the huge Newton Falls Paper Mills which employ hundreds of workers throughout the region, to the Tahawus mining operations near Newcomb which currently have only a skeletal work force. These hamlets have predominately year-round residents and little tourist or recreational activity. The precarious nature of resource-based industries in the Adirondacks often makes the economic stability of the communities questionable unless they simultaneously serve other functions.

Hamlets:

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Lewis | Newton Falls |
| Minerva | North Hudson |
| Newcomb | Willsboro |

8

Residential Service Communities

The residential service communities are all smaller hamlets which, as their primary function, provide inhabitants with a stable, year-round community within which to reside. They have active local retail businesses with mixed employment opportunities within the community. These hamlets are listed in at least one other functional group, the aggregate giving the hamlets a rather stable and diversified economy. Several have witnessed the influx of young professionals and growing families in recent years, reinforcing their emerging role as attractive, residential hamlets.

Hamlets:

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Bloomingdale | Long Lake | Westport |
| Colton | Wells | Willsboro |
| Essex | | |

9

Minimal Service Hamlets:

The minimal service hamlets have little or no economic base within the community and few service or retail facilities available to residents. Many of these places were once booming industrial communities, but with the closing of mines and mills throughout the Adirondack region, have been experiencing a struggle to even survive. Almost all hamlets in this group have exclusively year-round populations and some serve as bedroom communities for industry in other settlements.

Hamlets:

Arietta
Benson
Clayburg
Clintonville
Conifer
Fine
Hope
Lyon Mountain
Mineville/Witherbee
Morehouse
Moriah Center
Moriah Corners
Piercefield
Redford
Riverville
Sabael
Saranac/Moffitsville
Standish

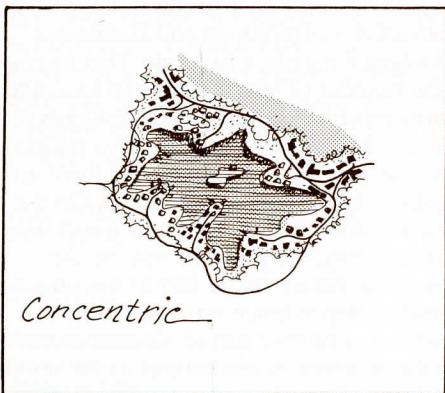
Each of these nine functional groups suggests certain problems and opportunities for hamlet planning in the future. Almost all communities in the Adirondack region experience some form of economic struggle or stagnation, so that a general movement towards a stronger and more diversified economy is assumed to be one of the primary goals of each hamlet. But the means of accomplishing this varies significantly from group to group. Whereas the greater regional service centers and sub-regional centers may have an active and diversified economy, perhaps the need is simply to find creative ways of marketing the community so it becomes increasingly attractive to employers and businesses looking for a place to locate. This increases the number of jobs available to local and area inhabitants. Adirondack residents repeatedly speak of losing their young people to the "outside world" because there are no jobs to keep them in the region. On the other hand, in a recreation or resort based community, the problem may be the seasonal nature of the hamlet's economy and its dependence on the precarious whims of mother nature. Greater diversity of jobs or activities less subject to the uncertainties of weather conditions and other natural adversities (such as black flies) might be viable alternatives to consider in these communities. Hamlets having stable, job-producing institutions might work at enticing more tourists or sports enthusiasts to their hamlets. Hamlets having little or no economic base may decide to not pursue jobs, but instead remain bedroom communities to other larger hamlets and focus on family-oriented community services and facilities.

These are but a few illustrations of how the functional groupings might be applied to specific planning strategies and will be further developed in the sample communities in Phase Two.

“Linear plan, high density, well-defined center . . . these characteristics give a hamlet its physical shape and form.”

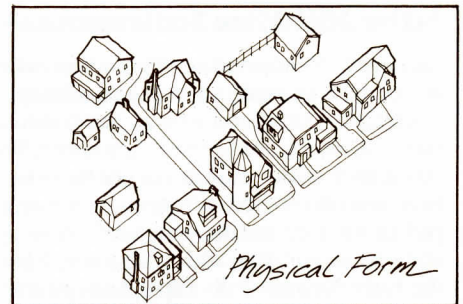
Physical Types

Physical types deal more specifically with individual hamlets than with groups of settlements. In this section, the characteristics which give a hamlet its physical shape and form are identified; that is, elements which one sees and experiences. The description of the elements will be followed by a discussion of what each characteristic suggests in terms of development strategies for the hamlets. As with functional groupings, this category will look at the 72 hamlets of the participating counties. The six areas of evaluation used in determining the physical form of a hamlet are: **plan configuration, density, visual quality, landscape type, physical structure and infrastructure.**

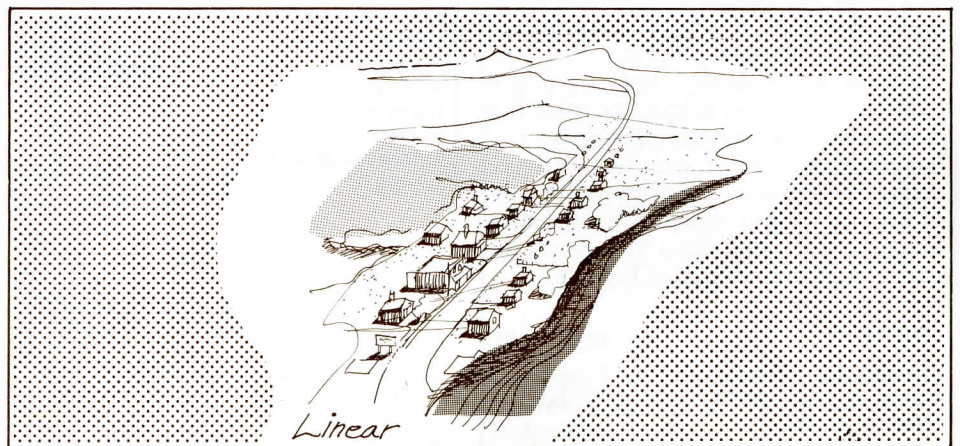


Plan Configuration — Plan configuration identifies the overall layout or plan of a hamlet including roads, buildings and natural features. Some Adirondack hamlets are formed along mountain streams, some wrap around lake shores, while others are essentially shaped by the intersection of transportation routes. Even though each hamlet is unique in its settlement form, there are five major plans into which Adirondack hamlets fall: **linear, concentric, nodal, crossroads, and grid.**

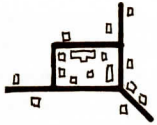
Linear comes from the word “line,” which defines the layout of communities along a highway or river. The linear plan form is common among hamlets of the Adirondack region. Such communities often lack a core or center. The dispersed, elongated nature of linear settlements creates confusion when one enters or leaves the community. As a result, what designers and planners call a “sense of place” is lacking. These settlements suffer severely when any of the structures along the village strip are torn down or left to decay. The resulting gaps in the strip further weaken whatever feeling of physical continuity formerly existed. The form of a linear hamlet is usually so strongly shaped by the requirements of automobile access and parking that social, pedestrian and outdoor spaces are absent. Sidewalks, if they exist, are broken by numerous curb-cuts and frequently one must walk through a parking lot to arrive at a store. Visual confusion is another problem experienced when commercial signs are seen in linear perspective. The repetition of one sign after another leads to a situation where background and foreground signs are in competition with one another. Classic examples of linear communities are Newcomb and the settlements from Speculator through Lake Pleasant to Piseco.



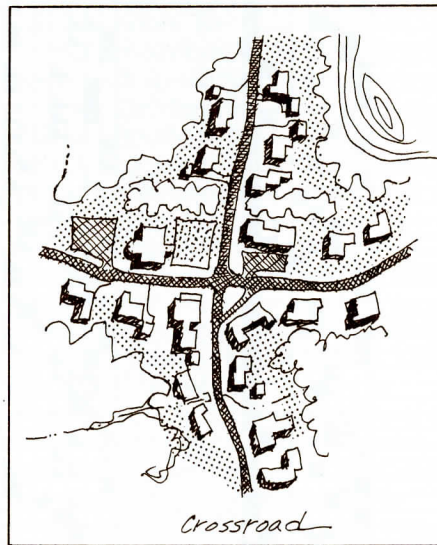
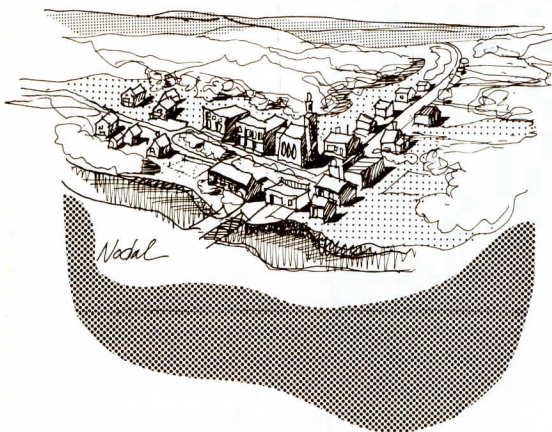
Concentric form suggests having a common center. Adirondack hamlets that are concentric in plan generally center around a lake. A good example is the hamlet of Star Lake in St. Lawrence County where the form is identified by continuous settlement around the perimeter of the lake. When a community stretches around a body of water, the absence of a core of buildings and spaces may once again result. Once the lake is surrounded with development, numerous problems can occur. For instance, how does the community continue to grow, or what are the growth patterns as the village expands outward from the center? How do future neighborhoods gain access to the amenity at the center of the community if and when private land prohibits such access?



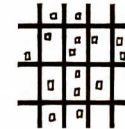
"Linear hamlets, many of which never had a central core, lack a sense of physical and social identity."



Nodal is the third hamlet form. A node is identified as a location or point of major activity; a place where pedestrian and vehicular traffic converge. In many hamlets this node was originally created by a general store and livery stable, but expanded to include several commercial establishments, a gas station, fire station and post office. In a nodal community there is an obvious spatial definition, a clear sense of knowing when you have arrived or when you are there. The public space often forms a center and has clear, well-defined boundaries. Nodal communities are intriguing because of their sense of human scale and the interest and activity the node generates. If the nodal center begins to erode, whether by loss of retail businesses or actual buildings, the sense of place also begins to decline. To prevent this, nodal settlements must retain economic strength to preserve their physical form. Outstanding examples of nodal hamlets can be found at Port Henry and Jay.

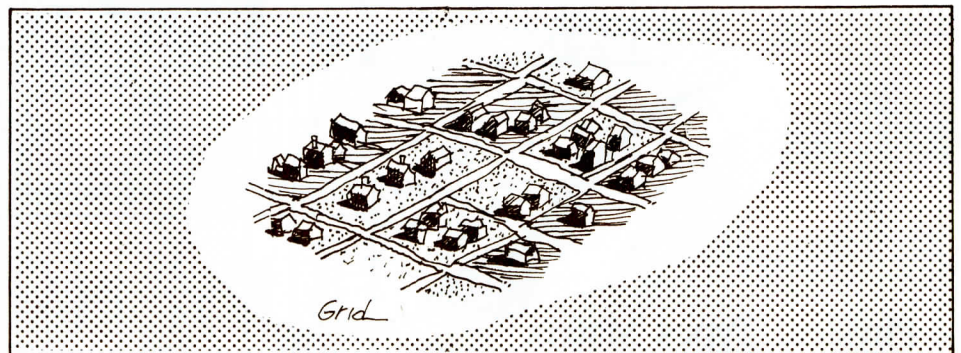


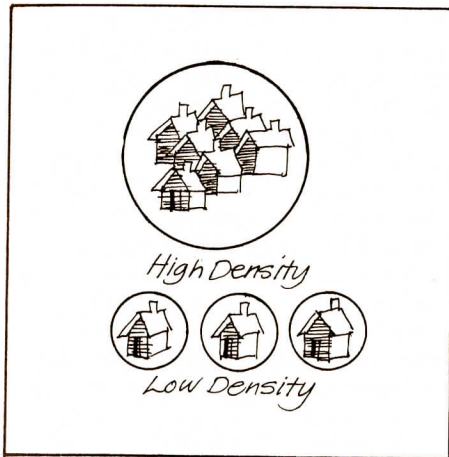
Crossroads were formed at the intersection of two or more transportation routes, commonly old stage lines or logging roads and in some cases water routes as in Essex hamlet. Nodal and crossroads communities often grew haphazardly from their original settlement nucleus, an occurrence which makes it sometimes difficult to understand the pattern or plan today. The tendency for a crossroads hamlet to transform into a strip settlement is often apparent when pressures for expansion force it to grow at its edges. Future planning in crossroads hamlets should be specifically concerned with the sprawl phenomenon. Good examples of crossroads hamlets include North Hudson, Indian Lake, and Keene.



Grid communities are formed by a pattern of streets at right angles to one another. This configuration is easily identified and often suggests that the community was planned or consciously laid out. This form is not particularly common among Adirondack hamlets, and only a few exist such as at Port Kent, a notable example of an old grid community. While a grid makes a community easily understood by the visitor and allows for controlled expansion, it does not respond very well to topographical changes in the landscape. The slope of the land is an important factor in the Adirondacks making the grid probably the least adaptable hamlet form.

Small hamlets usually have one predominant plan configuration. As communities grow and expand, they evolve through several stages of plan form. This was true of several Adirondack hamlets which have more than one plan form assigned on the matrix.





Density - Density is the number of persons per acre of land within a given hamlet. This ratio helps identify thickly settled hamlets as opposed to sparsely settled, or scattered ones. Three levels of hamlet density are listed on the matrix: low (0-4 persons per acre), medium (5-9 persons per acre), and high (10+ persons per acre). A village of high density has a concentration of residents within the settlement which generates a high level of social activity and often creates a stronger identity and cohesiveness.

Visual Quality - Visual quality represents the environmental character of a village as perceived by a person passing through it. To arrive at this evaluation, the following eight criteria were documented:

Buildings - What styles exist and do they have architectural interest and integrity? Are buildings well-maintained or vacant and in a state of disrepair?

Public Areas - What is the appearance or maintenance of open spaces, streets, sidewalks and public parks? Are commercial signs properly located and graphically attractive?

Landscape Quality - Is the character of the landscape and vegetation within and surrounding the hamlet of high quality? Is water a prominent feature of the community landscape and is it used to its best advantage?

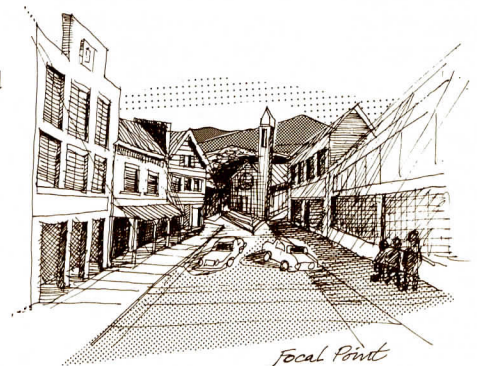
Entrances - What visually greets a person upon entering the hamlet — is there a sign, attractive building, or some other gateway element?

Edges - Is it clear where the hamlet begins and ends and are the borders between natural landscape and settlement clearly and consistently defined?

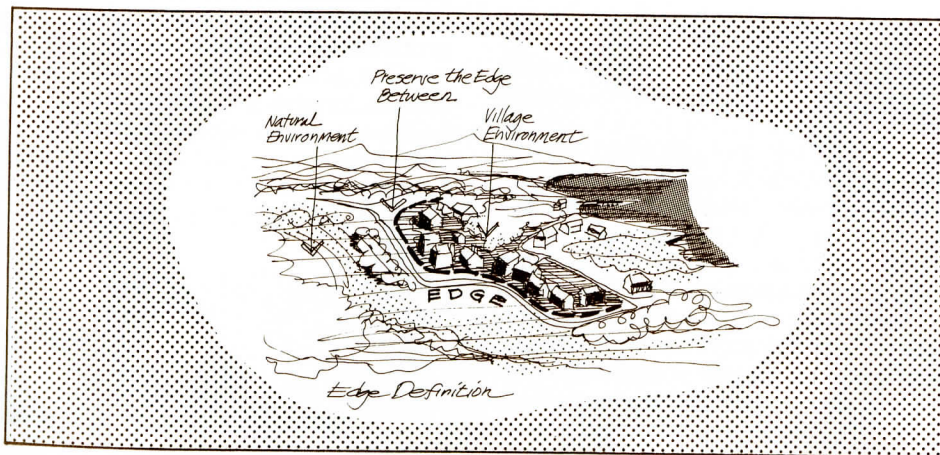


Views and Vistas - Are directed views or distant vistas taken full advantage of?

Focal Points - Are there structures or natural features which serve as reference points within the hamlet?

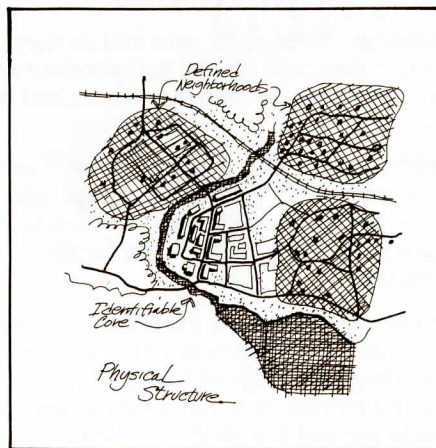
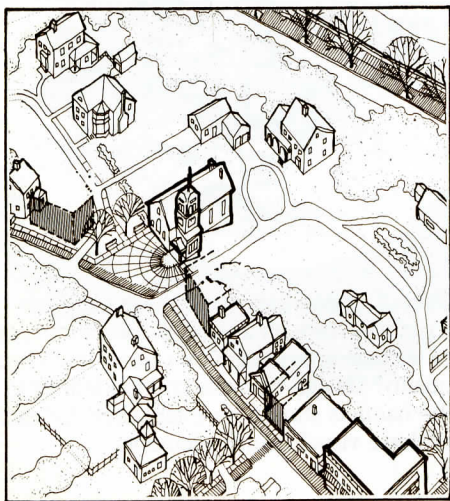


Overall Appearance - Do these elements together create an attractive community, one of average appearance, or one of low visual quality? Design controls and guidelines in the hamlets should be established for each of these visual quality elements.



Landscape Type - Landscape type identifies the predominant natural feature of the setting in which a hamlet is located. The landscape types most commonly found in the Adirondack region are **lake, river, valley, open meadow, plateau, agricultural, forested, and steep terrain.** On the matrix these were characterized as being strongly perceived, moderately perceived, or not present. While some hamlets have only one predominant landscape type, others have several and have been identified as such.

It is difficult to give qualitative values to landscape types as some have advantages and opportunities not available to others. For this reason value ratings were not assigned to landscape types. Lakes have been a great part of Adirondack history and a community with a strong lake relationship usually has outstanding visual qualities and many opportunities for recreation. Rivers also encourage water-related activities as well as adding charm to a community. The agricultural areas of the Champlain Valley, the dense forests of the northwest region, or the mountain valleys of the high peaks all have different possibilities for increasing the development potential of a hamlet. First, however, a community must determine what its outstanding landscape qualities are and then it must decide how to capitalize on those qualities.



Physical Structure - The physical structure encompasses two major elements of a hamlet, the central core and its neighborhoods. The **central core** is often identified by a cluster of buildings grouped in close proximity, containing activities such as retail shops and services. In many Adirondack villages once bustling and attractive community cores have deteriorated. Businesses have departed and structures have either decayed or been destroyed. Linear hamlets, many of which never had a central core, lack a sense of physical and social identity. **Neighborhoods** are groups of residential structures physically close to each other and often complementary in style and character. In some Adirondack hamlets there are clusters of older homes which were built about the same time, display similar styles of architecture, and have retained a uniform level of maintenance. Such neighborhoods are present in even the smallest hamlets such as Upper Jay and Nicholville. These neighborhoods give the community a stronger, more cohesive character than those with unstructured residential areas.

Villages having strong central cores and well-defined neighborhoods often have a clear image of what their community is or can be. The attractive village greens of Jay and Westport are also the central cores from which the major functions and businesses of the community radiate. People know when they are in the center of the hamlet and usually think of these familiar spaces when asked to characterize them. It is essential to have an attractive and identifiable core and neighborhoods within a hamlet, for these, more than anything, provide a sense of permanence and quality to a village.

Infrastructure - Infrastructure addresses underground utilities and identifies their existence and condition. In the case of both water and sewer systems, the analysis notes whether these facilities are available in the community. If they are present, it then describes the condition of the existing system. These may be either 1) poor and in need of repair or replacement, 2) good but functioning at maximum capacity, or 3) good with available capacity.

There is little question that hamlets having water and sewer systems with available capacity are in an enviable situation. Good sewage facilities are especially critical to communities in environmentally sensitive areas where the lack of these present major problems. Good and plentiful water supplies, as well as adequate distribution systems, are also critical, and again, a problem for many villages. Future planning and programming efforts will certainly have to address the funding of improvements to these systems throughout the Adirondack region.

Chapter 5

The Hamlets In Focus

The settlements of the four participating counties are listed on the next several pages. Arranged in alphabetical order, the hamlet names are in bold type with the county in which they are located identified by: (C) Clinton, (E) Essex, (H) Hamilton, or (SL) St. Lawrence. Included for each hamlet is some type of graphic representation of the village: a photograph, plan diagram, or perspective drawing of a section of the community that captures its essence.

Accompanying the image is a short one or two sentence statement identifying some outstanding characteristics or circumstances which are the predominant elements of the community's personality.

This section has been included for a very important reason. Even though the groupings suggested emphasize collections of hamlets and the shared characteristics of the group, each village, in the final analysis, is a unique and special entity which cannot be

forgotten in any form of developmental or marketing strategy. While geographic, functional, or physical groupings might prove valuable in pursuing investment or developing improved marketing approaches, each hamlet is a special and important part of the Adirondack region with loyal inhabitants and unique histories rooting the community to its soil. Future planning approaches will have to address the needs and aspirations of each of these individual hamlets.

As a small, isolated hamlet in the southern region of the Park, **Arietta (H)** exhibits many of the characteristics of numerous tiny Adirondack communities bypassed by time and progress.



From an early flourishing milltown **Ausable Forks (C/E)** has become a more peaceful sub-regional service center. The low visual quality of the hamlet's central core, seasonal flooding, and the need for improvements in the community's sewage system are among its major problems today.

Benson (H), although of some importance in early Hamilton County history, is today a tiny, sparsely settled, woodland hamlet.



Bloomingdale (E) is a fine example of a well-maintained bedroom community. Situated in the Saranac River Valley, the attractive hamlet displays good visual quality enhanced by outstanding views to distant peaks.



Blue Mountain Lake (H) typifies an outstanding example of the lake-oriented Adirondack hamlet with the Adirondack Museum providing the economic base and a major tourist draw for the community. Physically the village core lacks the attractive identity presented by the community as a whole.

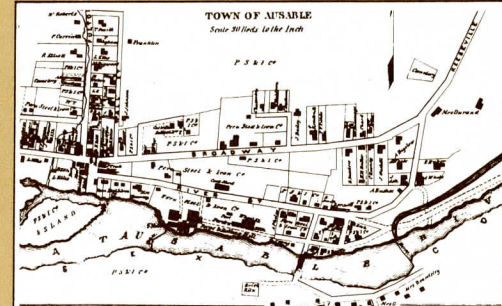
Chazy Lake (C) represents the isolated, mountain, lakeshore development including subdivisions of small cottages, but having no identifiable core.





Located along a busy tourist access route into the Park, Childwold (SL) is a linear settlement with no central area. Its economy is largely dependent on seasonal traffic.

Located in a shallow river valley, Clayburg (C) is a small and rather remote hamlet serving a community of permanent residents.



Though once a thriving and well laid out milltown, Clintonville (C) has evolved into a declining strip community exhibiting low visual quality.

Located near the Park, Colton (SL) enjoys the waterfront and forest amenities of many Adirondack hamlets. This year-round bedroom community contains several interesting and architecturally significant structures.



Conifer (SL) typifies the old company town in a remote location. Having lost its industry, the community now struggles without a local economic base.



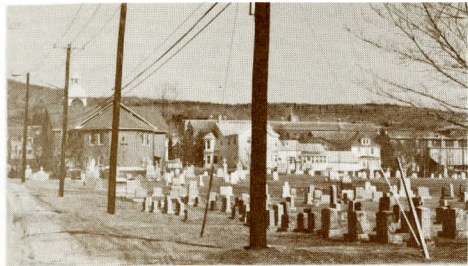
An attractive lakeshore village, Cranberry Lake (SL) is a summer home for many retired persons. Tourism based on the outstanding lake setting could be further developed.

Crown Point Center (E) exhibits many of the characteristics of a 19th Century farm service community. Remnants of the general prosperity of the once-thriving hamlet are still visible in scenic green areas throughout the village.



As an historic Lake Champlain community Crown Point (E) serves its mainly year-round residents and farming concerns in the surrounding area. Although once a handsome community with many fine older homes and a quaint village green, the hamlet in recent years has become somewhat seedy in appearance.

Dannemora (C) is a community dominated by an institution, both through the economic prosperity which the Clinton Correctional Facility provides for the residents and the visual dominance which the prison affords the central area of the village.

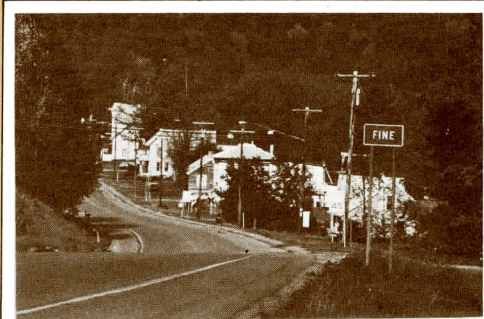


Elizabethtown's (E) role as county seat is identified by the imposing lawns and structures housing the county government. While containing many attractive homes, wide streets and scattered settlement patterns give the community a sprawling, open character lacking human scale.

As a quaint, farm service community **Ellenburg Center's (C)** central core achieves good human scale as contrasted to the open farmland surrounding the village. While located in the Park, Ellenburg Center is more similar to other northern farming communities than to most Adirondack hamlets.



Essex (E) is a small, historic hamlet which appears to have been "frozen in time". Its center is outstanding both in scale and architectural quality and enjoys a unique relationship to Lake Champlain in welcoming ferry traffic to New York.



Fine (SL) is a small, remote village which serves as a bedroom community for nearby industries. A number of deteriorated roads, sidewalks and buildings need attention.



As an isolated strip development with minimal economic base, **Hoffmeister's (H)** scattered structures project an almost frontier-like character.

Hope (H) is a tiny Sacandaga River hamlet with an outstanding setting but minimal population and commercial activity.



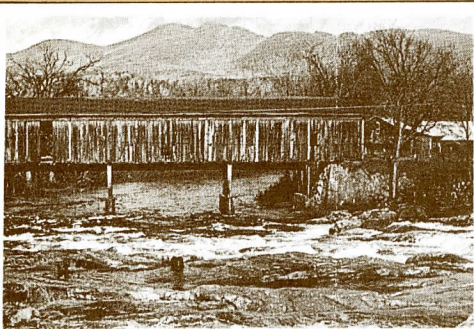
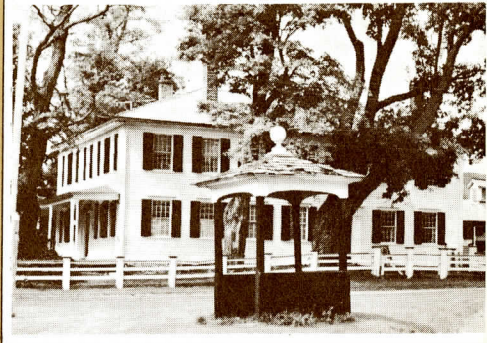
An agricultural economic base and landscape setting distinguish **Hopkinton (SL)** from the majority of Adirondack hamlets. Strip development diffuses the community focus from the "village green".

As a central Adirondack crossroads community, **Indian Lake (H)** is unusual in ignoring its close proximity to Lake Adirondack. The village shows the domestic landscape of many small American communities with a strong village center.



Although its appearance could be improved, **Inlet's (H)** central core is outstanding in character. The recreational base of the village should be expanded in any development plans.

Ironville (E) is an attractive museum community in a rather remote location. Its presence should be more widely marketed.



An old covered bridge and an attractive village green give **Jay (E)** a very New England character. This close-knit community charm should be preserved.

Keene (E) is a river valley community enroute to Lake Placid with many beautiful homes in the surrounding countryside complementing historic structures within the village.



As a linear river hamlet **Keene Valley (E)** contains some architecturally interesting buildings. The settlement is well-defined and yet has no perceivable nucleus.



Keeseville (C/E) exemplifies a community evolving from an old milltown into one with a diversified economic base. The village center needs to be strengthened including the upgrading of public areas.

Lake Placid (E) is a prosperous, European-like community, site of the 1932 and 1980 Olympics, and destination of many park visitors. The strong main street and picturesque setting should be reinforced.





The attractive county government buildings in **Lake Pleasant (H)** serve as a focal point for the otherwise loosely organized, linear hamlet. The community has strong potential for recreational and industrial development.

Lewis (E) typifies the classic crossroads community enhanced by distant views and marked by consistent but undistinguished architecture. Growth potential exists with future mining of wollastonite deposits.



As one of the Adirondack Wilderness Outpost hamlets, **Long Lake (H)** enjoys a beautiful natural setting. The community should continue to develop its recreational assets.



Lyon Mountain (C) exists as the perfect example of an industry-deserted mining town. Workers' housing and neglected mines present dramatic images in a community where people are experiencing fewer services on a minimal economic base.



Minerva (E) is a small, peaceful community with the quality of being from another time. An old hotel and some vernacular architecture contribute to the village's charming character.



The starkness of the workers' homes and the deserted mining structures of **Mineville/Witherbee (E)** accentuate the unique town plan of this once bustling industrial center. The separation of neighborhood units poses unusual planning problems.

Morehouse (H) is a small, scattered highway settlement in an attractive woodland setting.



Nestled in a river valley, **Moriah Center (E)** is a small hamlet at the junction of several roads. The closing of mines has left vacant store fronts and buildings in disrepair.

As a characteristic hamlet of the eastern foothills, **Moriah Corners (E)** has a distinguished looking general store and well-maintained residences overlooking the Champlain Valley.



Newcomb (E), a well-maintained strip community of unusual length, has no sense of village center. Although it enjoys a remote high peaks location, the community's economy is jeopardized with the future of industries, forests and mining, in question.



Newton Falls (SL) is an outstanding example of a company town actually focusing on the mill itself. The unique physical layout of the hamlet defines a sense of arrival and several focal points.



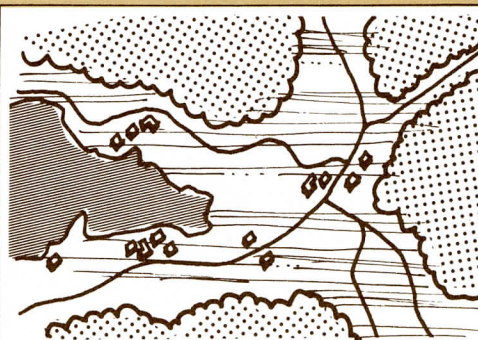
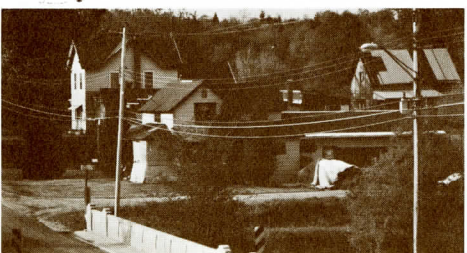
Nicholville (SL) is an agriculturally oriented hamlet at the park's edge, which has been physically altered by highway construction. It combines field and forest landscapes.

North Hudson (E) has seen its Route 9 oriented tourist business fade with the construction of the Northway. Its major tourist business, Frontiertown, survives through prominent Northway visibility and ready accessibility, though the future viability of this theme park depends on the ability of its new owner to identify and capitalize on the tastes and interests of the 1980's market.



Olmstedville (E) typifies the small cross-roads hamlet that has retained the early charm and rural character of many Adirondack villages.

As an early settlement on the Oswegatchie Trail, **Oswegatchie (SL)** suffered from highway relocation which bypassed the community. The hillside residential area is isolated from the highway commercial development.



As an old-time, lake-oriented resort community **Paradox (E)** exists with a minimal economic base.

A former company town, **Piercefield (SL)** serves as a bedroom community for Tupper Lake. Economic problems have caused some deterioration of the historically interesting company housing.



Piseco (H) exemplifies the linear Adirondack, lakeside settlement, dispersed in character in an outstanding mountain setting with numerous activity nodes.



Located on a spectacular point overlooking Lake Champlain, **Port Henry (E)** nevertheless exhibits the dreariness of an old mining town. The strong downtown district needs to be emphasized with creative reuse of existing architecturally significant structures.

As a well-organized and formerly thriving resort community, **Port Kent (E)** is now a bedroom settlement with an outstanding natural setting.



Raquette Lake (H) is remembered as the historic transfer point from rail to lake steamers providing access to the early camps and wilderness areas. Today the village remains a unique, if somewhat unmaintained, seasonal settlement.



As an extremely dispersed, institutional based village, **Ray Brook (E)** functions as a pass-through settlement between Saranac Lake and Lake Placid with minimal residential areas.



Redford (C) is a Saranac River hamlet reflecting the river's form and projecting a pleasant character and setting. Possible development opportunities are obvious in vacant buildings and attractive green spaces along the river's edge.

Riverview (C) is experienced as a stark, frontier-like hamlet struggling to survive.



Sabael (H) enjoys an outstanding setting on the shores of Long Lake and serves as a vacation spot for many seasonal visitors.

Saranac/Moffitsville (C) and **Pickets Corner (C)** are an almost endless linear settlement along the Saranac River with no central core and exhibiting a rather undistinguished character.

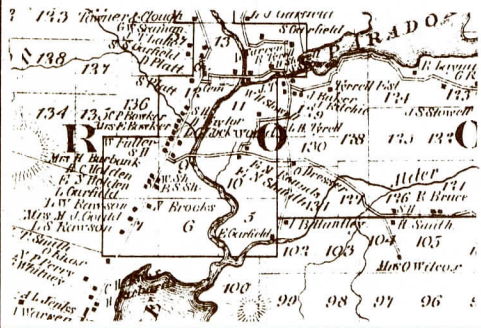


Saranac Lake (E), the largest Adirondack Park settlement, in its early history evolved as a major health resort. Historic neighborhoods, unique topography, and outstanding water relationships create significant potential for downtown development.

A thriving summer community with an attractive setting, **Schroon Lake (E)** offers good access from I-87. Village-wide design controls would improve the appearance of downtown areas.



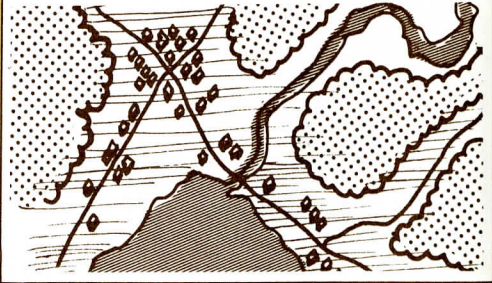
Severance (E) is an older resort settlement of both seasonal and permanent residents. A lack of village identity is promoted by its linear form.



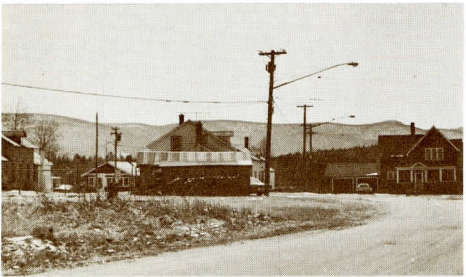
The settlement of **South Colton (SL)** serves as an entry point to the Adirondack Park and other local recreational facilities. The community, while not distinguished in character, has an attractive natural setting.



A good commercial and recreational base as well as a unique history number among the many attributes of **Speculator (H)**. Stronger visual and architectural unity, especially in public areas, might encourage even greater recreational activity in the area.



The tiny, isolated community of **Standish (C)**, although enjoying a spectacular natural setting, exhibits deteriorated housing conditions and no viable economic base.



Star Lake (SL) serves as a regional service center and lake resort. The scattered central core of the community does not take full advantage of the lakefront setting.

As the economic hub of the lower Champlain Valley **Ticonderoga (E)** enjoys a unique river site with hydro reuse potential. The community's location near the old fort and other tourist attractions offers major development potential.



Upper Jay (E) is an attractive small river community having one of the earliest theme parks in the country. Although now closed due to flooding, the Park should be considered as an historical site.



Wanakena (SL) is an attractive hamlet in a wooded, riverfront setting. Home of the State Ranger School, the hamlet has a stable year-round economy and numerous seasonal homes.

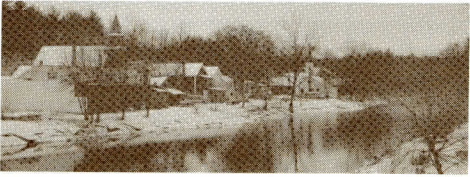


As a depressed farm service community **Whallonsburg (E)** is experiencing the deterioration of village structures and utilities. The settlement's location on the Boquet River should be exploited.

As a hamlet of architecturally consistent buildings in an impressive river valley setting, **Wells (H)** could expand its tourist and recreational facilities to enhance its economic viability.



Located near the mouth of the Boquet River, **Willsboro's (E)** close relationship to the river presents both problems and opportunities. Winter and spring flooding and lack of public utilities are encouraging commercial sprawl outside the historic village core while the newly constructed fish ladder increases recreational and tourism possibilities.



As an agricultural service community **Wadhams (E)** is located on waterfalls of the Boquet River. Several 19th Century farm style homes also contribute to the village's pleasant character.



Historic **Westport (E)** is a linear settlement along the Lake Champlain shoreline enjoying an abundance of green spaces and outstanding vistas. Future development of the old inn site is critical to the life of the hamlet.



Wilmington (E), a linear hamlet located adjacent to the skiing hub of the Adirondacks, suffers from a seeming inferiority complex relative to its prosperous neighbor to the southwest, Lake Placid. The low visual quality and "lack of center" in the village need to be offset with a new public image and improved marketing strategies.

Sample Communities

As a means of summarizing the analysis in Phase One, a primary task was the selection of a group of **sample communities**. These hamlets would be used in illustrating certain prescriptive and developmental strategies which could be applied to other hamlets throughout the Adirondack Park. These were to be, in fact, prototype communities or "prime examples". Therefore, it was essential that that sample communities be a representative cross-section of all the hamlets in the Park.

To this end the consultant and county planning directors chose 12 communities which afforded the best possible coverage of the following criteria selected from the analysis. These criteria were deemed to be critical in determining the program in Phase Two of the work. The criteria and the considerations in making the selections are listed below:



Photo courtesy of the Adirondack Museum

Physical Characteristics -

- all plan configurations
- varying village densities
- all qualities of visual environment
- all conditions of infrastructure
- varying landscape types
- varying conditions of village cores and neighborhoods

These 12 settlements, which together have the broad range of hamlet characteristics desired, will be the **sample communities** examined in Phase Two:

Ausable Forks
 Bloomingdale
 Indian Lake
 Keeseville
 Long Lake
 Lyon Mountain
 Port Henry
 South Colton
 Speculator
 Star Lake
 Willsboro
 Wilmington

Population - Very small to large hamlets

Location - Participating counties to be represented proportionately

Geographic - All geographic groups within the four participating counties to be represented

Functional - All nine functional groups be represented

Sample Communities

| | Geographic Groups | Functional Groups | Physical Types | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------|----------------|-------|-------|----------------|------------------|---------------|--------|
| | | | Physical Form | Density | Visual Quality | Water | Sewer | Landscape Type | Central Core | Neighborhoods | |
| Ausable Forks (C/E) | 3 | 2 | NODE | 4.5 | LOW | + | A | 0 | RIVER VALLEY | WEAK | STRONG |
| Bloomingdale (E) | 4 | 8 | X-ROAD | 1.5 | HIGH | + | A | - | OPEN MEADOW | STRONG | STRONG |
| Long Lake (H) | 11 | 3, 8 | LINEAR | 1.6 | HIGH | - | 0 | LAKE/FOREST | WEAK | WEAK | |
| Indian Lake (H) | 11 | 3 | X-ROAD | 2.0 | AVG | + | A | + | FOREST MEADOW | STRONG | STRONG |
| Keeseville (C/E) | 3 | 2 | NODE | 2.0 | AVG | + | A | + | RIVER VALLEY | WEAK | STRONG |
| Lyon Mountain (C) | 9 | 9 | NODE | 3.5 | LOW | + | M | - | FOOTHILL PLATEAU | WEAK | STRONG |
| Port Henry (E) | 1 | 2 | NODE | 2.0 | LOW | + | A | + | LAKE/SLEEP TERR. | STRONG | STRONG |
| South Colton (SL) | 10 | 6 | X-ROAD | 5.0 | AVG | 0 | 0 | 0 | OPEN MEADOW | STRONG | WEAK |
| Speculator (H) | 14 | 2, 3 | X-ROAD | 1.3 | AVG | + | M | + | LAKE/FOREST | WEAK | WEAK |
| Star Lake (SL) | 8 | 1, 3 | CONC. | 4.0 | AVG | + | 0 | 0 | LAKE | WEAK | WEAK |
| Willsboro (E) | 1 | 3, 5, 7, 8 | NODE | 1.0 | AVG | + | A | 0 | RIVER VALLEY | WEAK | STRONG |
| Wilmington (E) | 1 | 3 | LINEAR | .75 | LOW | + | A | 0 | OPEN/VALLEY | WEAK | STRONG |

Chapter 6

The Next Step

Marketing the Hamlets

What does the hamlet analysis indicate? What conclusions can we draw? The hamlets of the Adirondacks have enormous potential hidden beneath a blanket of missed opportunities. What is needed more than anything else are effective marketing strategies that will attract investment to the area — financial investments as well as investments of human and cultural resources. Part of this strategy involves telling the story of settlements in the Adirondacks, an interpretive story which highlights the unique characteristics of the region as seen by the human eye. This report is the first installment toward achieving this end.

The new emphasis in the Adirondacks must be on the **people** as well as on the natural resources of the region. Humankind and nature are capable of coexisting as they have throughout history. In this day and age of rapid urbanization, the synthesis of human and natural resources remains the Adirondack's unique and major asset. It is the region's selling point and will provide the grist for sensitive marketing strategies in the future.

While the hamlets have been both grouped and described in this study, the central issue really becomes what amenities, attributes and qualities an individual hamlet or a group of hamlets can build upon in the future. It is already understood that the majority of communities in the Adirondacks are either too small, too poor or too disorganized alone to do much about their current dilemma. This is precisely where the importance of the groupings come into play — where several hamlets with common characteristics can join forces and through a variety of political and administrative channels (county planning offices, rural preservation companies, etc.) collectively begin marketing themselves. This overall marketing approach requires first identifying the amenities to be marketed; second, the development of marketing strategies to communicate the amenities to outside interests and third, organizing a network of human resources to carry ideas through into implementation.

Ideas for Action

Locating and interpreting key amenities and resources of a hamlet or group of hamlets is an important part of the marketing approach. This involves the analysis of unique characteristics of the hamlet, many of which have been identified in this publication: people, spaces, buildings and special districts; the regional environment, context and landscape setting; and the history of a hamlet's life as a place.

Developing specific marketing strategies which capitalize on the resources of a hamlet or group of hamlets is the next step and is the work which can attract future economic development to an area. This may not be possible in all hamlets and some hamlets may in fact decline in their attractiveness and viability. Even so, the majority will have an excellent chance to thrive once again. Marketing should be carefully aimed at developing a unique mix of uses in a community's center which will attract shoppers and users from the larger region. A part of the marketing strategy is tourism and recreational development, potentials for infilling sites and recycling vacant buildings, and ways to rehabilitate community infrastructure such as sewer and water.

A total marketing approach will, in addition, include methods of improving the visual appearance and maintenance of public landscaped areas within the hamlet; developing a unified design vocabulary for signs and facades which respond to the traditional architectural vernacular of the Adirondacks and; suggesting ways to screen undesirable images and commercial architecture which may detract from a place. The overall welcoming image that a hamlet presents when a visitor enters is also an area in which a marketing approach coupled with sound physical planning can have a beneficial impact.

Preserving the visual integrity of edges and gateways to settlement areas is a particularly important aspect of a strategy for the Adirondacks. Sprawl or strip development has too often in the past been a tempting alternative in the region. Strip development has been regarded as convenient, inexpensive, and quick to implement. Where it has occurred the linear hamlet has resulted. Development patterns have simply followed the roads which thread through valley corridors, resulting in conditions in which one settlement bleeds into the next and the traveler is left wondering when he has left one hamlet and arrived in another.

In order to reverse this trend the center of a hamlet should be strengthened and smaller areas encouraged to take on a richer mixed use character where living, shopping, working and recreation are combined. This type of contained diversity of activities can then be linked together by pedestrian space. By encouraging both infill development on vacant sites and the adaptive reuse of vacant buildings in the hamlet center, the core can be revived as a social and community oriented place — a notion which over the years has been unfortunately lost as business establishments moved out to the fringe.

The final aspect of a successful marketing approach for the settlements of the Adirondacks involves the development of an organized network of people and human resources to achieve results. Local confidence and support must be solicited in approaches which facilitate action and do not merely dictate results. Human resources, even though they are often in short supply in the hamlets, must be organized and generated at the local level in order that sound decision-making concerning future development can occur.

"The new emphasis in the Adirondacks must be on people rather than exclusively on the natural resources of the region."

Steps have already been taken in the right direction in the Adirondacks through the establishment of organizations which address one or many of the ideas outlined above. Organizations such as Historic Saranac Lake, Essex County Heritage Organization (ECHO), Friends of Keeseville (all funded by the Rural Preservation Company Program of the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal) and the Adirondack North Country Association (an amalgam of public and private interests) have begun to address these concerns. Strategies and more detailed plans for accomplishing various levels of a marketing approach as outlined above is the subject of Phase Two of this project. However, there are certain aspects of such an approach which should be elaborated at this time. These include the concept of amenity frontage and its subsequent impact on the economic and historic/cultural enrichment of the region.

Amenity Frontage Concept

In major urban centers, the land abutting parks, open spaces, and other natural amenities, such as waterfronts, is called amenity frontage. It has substantially higher market value and is more attractive for development than sites without amenity frontage. For example, the property values directly adjacent to New York City's Central Park are some of the highest in Manhattan, because of both the park's central location and its green open public space. Just about every major city in the U.S. has a comparable example of this relationship. Based on this principle, it is suggested that we formulate a *quid pro quo* between landscape preservation and economic development for the Adirondacks in much the same way that it occurs in more urbanized settings. The suggestion is based on the idea that by limiting development and preserving land for recreational use abutting, the actual value of land increases. Because fewer sites are available for development, each one is actually worth more. The realities of supply and demand that take hold after a period of time increasingly cause land values to rise.

For the hamlets of the Adirondacks the principle of amenity frontage could be a boon to local economic development, because they are located next to areas of restricted land use and outstanding open space resources. To stimulate development in hamlet areas we need to improve the amenity frontage and access to forever wild lands — making these lands in essence the region's Central Park. Hamlet properties which benefit from amenity frontage will increase over time if other supportive development strategies are put into action. Recreation and tourism are such supportive strategies creating economic development opportunities in the Adirondacks and maximizing the hamlets' amenity frontage.

Recreation-based industries, while the most obvious, are not the only ones that could potentially benefit from the concept of amenity frontage. Light manufacturing, high-tech research and development companies, and the housing industry could stand to gain as well. These economic development strides can only be realized if the hamlets develop clear marketing approaches, both individually and together. A regional effort must be made to coordinate such activities into a park-wide interpretative plan that presents the amenities including important landscape features, the history of settlement patterns in the Park as well as the region's unique cultural and wilderness qualities. The next plan for the Adirondacks should be 'bullish' about the special attributes and opportunities that exist in the Park for prospective year-round residents and seasonal users.

Getting the Funds

A variety of federal, state, and private programs are designed to carry out redevelopment strategies. Use of such programs will enable the hamlets to market themselves more effectively and to secure financing for community revitalization.

These programs include New York State's Rural Preservation Company Program which provides funding for staff activities in support of efforts needed to redevelop the hamlets, as opposed to dollars for actual project construction. The federal Community Development Block Grant program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), also called the CDBG Program or the Small Cities Program, provides grants for many community development activities including rehabilitation of private housing. The Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) program is a second major HUD program and is applicable only under circumstances entailing "leveraging" of private financing (more about this concept subsequently). Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) provides long term, low-interest loans (and grants under certain circumstances) for housing, community facilities, water systems and waste disposal systems. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in conjunction with New York State, finances sewage disposal systems. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has programs which can mirror what is possible through HUD, FmHA, or EPA funding. However, EDA financing is strictly contingent on private investment commitments which produce jobs, usually long term jobs. In addition there are numerous lesser federal and state programs with similar objectives not always funded in a given federal or state fiscal year.

“What is needed more than anything else are effective marketing strategies that will attract investment to the area — financial as well as investments of human and cultural resources.”

Quasi-public organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation and private foundations also occupy a place in the wide and diverse spectrum of financing possibilities. Though in the latter case one's skill at marketing the need, uniqueness and merit of a proposal or other remarkable quality becomes paramount.

Finally there are a variety of federal and state programs not discussed here which depart from those mentioned above for the construction or repair of public facilities or housing. These programs finance labor force training, working capital, etc. for new or expanded business activities. Since hamlet redevelopment must entail private as well as public investment, such sources of financing need to be known, understood and effectively utilized.

The Concept of Leveraging

An important concept, indeed a requirement for use of UDAG or EDA financing, is **leveraging**. Generally leveraging is use of funds to induce supplementary investment. In the form of a public dollar investment, leveraging stimulates private investment, thereby multiplying the impact of what would have been possible with only the public dollars. In the case of EDA, a needed public improvement (such as a water line extension) is used to leverage the establishment or expansion of a job-creating business activity (or vice versa). Without the one, the other cannot occur as EDA will not participate unless job creation results (usually one job for every \$10,000 of EDA investment). In using scarce, highly competitive resources, it is important that communities utilize the leveraging concept even if it is not a funding requirement. For instance, it is often possible to install new sidewalks, street trees or other public amenities adjacent to private property in exchange for a restored facade financed by the owner.

Some of the Funding Problems

Securing public funding in small rural communities is not without major problems that must be redressed through new legislation, new regulations, new partnerships in working cooperatively to bring needed public investment to the hamlets, and above all, new attitudes in understanding the unique qualities and needs of small Adirondack settlements. It is beyond the scope of this prospectus to provide a comprehensive criticism of such problems, but a few examples are discussed below.

In general, public financing programs are designed to be applied in communities of another order of magnitude in size than the hamlets of the Adirondacks. Competitive application for CDBG funds necessitates “targeting,” an urban concept often not applicable in small rural communities because of the dispersed nature of need. Competitive application also requires a community to **direct** a significant benefit to low and moderate income people. A competitive application designed by a clever “grantsman” responding to such requirements does not necessarily address the most pressing and fundamental needs of the hamlets and/or low and moderate income people. New York State now proposes to take over administration of the CDBG programs, and promises to be more responsive to the needs of rural areas. This would be a beneficial change.

Two other examples are worthy of note. Although there exists a surfeit of functionally obsolete structures and oversize “white elephant” housing in the hamlets, there is insufficient policy direction to encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of such structures to meet housing (especially rental and elderly housing) and other space requirements. Such needs are met too often through architecturally incompatible new construction at a hamlet's periphery, while an historic or architecturally significant

structure suitable for adaptive reuse languishes in the hamlet's center desperate for a new use. The Farmers Home Administration's Section 515 program for rural, rental housing is a potentially useful program to combat this **problem** if rehabilitation were to be promoted and facilitated to the extent that new construction is.

Many if not most of the hamlets have sewage disposal problems due to their location near rivers and lakes and the prevalence of small lots. The community's limited size typically precludes conventional central collection and treatment systems. Unfortunately, EPA, FmHA and New York State, all of which have funds to solve sewage disposal problems, have no protocol to deal with the particular scale of sewage problem of the Adirondack hamlets. In most funding instances a further complication must be overcome; that is the complex process of applying for funds and wading through the red tape of mega-bureaucracies and administrative procedures that are so cumbersome that only the large, well-staffed projects can actually afford to pursue this assistance. Finally, with the recent elimination by New York State of the Local Planning Assistance Program in the Adirondacks, all aspects of community development planning and programming will be curtailed in the future.

To overcome many of the special problems of the Adirondacks outlined in this report, the State should consider establishing a **rural community development district** for the region that could be monitored and implemented by a broad-based organization representing state, regional and local concerns. Such a body could function as a catalyst or **clearinghouse** for development planning, marketing and investment in the region. Its mandate would go beyond that of single-purpose agencies by charting the course for a **comprehensive** development and preservation program. Numerous organizational models that might be referred to as good examples, such as the Appalachian Regional Commission, exist throughout the country.

"Community organization and networking are vitally important in planning for the future."

Phase Two

It is necessary to revive not only the physical and economic fabric, but the inner spirit of the hamlets of the Adirondacks. Community organization and networking are vitally important in directing planning for the future into the public arena — where the people who are affected by decisions can be actively involved. Community-based approaches should involve locally accessible field offices, educational workshops and goals identification programs, as well as communication through area newspapers and other publicity techniques. Plans for the future grow and change, and can never be **etched in stone**. Therefore, the process and product are equally important in assuring the survival of the hamlets of the Adirondacks.

Development alone does not always mean progress. An important element of the Adirondack hamlet survival kit during the period of national retrenchment is the ability to accomplish more with less. The mistake often made is to rush into development propositions borrowed from somewhere else, that do not fit a local formula. The prescription for one region may not be the solution for another and short term gains may be costly in the long run, unless we no longer care if every place looks the same!

Many hamlets of the Adirondacks need help. They share common ills which have actively and passively led to their decline: the single industry towns that have lost their mine or mill, their only livelihood; crumbling infrastructure that must be rebuilt at great expense; local administrative skills and human resources that are lacking and the physical and economic deterioration of the community core that is everywhere evident. The information presented in this publication provides a foundation for addressing these factors directly in the next phase. Policy plans developed in the twelve sample communities will be applicable to all settlements in the Park and will focus on these key problem areas. A handbook aimed at assisting hamlets and villages in interpreting their amenities and building on their individual investment potential will be prepared in Phase Two.

*"It is necessary to revive not only the physical and economic fabric,
but the inner spirit of the hamlets of the Adirondacks."*



Hamlet of Essex on Champlain

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